

*Government Orders*

savings could save millions of dollars for the Canadian taxpayer.

Departmental contracting value for last year was in the order of \$7.8 billion. The handling of this large amount of tax dollars must be treated with great respect. We need to assure the public that everything is done out in the open with full disclosure of who is getting what and how much they are getting.

I wish to conclude by saying that I am personally committed to doing my share in influencing the way the government does its business. I want the people of Canada to know that in the Reform Party and hopefully among the other members of this House there are individuals who are deeply committed to doing this thing right. We want to treat the people with the respect they deserve. We want to stop overtaxing them. We want to serve them and we want to be good stewards of the money that they entrust to us.

I believe that the Canadian public is becoming more and more disillusioned with the concept that the government has to do everything for everyone. There are more and more people who simply want the government to back off and give them some freedom to make their own choices and manage their own affairs. They want government to do just the minimal things that it is not possible for them to do by themselves.

The days of thinking that nothing will get done unless the government controls and subsidizes or pays for it are over. The days are ending when everyone can use the government as a means of confiscating the dwindling available earnings of the average person to spend at will on whatever project seems to meet their fancy.

Henry Samtrooke said it well when he referred to the rapturous, wild and ineffable pleasure of drinking at somebody else's expense. In giving support in principle to Bill C-52, I hope that we are beginning to move in the right direction. We will be waiting with great interest to observe that this government takes it all the way. We want to see that the deficits are stopped before it's too late.

**Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works and Government Services):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be able to follow the two lead critics of the Bloc and the Reform Party with respect to this legislation because it gives me an opportunity to make a few comments, not in an unkind way but to make sure that we understand each other and that we are talking from the same base.

My colleague from the Reform is supporting this bill and I appreciate that. I think it is for many of the right reasons. I want to make sure it is understood that the decision to amalgamate government had been initiated by the previous government with the order in council process. We are undertaking today this legislation to affirm that we do have the powers that we thought we had.

• (1255)

It would not be fair to say that we had not done our job. We are in fact doing our job. I am not sure that is what he was suggesting.

I also want to point out that we are open to suggestions. My colleague mentioned that he wanted to make some suggestions. That is not a problem.

A comment was made regarding Canada Post and increased postal rates. My colleague will know that Canada Post had anticipated that. There was a request made of government and that request is being reviewed right now. My minister, the minister responsible for Canada Post, is particularly sensitive to what the impact might be on small and medium size businesses. He will analyse that with his colleagues and look at it very carefully before proceeding.

The third point that was made was with respect to the deficit and the debt. I want to remind my colleague that by the year 1998, if my memory serves me correctly, the anticipated savings with this legislation because of what will be done are in the neighbourhood of \$180 million and by the year 2000 up to \$1 billion. That is a lot of money and it is going in the direction I think he would like, perhaps not as quickly but certainly in the right direction on that particular issue.

[Translation]

The Bloc Quebecois member commented about government waste and abuse. He mentioned contracts for Quebec. In a calm and generous manner I simply ask him to prove what he is saying. Where is the proof? It is so easy to make accusations.

The member knows very well that we are now in the process of eliminating overlapping and duplication with this bill. If I remember correctly this is exactly what some of my colleagues from the Bloc are asking. I hope it is not only talk, that they really mean it because this bill is tackling the problem of overlapping and duplication.

I think the member also forgot to mention the large savings this will bring about: \$205 million by 1998, and one billion by the year 2000. I hope he will still be here, as well as myself, to see these savings come about.

A last comment, to be completely sure there is no misunderstanding. Unfortunately, the member gave the impression—he is not a bad man, maybe he was influenced by somebody else—that the government had been far from generous in the allocation of contracts to Quebec. As regards the whole question of access to government, openness and transparency for the government, the hon. member knows well that our open invitations to bid are very transparent and that we also have other systems. For the first time in a long while we have opened up the process. For the first time in a long while any Canadian throughout this vast country can obtain information on what the