

Government Orders

during his extensive pre-budget consultations with Canadians from all walks of life and from all regions of the country. While he heard many differing views on how best to meet the economic challenges faced by Canada, he heard one particular view over and over again. Put simply, it was that the structure of government did not yet reflect the realities of the new global economy.

We are reminded on a daily basis that the world economy has changed dramatically in the past decade, in particular accelerating technological advancements have extended competition beyond national boundaries. In the process international markets and customers we once considered secure are now up for grabs. To be competitive and preserve our markets, Canadian firms have had to be more efficient. They have had to face the challenge of cutting costs without sacrificing quality in order to provide superior goods and services at lower prices than our competitors.

Despite the hardships of an international economic slowdown, there are indications that Canadian businesses and their employees are succeeding. An array of recent statistics points to the fact that the international competitiveness of Canadian industry is on the rise. For example, the growth in unit labour costs in Canada has dropped from about 8 per cent in early 1991 to 1.5 per cent in the first half of this year. Only the U.S. has a better 1992 record among the G-7 countries. Not coincidentally, Canadian exports rose 9.5 per cent in the first half, reaching a record of \$13 billion in August. Certainly in my constituency I can confirm that businesses are saying it is still continuing so there is good news there.

However, the need to restructure to increase our international competitiveness is not exclusive to the private sector. Government must also become leaner, more efficient and more productive. Where services are duplicated they must be merged. Where programs are obsolete they must be eliminated. Where savings can be achieved, particularly in administrative overhead, they must be realised.

In effect, governments must continue to serve their constituents effectively but they must do so with less resources. In so doing, governments will be taking the kind of actions that the private sector is having to take and has been taking for quite some time. They will

demonstrate to Canadians that they are not insulated from the real world and that they are responding to the same competitive pressures that are buffeting the private sector.

On a practical level, reducing expenditures will help to control the deficit and the national debt which in turn will lead to lower interest rates and a reduced tax burden for Canadians and Canadian businesses.

We on this side of the House have worked to reduce the size and cost of the federal government. We have restrained federal spending, including public sector wages. On Wednesday of this week there were some additional actions announced that were most important in that direction. We have implemented the Spending Control Act and the Debt Servicing and Reduction Account to ensure that fiscal responsibility is a matter of law. By privatizing over 20 Crown corporations we have reduced the public payroll by some 50,000 employees.

Nevertheless we realize, as do Canadians, that the task of streamlining the federal government and making it more efficient is not yet complete. Bill C-93 is another step in that direction.

The budget implementation government organizations bill is the second of a series of omnibus bills designed to give effect to the government's streamlining measures announced in the 1992 budget. The purpose of the bill is to reduce government overhead and to provide services to Canadians more efficiently.

• (1040)

The bill includes the necessary amendments required to give full effect to the budget decisions affecting 15 different organizations. I want to consider now the specific organizations addressed in Bill C-93.

I would note that any public servants affected by the reorganizations in this bill will be covered by the government's work force adjustment policy. The policy provides for notice of layoff, opportunities for alternative employment and arrangements for termination of employment.

The legislation provides for the winding up of the Agricultural Products Board. Over the years the board has provided an important service in stabilizing markets for agricultural commodities. However, the function can be exercised more efficiently on the basis of an amended