

government but of governments of other jurisdictions as well, for instance, provincial, municipal, and so on. Indeed, the impetus for regulatory reform in Canada emerged from a federal-provincial meeting of First Ministers in 1978. Ever since that time work on regulatory reform has been going on at all levels of Government.

I should mention, moreover, that a federal-provincial-territorial committee of officials was established in 1978 to monitor the outcome of the regulation reference undertaken at the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) request by the Economic Council of Canada. In other words, already in 1978 a committee was set up of federal, provincial and territorial bodies to monitor just this very problem.

I understand that that committee of officials has met occasionally, most recently in 1982. I understand also that the chairman of the committee, the co-ordinator of Treasury Board's office of regulatory reform, has been in recent contact with his provincial and territorial counterparts and colleagues for the very purpose of assessing their interest in a further meeting sometime in the next few months. In that respect, the motion is somewhat redundant since it proposes action that has already been initiated and which, subject to provincial and territorial wishes, will take place.

The motion is also a bit off-base in suggesting that work on simplifying and streamlining the regulatory burden on the Canadian economy has yet to begin. At least at the federal level, Mr. Speaker, the work began long ago and it is continuing at a strong pace, I suggest. It was in 1978 that the Economic Council undertook its major regulation reference at the request of federal and provincial governments. Its massive study resulted in a large quantity of valuable research and in 66 recommendations, which have acted as an important base and catalyst for ongoing work during the past three years both at the federal and provincial levels of government.

Hon. Members are no doubt fully aware, moreover, of the excellent work of the Special Committee of the House on Regulatory Reform, chaired by my distinguished colleague, the Hon. Member for Willowdale (Mr. Peterson), whose riding is just to the north of my riding of Eglinton-Lawrence. He chaired that committee and its results are, I am sure, well known to every Member of the House and, I hope, to all Canadians.

The recommendations of these and other studies have provided a firm basis for the Government's regulatory reform work plan. The far reaching scope and impact of the recommendations and the ensuing work plan led the Government to establish a special office of regulatory reform in the Treasury Board with the specific mandate of promoting and co-ordinating the Government's regulatory reform program. Obviously it is no new idea.

Since the motion refers to "regulatory burden"—those are the words used in the text of the motion—I would like to draw particular attention to three major accomplishments of the federal regulatory reform program whose specific target was the simplification and streamlining of the regulatory process. To begin with, the Government introduced legislation repeal-

ing 124 pieces of redundant or unnecessary legislation. This was enacted in July, 1983 and proclaimed in force on December 1, 1983. While I would not claim that this legislation constituted an enormous step forward in terms of regulatory reform, I regard it, nevertheless, as an important move because of the principle it underlined, namely, that laws and regulations should be regularly reviewed and, wherever they are no longer absolutely necessary, should be removed. That is an important principle for all legislators to bear in mind.

We have continued our review of legislation and may wish to propose a Bill repealing a further substantial number of statutes later this year.

Of greater immediate impact on the private sector, Hon. Members will recall that they approved legislation simplifying and reducing records retention requirements imposed on the private sector with the passage of Bill C-119 in July, 1983. This legislation, which was also proclaimed in force in December, 1983 will result in an estimated \$100 million of savings to the private sector per year. We are studying the potential for further reforms of this type which have the potential for additional substantial cost savings for the private sector, particularly for the small business community.

Speaking of simplifying and streamlining, Mr. Speaker, I am particularly proud of the program of regulatory agendas which the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) introduced on an experimental basis about a year ago. It is a program involving publication of upcoming regulatory initiatives by federal Departments and agencies. Initially, the program covered 14 Departments and agencies, but with the addition later this year of the Department of Finance, the Department of National Revenue, Customs and Excise, and the Department of Insurance, the program will cover a total of 17 federal entities, thereby providing a kind of early warning mechanism to the private sector for virtually all the federal Government's regulatory intentions. This has two important effects. By putting the Government's regulatory cards on the table well in advance of the implementation of regulations, the agendas greatly simplify public information and involvement in the regulatory process at a time when it counts most, that is to say, before the regulation is in place. Moreover, the discipline of the regulatory agendas and the heightened opportunities for consultation they encourage has had, in my view, the effect of contributing to the streamlining of the regulatory process.

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As an additional dimension of the regulatory agenda's project, the President of the Treasury Board recently announced the introduction of an electronic version of the agendas. This was a significant step taken by the federal Government. Electronic publishing clearly offers an exceptional means of making information on the Government's activities available to a much wider range of the Canadian public.

A growing number of households are purchasing microcomputers and, through the adaptation of Canada's world leading video technology, Telidon, software carrying the regulatory