

Government Organization Act, 1970

had raised your eyebrows when this bill was first tabled in the House. Then, after having looked at the bill, and when handing down your ruling on the motion that it not be proceeded with, Your Honour stated that omnibus bills seem to take in too much and that we have had many other instances of this in the House. I am sure Your Honour's recommendation that these bills should be scrutinized when first tabled will be followed. So, I, as an elected representative of this House, object very strenuously to having to vote on a bill containing a number of subjects, some of which have my approval while others do not.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Hales: I should like to vote for the clauses setting up the Department of the Environment. But I do not approve for one minute of the part which would set up the different ministries of the government, and I would like to have the opportunity to vote against that. Obviously, we are placed in a very unfair position. I hope this precedent will not be continued and that in future each subject will be presented in a separate bill.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Hales: Yes.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Would the hon. member not have the opportunity to vote against individual proposals in the bill when the bill is in the committee of the whole House.

Mr. Hales: Yes; I will have an opportunity to vote against a proposal but the vote will not be a recorded vote. The recorded vote will not be on each issue but rather on the whole bill. I can register my dislike of a particular part of the bill, but still the bill as a whole will carry. That is the point as I see it.

My other objection is that the time of this House will be taken up discussing this bill on government reorganization when we have serious unemployment problems facing this country involving nearly three-quarters of a million unemployed people. I believe it would have been much better if the government had placed before us a bill in the name of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey), entitled a bill to prevent human misery and economic waste.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hales: I submit, Mr. Speaker, that is what we should be spending our time on at this moment.

I may say, with regard to the contents of the bill, that it has nine parts. It certainly is a catch-all bill. The bill provides for setting up a Department of the Environment, and sets out the duties of the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources as well as the duties to be assigned to the Minister of the Environment. It transfers the responsibility for astronomical observatories from the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to the

[Mr. Hales.]

National Research Council. The fourth part of the bill concerns ministries and ministers of state. The fifth part concerns Parliamentary Secretaries. The number is to be increased from 16. The sixth part provides for the appointment of a Postmaster General. We already have one, but still there is this provision. The seventh part concerns the Public Service Superannuation Act and provides for improved early retirement. Part VIII amends the Salaries Act to provide a salary for each minister. Part IX is a general section.

I do not have time to deal with all the parts of the bill, but in the time available I wish to speak on Part IV which deals with ministries and ministers of state, Part VI regarding the post office, and Part VII regarding superannuation. Then, I should like to say a little about the cost of this whole package deal we are discussing at the moment. Many of my colleagues, and members on the other side of the House, have spoken about the setting up of a Department of the Environment and about pollution. I am delighted that this part is contained in the bill, but I wish it appeared by itself. As a member who has a university in his riding, I am particularly pleased that we are now to have some legislation to take care of pollution and to place it under the jurisdiction of one minister. Just the other day I received a letter from the University of Guelph. I was asked what we had done in respect of noise pollution control. I was surprised to learn there were no federal provisions covering that, except in the Department of Transport regulations concerning aeroplanes. So, it is good to have this part in this bill.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the part in respect of ministries and ministers of state is a real package, indeed. Here, we certainly have an example of a government dream or a bureaucratic dream. In addition to having the ministers we have today, we are to have ministers of state for specific purposes. There will be five of these. They will be paid \$15,000 plus their other salary. There will also be ministers of state with no specific duties to perform. There is no limit to how many ministers of state can be appointed. There are three types of ministers in addition to ministers without portfolio, as we have now. What a mixed bag of tricks this will be.

• (3:00 p.m.)

The bill does not state what the ministers will do, but let us take a look at it. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury), in introducing this bill, said it will provide for greater accountability of the executive branch to Parliament. What nonsense! Here, we will have five ministers appointed with no specific duties assigned to them, but the House will have nothing to say about the departments they will head. This is probably the most devious piece of legislation this government has ever presented. Its only aim is to increase the number of ministers. The bill contains no statement of purpose, no clearcut objectives. Not only does the government have nothing specific for the ministers to do, but it is also proposing a new way to diminish the powers of Parliament. This is a very serious aspect of the bill.