

sector of the economy nor region of the country bears a disproportionate burden of these changes.

I want to assure Hon. Members that we were careful to select reductions that will not impair the health, the safety or the security of Canadians.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. de Cotret: Expenditure reductions reflected in these Main Estimates were primarily made in five areas. First, growth in the defence programs is being reduced by \$575 million. Second, savings of \$360 million are being obtained this year by limiting the funding levels of ODA. Third, subsidies and transfers have been reduced, netting a saving of \$141 million. Fourth, payments to certain Crown corporations have also been decreased, yielding \$105 million. Finally, Government operations are being curtailed by \$49 million.

These Estimates make no provision for expenditure reductions requiring legislative changes which will have to be approved by this House. These statutory items amount to some \$140 million. Further, the Main Estimates do not reflect reductions of \$175 million to items that have been carried in reserve in the Government's expenditure plan.

• (1220)

Reducing the deficit and overcoming the legacy of debt is a Government priority. We have approached this priority in a way that will allow the Government to maintain its commitments: Its commitments to a stronger, more competitive economy; commitments to preserve our environment; commitments to show that we are a caring and compassionate society; and the commitment to foster Canada's cultural and national identity. Spending to reinforce an already strong science and technology program, which is crucial to a competitive economy, will be increased by 12.8 per cent. Environmental protection and enhancement expenditures will grow by 9.4 per cent.

Social spending is not at risk. Funding for key social programs, including programs for elderly Canadians, will grow by 6.6 per cent. Included in this total are increases for elderly Canadians of \$865 million.

Estimates

Further, to foster Canada's cultural and national identity, cultural funding is being enhanced and a new Department of Multiculturalism is being established.

Assistance for native peoples is being increased by 11.6 per cent. Finally, the Government, as always, is delivering on its commitment to assist farmers hit by drought, and \$387 million is being provided in the Estimates for this purpose.

[*Translation*]

In the May 1985 Budget, the government announced a program to downsize the public service aimed at lowering the cost of delivering programs while ensuring that essential services to the public and services related to health, safety and security were maintained.

Mr. Speaker, I am confirming today that the size of the Public Service is being reduced by a further 1,072, or one-half of one per cent in these Main Estimates. This brings total net reductions to date to 11,596.

Mr. Speaker, our public service employment level is now the same as it was in 1973.

These total reductions have been achieved while the workload associated with a number of existing programs, such as the issuance of income security cheques, continues to increase. In addition, the government provided the necessary resources to administer a number of new priorities, such as the new refugee determination system, by re-investing some of the savings from the downsizing program into these new requirements. The success of this effort is a testament to the competence and dedication of our managers and employees.

As Honourable Members are aware, over two weeks ago I presented to the House my report on the special warrants that the Governor General was asked to issue in the 1988-89 fiscal year when Parliament was not in session. I also tabled at the time a report on the special Governor-General's warrant for the 1989-90 fiscal year. The funds included in this warrant, as well as in the interim Supply Bill I will be tabling next week, are supported by the program information in the Main Estimates, which Members will have an opportunity to assess in detail.