

Estimates

measures will go a long way in serving members of Parliament, so that they can have a more enlightened view of what is actually happening in the government with regard to spending and making the government accountable to Parliament. I think these measures will save a lot of research for members and their office staffs, since the new form of the estimates will be much more understandable than it was in the past.

The expenditure plans, especially in terms of the programs, will make departments sit down and look in an objective way at the programs they are putting out. They will have to justify what the objectives of the programs are and the funding which will go along with those programs. We, as members of Parliament, and the public accounts committee, can check against those expenditure plans of programs in future years by comparing it to the public accounts of Canada. I think that is a big step forward. Those who have worked very long and hard to bring this about should be commended.

I do not think the government can stop in terms of having a revised form of the estimates. I would like to see it proceed further in terms of freedom of information and to have the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) listen to recommendations made by the special task force which was set up this year to deal with regulatory reform. I would like the President of the Treasury Board to give some serious consideration to having permanent staff allocated to committees, such as the public accounts committee, so that there is some kind of consistency with regard to the people who are watching those committees.

I am concerned about the amount of the public debt. It is acknowledged that the public debt is the fastest growing envelope, increasing by 16 per cent. I do not see that the government has its public debt under control yet. That causes me some concern.

I would like to go on to say that the estimates have, in fact, increased the number of person-years by 3,085 for the 1981-82 estimates. I acknowledge the fact that many of these increases are in terms of the National Energy Program and in terms of the census which is to be taken this year.

I would like to say a few words about the National Energy Program itself. I feel there are some good objectives within it. I would like to see Canadians gain some increasing control of ownership within the petroleum industry in Canada. I feel that the political will is not necessarily being carried out in Canada with respect to this program. I fear that the government has placed the oil companies up against the wall and they are rebelling. Even though we do agree with many of the recommendations and objectives of the National Energy Program, we have a great deal of fear with respect to the way in which this program will be carried out.

I want also to respond to the inconsistency between the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) and the President of the Treasury Board in terms of one supporting the objectives of President Reagan and the other being opposed to them. I would like to reiterate that they should be getting together with respect to their approach to Canada's economy, decide the manner they will take to approach this and be consistent.

I would like to turn to the transfer of payments to the provinces, which was also touched on by the previous speaker. Including the statutory payments paid under the equalization program to the provinces, a large proportion of those payments is paid to eastern Canada as compared to what is paid to western Canada in terms of per capita population. I think this is a good sign. It shows an increase in the economic wealth of the western provinces. For example, 26.9 per cent of the population is contained in western Canada. In that figure I am using the 1976 census figures for the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, which make up this 26.9 per cent. Yet those same provinces only receive 11.3 per cent of equalization payments. The large balance, of course, goes to eastern Canada, that is from Ontario east, including the Atlantic provinces, which are in a worsening economic position.

Mr. Blenkarn: Ontario does not receive equalization payments.

Mr. Anguish: The hon. member says that there are no equalization payments being made to the province of Ontario. I would like to point out that in these transfer payments Newfoundland receives \$440.5 million, Prince Edward Island receives \$100 million, Nova Scotia receives \$ 509.5 million, New Brunswick receives \$429 million, Quebec receives \$1,707.2 million and Ontario receives \$85.5 million. The provinces I have mentioned are the ones I consider to be eastern Canada. I would like to deal with the provinces of western Canada. Manitoba receives \$369.5 million, Saskatchewan only receives \$2.2 million under the transfer payments. This is the amount that was agreed to under the British North America Act for statutory subsidies. The province of Alberta receives \$40.7 million, British Columbia receives \$4.1 million and the Northwest Territories and the Yukon each receive \$0.3 million. The point I am trying to make is that there is a great transfer of the wealth in this country to western Canada, in terms of the western provinces helping to carry the load for the rest of Canada in the bad economic times we are facing. I am happy to see this. I do not see it as a necessarily negative aspect.

Also, I would like to say that I am concerned about the government and its expenditure plans. It is transferring a great deal of the responsibility for payment of some programs to provincial and municipal governments. It is a cost which they cannot afford to be absorbing. The two programs that come to my mind immediately are the community services contribution program and the costs of policing. The community services contribution program provided a great deal of funding to needy municipalities across this country. This program has not been cut off. At this point in time there will be nothing to follow it up. This creates a void within some of the municipal governments across Canada.

In The Battlefords-Meadow Lake, the constituency which I represent, there are some communities such as Uranium City which will have its payments for policing costs go up this year over last by 95 per cent. In the town of The Battlefords the