

Routine Proceedings

The government of the day was digging a hole which was ever deeper and ever more difficult for future governments to repair, one that was saddling future generations of Canadians with crippling debt.

There is no more telling evidence of the progress this government has made than the way in which we have turned that operating balance. We have gone from an operating deficit of \$15.9 billion to a surplus this year of \$9 billion. In 1991, we expect that operating surplus to grow to \$12.6 billion, a turnaround since 1984 of \$28.5 billion.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, we are keeping our promise to improve the way the machinery of government is managed. These improvements do not make headlines but they result in large savings for Canadians. You will find the highlights in Part I of the Estimates and I trust that all hon. members will take the time to read the document because it gives evidence of evidence of better, more efficient management.

We have implemented better cash flow management methods. These alone have saved Canadian taxpayers more than \$900 million since 1985.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. de Cotret: We have adopted a better way to manage the government's real estate holdings.

Since 1985, sales of surplus properties have yielded \$400 million, generating revenues of \$200 million and resulting in more productive use of real estate worth an additional \$200 million. This is due to joint projects with the private sector and other governments.

The cost recovery program that we instituted contributes to greater revenue equity. We wanted users and other direct beneficiaries of government services to pay their share of the costs involved in these services.

Revenues from cost recovery should amount to \$3 billion in 1990-91, almost twice the \$1.6 billion they were in 1984-85.

We also sold all or part of 18 Crown corporations which more appropriately belong in the private sector. Since 1984, the personnel of Crown corporations has

decreased by 75,000 as a result of privatization, productivity gains and rationalization of operations.

The government will sell its share in Telesat, will privatize Nordion and Theratronics and has also decided to offer the general public direct ownership in Petro-Canada. Furthermore, profitable Crown corporations such as the Canada Ports Corporation, Canada Post, Canadian National Railways and the Royal Canadian Mint will contribute to deficit reduction by paying dividends.

Our new method of management has enabled us to reduce departmental overhead expenses, cut down on paperwork and benefit from technological progress. We have also considerably reduced the number of regulations approved by the government in recent years.

[*English*]

I would be remiss if I did not take this occasion to comment in greater detail on managing the federal Public Service.

This federal government is no different than many other organizations in the world. We have challenged our Public Service managers to do more with less, with less money, with fewer people but with more responsibilities. I can assure this House that the management challenge is in fact being met. Let me put on record this government's performance.

We have worked to keep Public Service salaries from setting inflationary trends in the nation.

Since 1984, we have negotiated collective agreements that are fair to employees and responsible to taxpayers. Those agreements have been below private sector settlements, below, and in some case well below, provincial settlements, and below the rate of inflation.

Also, we have reduced the size of the Public Service. Since 1985, we have removed 23,542 person-years from departmental authority levels. To meet new priorities and to make sure that health, safety and security were not compromised, we have provided for some 11,000 person-years. The net result is that the Public Service is now 12,377 person-years smaller than it was in 1985-86. In fact, it is now the smallest it has been since 1973.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!