

*Refitting of HMCS "Bonaventure"*

In the field of personnel management we have innovated even more. We have introduced collective bargaining into the public service on a massive scale, giving to public servants in one fell swoop the rights and privileges enjoyed by other workers across Canada. We have revolutionized the classification system. To give one index of the scale of the change and of the simplification, we have reduced the number of position classes from 200 to just under 70. We—here I mean the Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission together—have introduced new programs for the development of personnel, including the training of developing executives, the career assignment program, language training and programs for educational leave; and we currently are engaged in developing a program for the interchange of personnel between governments and between government and industry.

In the field of administrative transactions, as in the field of organization, we are similarly seeking to substitute the evaluation of departmental performance for its regulation. By administrative transactions I mean the inputs into administration—accommodation, contracts for construction and services, travel, the acquisition of materials and supplies, and the system for accounting for all these public expenditures. If we are able to establish norms or standards by which departments ought to be guided in their administrative transactions, and if we are able to develop along the department's techniques for evaluating performance against these norms, we will have found a substitute for the regulations of the past. I might tell hon. members in passing that I am just now in the process of establishing a special administrative policy branch in the Treasury Board secretariat for the purpose of speeding up these developments.

I have spoken so far of the principal elements of administration—organization, staffing and the other administrative inputs. Over and above all this is the evaluation of administrative efficiency generally. Here again the Treasury Board is seeking to develop new approaches and new techniques. In a few pilot projects we are identifying units of output and then measuring the cost of producing these outputs, both over time and as between administrative units. I would not pretend that these have progressed as far as we would like, but I do know that we are advancing with energy and enthusiasm.

Finally, let me say something about the changes we have introduced in our approach to planning and budgeting. In our work in this field we have been guided by the proposition that an expenditure budget is nothing more or less than a bundle of programs and a bundle of administration for executing those programs. If we have the best combination of programs for achieving the government's goals, and the most efficient administration for executing the programs, we will have given the taxpayer the best return for his dollar.

The job of reviewing programs and administration must be done, of course, both by the government and by this House. It can only be done in the light of the objectives of the government. It is for this reason that our first reforms were to introduce a more meaningful classification of expenditures in the estimates and to incorporate into the estimates statements of objectives. Then, to ensure that this chamber would be better able to examine the expenditures budget, the government proposed referring the departmental estimates in every case to a Standing Committee equipped by its nature to examine these estimates in detail.

These were our first steps. Our next ones were designed to improve the reviews within the government of the efficiency and effectiveness of public expenditures. This is not something that is achieved in the short span of weeks during which expenditure budgets are produced. In that interval we are seeking to achieve more limited objectives, to review our programs with a view to ensuring that there are sufficient resources available to accomplish high priority objectives even if this means eliminating some of the low priority programs. We also endeavour to make sure that only those resources which are essential to the implementation of the government's programs are allocated to departments.

We have been prepared to be rigorous in our allocation of resources to ongoing programs, as hon. members discovered last year when we cut both expenditures and the numbers of civil servants. Our rigour was such, indeed, that the opposition complained that we were harsh and heartless. Put rather blandly, hon. members opposite have not always supported our efforts to protect the taxpayers of Canada.

The evaluation of the highest and the lowest priorities and the annual allocation of resources does not, however, complete the