

The Budget—Mr. Macdonnell

civil service. I have mentioned this on a previous occasion. I mention it because not only is it costly to the public and to the taxpayer but it is unfair to those who are in the civil service. I wish to emphasize again that it is unfair to those who are in the civil service. The report to which I wish to refer comes from the pen of Mr. Grant Dexter of the *Winnipeg Free Press*. It gives the key to the whole attitude towards government expenditure. Writing in the *Winnipeg Free Press* of December 30, 1954, after setting out that the federal government had then been engaged for months in a reform trying to control the growth of the federal civil service, Mr. Dexter said:

Careful study of the federal civil service indicated that the cause of the hitherto uncontrollable growth was simple—whenever there was a need for expansion, the departments expanded. They did not search within themselves for surplus personnel and meet the need for expansion by making better use of their existing staff. They invariably added to it. To illustrate, if a bridge is built across the St. Lawrence there would have to be a customs house at the Canadian end of it, staffed by customs and immigration officers. The opening of the bridge would greatly reduce the number of people entering the country by ferries. But instead of transferring men from the ferry ports to the bridge, the tendency would be to add to the payroll by appointing additional staff at the bridge.

Again in July, 1956, Mr. Dexter reverted to this topic and gave figures showing that in 1934 the civil service in round figures numbered 47,000, in 1938 51,000, in 1945 138,000, and that it increased from then on until it reached 181,000 in 1955. Mr. Dexter adds:

The civil service expands in depression (1934), in normal times (1938), in war (1945), in peace (1945-50) and in times of plenty (1951-55).

As I said before, this is unfair not only to the taxpayer but even more unfair to the civil servant who by reason of the bringing in of outsiders is often denied the promotion to which he is entitled. The lesson of this is surely plain for all to see. How can we expect a government which can be so blind and reckless as to what is going on under its very eyes to exercise economy about the general burden of expenditure which is not under its eyes?

This leads me to mention one piece of what seems to me outstanding folly in that the government has refused to have the work of the departments reviewed by competent outside experts. We have brought this up again and again. I can see any number of arguments for it. I cannot see a single argument against it except one which I do not like to believe and yet I can see no other argument, viz., that the government hesitate to let the light of day in on what they are doing. In private business there is no question that it would be done, and in the one or two cases where it has been done, I think

the film board and the post office, I do not think anyone will suggest that such a situation was shown there as to make people believe that the inquiry should not go any further. So I say that I can imagine no reason that this is not done except for the fear that it would show up waste and extravagance in the public service.

The government are fond of stressing the fact that they are strong supporters of private enterprise. But what is the evidence of this? In 20 years they have gone further and further into government activities of all kinds. The extent to which we have been developing government activity including big business, in other words, the extent to which the government has extended its operations more and more, is well set out by J. J. Deutsch, formerly of the Department of Finance. Writing in the *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* for February, 1957, he draws attention to the astonishing changes of 20 years of Liberal rule. He says that during those years the average rate of increase in the civil service has been 7 per cent that during the same period the average rate of increase in national production has been 5 per cent and the average rate of growth of total population has been 2 per cent.

Nothing could better illustrate the increasing growth and power of government through the civil service in our society. The change has come about, of course, mainly by the increase of welfare activities, defence services and by what is called "big government". Writing in the *Queen's Quarterly*, winter, 1957, Mr. Deutsch said:

In order to help provide an ever-widening horizon of economic opportunity the federal government nowadays conducts investigations, studies and research into a vast number of problems.

Mr. Deutsch refers to:

. . . such diverse efforts as those being made to improve the techniques of farming, forestry, mining and fishing. . . . In the field of direct service and production the federal government operates gigantic transportation and communication systems, huge mortgage and credit schemes, marketing facilities for one of the country's basic exports and a large complex chemical plant. Each of these is among the biggest businesses in the country. Related to all this is an extensive organization for the gathering, compiling and the publishing of facts and statistics . . .

He goes on to say:

Parliament, as a result of these developments, is suffering an ever-deepening sense of frustration. This is especially so when one recalls the enviable circumstances of earlier periods during which the functions of government were far simpler. One of the basic reasons for this situation is . . . the fact that parliament is not a technical body. While the functions of government have become increasingly technical . . . parliament has maintained its ancient ways. . . . Parliament is not a gathering of experts. Its members are for the most part representative men and women . . .