

government is and what government does. That is exactly what the minister has been doing this last year, looking at precisely how government can be restructured in such a way that it not only spends less but also concentrates on its core roles and responsibilities.

The full details, as we are all aware, will be announced in the forthcoming budget. However, the minister has looked at ways that government operations can be more focused, more client centred, more efficient and more cost effective. In a word, the kind of government Canadians want, at a price they can afford.

It is very obvious that Canadians have understood our intentions, that they agree with and support our approach. We need only look at the results of yesterday's byelections for confirmation of this. The voters in three riding enthusiastically endorsed the Liberal government's actions to create jobs and growth.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that the Prime Minister asked Mr. Massé to lead a review of every department's programs, activities and expenditures. This initiative, known as a program review, covered approximately \$47 billion in program spending.

[English]

The program review had three major objectives. The first was to strengthen the public administration of federal programs and services. Program review will lead to a smaller, more efficient federal government delivering high priority programs to Canadians.

The second objective was to make a contribution to the modernization of Canadian federalism. Program review will help ensure the federal government delivers only those programs and services it is best equipped to deliver.

The third objective was to help the government meet its fiscal objectives. Federal departments have recommended major reductions in program spending based on their priorities. In general, ministers proposed a range of program changes and consolidations which are to be implemented following the 1995 budget.

These changes are designed to ensure that departments discard non-core responsibilities. Similar programs and services are placed in a single department to achieve maximum efficiency. What has been done with pesticide control in recent days is a very good example of that.

Overlap and duplication among and between departments and jurisdictions is removed. New technologies are used to lower the cost of program delivery, while increasing service standards. Cost recovery and user fees are to be used to finance programs that provide economic benefits to clients and stakeholders.

Supply

[Translation]

Every sector of government activity—from transportation, farming and fisheries to energy, mines and forestry, as well as assistance to businesses, immigration, etc—was reviewed. Almost all federal departments will be called upon to restructure their programs and to concentrate their efforts on sectors of national or international importance, sectors which are in the general interest of the country. This was one of the program review's guiding principles.

[English]

Program review outcomes will provide clear and undeniable evidence that the federal government has confronted its fiscal pressures by getting its own fiscal house in order. The federal public service will be reduced significantly. Its size and functions will be brought into line with the federal government core roles arising from the program review.

This is and will continue to be a difficult period for public service employees right across the country and here in the national capital region. Local members of Parliament such as myself and the newly elected member for Ottawa—Vanier are all committed to ensuring that reductions in the public service workforce are managed in a fair, orderly way so as to reduce to an absolute minimum the stresses and disruptions to the lives of individuals affected.

● (1545)

As public service employees across this country hear horrendous stories about the magnitude of downsizing, I want it to be clear that we are not talking about huge numbers of public service employees losing their jobs. Financial compensation packages will be there. They will be fair and they will be adequate.

We will be flexible and imaginative in our approach. Every means at the disposal of government will be used to ease and facilitate the acquisition of new skills to make the transition to new careers as smooth and as complete as possible.

Let me illustrate how the program review will translate into specific actions by citing the Department of Transport as an example.

[Translation]

As the Minister of Transport said several times, the transportation system in Canada is too intrusive, subsidies are distorting trade and several parts of the system are in bad shape. Following the program review, Transport Canada will no longer own large parts of the system. It will no longer operate and finance them. Instead, it will focus on its fundamental responsibilities in terms of direction and regulation in order to ensure the safety of the transportation system.