

Development. Upon close examination, there seems to be a pattern evolving in a number of departments where there has been a significant cutback in programs and services, particularly to disadvantaged peoples, while there has been an increase in departmental administration costs. In one department, for instance—the Department of Regional Economic Expansion—there is an over-all decrease in the budget for the department, an increase in operating expenditures and a significant decrease in contributions and loans for developmental purposes.

Can the minister indicate whether any policy was evolved prior to the preparation of this year's estimates which in effect cut back services and programs to people while increasing the internal administration costs of the federal government?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, there was no policy with that intent or that desire. That was not, in fact, anticipated.

REDUCTIONS IN GRANTS TO CERTAIN ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should direct this question to the Prime Minister, as the leader of the government. With respect to the services provided by a number of departments there has been considerable public protest. A month or two ago I raised a question with the Secretary of State concerning the cutback in grants to performing art groups. There has been a significant increase—some 77 per cent in one case—in departmental administration costs. A similar effect has occurred with respect to DREE, Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and quite likely other departments.

● (1432)

Can the Prime Minister indicate what steps were taken in the preparation of this year's estimates to prevent the phenomenon of seeing a reduction in services to people by either stabilization or an increase in the internal administration costs of the government?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am assured by the President of the Treasury Board that the facts as stated by the hon. member are not correct. Generally, the answer to his question is that we reduced the growth of the public service this year, as well as last year, very near to zero. Those are the steps we are taking to make sure the public service is not increased in size.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I know that the Prime Minister is a busy man and perhaps he has not had an opportunity to look specifically at the thousands of letters and criticisms which have been received with respect to a number of departmental budgets where there have been significant cuts in programs. As recently as this week, the National Indian Brotherhood raised serious questions about basic services, fire protection services, education, hot lunch programs.

What steps are being taken to authorize a review of the procedures followed with respect to the preparation of this

Oral Questions

year's estimates which have had the effect of cutting important services to people, particularly those in disadvantaged groups or regions, while protecting—and in some cases enhancing—the amount of money made available to the federal bureaucracy?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, in times when the federal government is attempting to restrain the rate of growth of its bureaucracy and when federal budgetary expenditures are being restrained, it is obvious that in some areas of Canada the public will not have services growing at the rate they would like. This has to be accepted by the hon. member. His own party has been preaching—

An hon. Member: Deal with the question.

Mr. Trudeau:—government restraint. Obviously, government restraint means restraining government expenditures toward some people. In so far as the detail of each departmental expenditure is concerned, Mr. Speaker, the blue book is before the House; it can be discussed in standing committees of the House. That is why we adjusted the rules respecting that responsibility—

An hon. Member: When?

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. member opposite asks when it will be discussed. The government House leader will be happy to discuss with House leaders opposite when they want these estimates to go to the standing committee.

Mr. Clark: You don't understand that either.

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IMMIGRATION

GOVERNMENT ACTION TO PREVENT MARRIAGES OF CONVENIENCE

Mr. Jake Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. An internal, departmental memo originating in the Toronto immigration offices indicates that marriages of convenience are an ever-increasing concern to departmental officials, in that they only have the time and resources to investigate approximately 5 per cent of the total number of suspected marriages of convenience. The report goes on to say, and I quote, "that their work is largely an exercise in futility".

I would ask the minister if he is aware of this report and, more important, what steps has he taken to investigate this matter which, again in the words of the report, indicates that Canada's immigrants are largely being chosen by methods which involve extortion, blackmail, threat of physical violence and prostitution?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member says, I am much more concerned about marriages of convenience. This is something which presents extreme difficulty. Our immigration officers