

*Supply*

The government believes that an innovative, competent and dedicated Public Service is a key asset in supporting Canada's economic competitiveness. Canada has a world class and high quality Public Service that is being saluted during "National Public Service: Serving Canadians Better" week.

This special week is being celebrated for the first time this week as a result of Parliament passing a private member's bill on June 4. This new national week will enable all Canadians to acknowledge the thousands of conscientious and responsible Public Service employees who are working to serve the public wherever Canadians are, in major centres and in smaller communities across the country, and from missions abroad.

The government is also decentralizing decision-making. We are changing what we ask of our program managers. Rather than directing them to follow rules we are asking them to focus their energies on serving their clients. We are making sure that public servants get adequate training to meet the demands of increasingly complex jobs. We are empowering them to make decisions and to be responsible for those decisions. We are holding them accountable for achieving results.

Many of our recent initiatives are the result of the major renewal exercise that the Prime Minister announced in December 1989, Public Service 2000. For the taxpayer and the client Public Service 2000 means that more tax dollars are being devoted to service delivery and less to internal administration.

Administrative decision-making is being decentralized. Program managers are challenged to focus their energies on serving their clients. They are being held accountable for the results and the bottom line of their programs, and training is crucial to making this all work. Public servants are being empowered to make their own decisions and to be responsible for them.

Central agencies are reducing and streamlining demands made on the departments. Internal administrative processes are being reduced and very much simplified. Investments are being made in people and in new technologies. Investment in information management is being undertaken to make it easier for clients to conduct transactions with the government and to reduce costs, red tape and paper.

Operating budgets covering salaries, operations, maintenance, and minor capital are being established. They give managers flexibility in deciding how best to spend their resources in order to maximize the results. They hold a promise of increased management efficiency, increased adaptability to changing client needs, and increased accountability for the use of the tax dollar.

Commencing April 1, 1992, a number of departments and agencies began operating budgets on a department-wide basis as pilot projects.

The way government has transitioned and transitionally been organized has not always been conducive to clients' receiving simple, easy, and accessible service. At present there are thousands of different points of service delivery across Canada; a reflection in part of the expanse of this country and its dispersed population.

However, it can be confusing and very frustrating to Canadians to have to speak to several people from several departments on a pension matter, for example. A number of measures announced in the budget will help change the way in which services are provided.

Departments will be moving to adopt more flexible hours and to work together toward the development of single-point access to clusters of government services. In the larger urban centres, departments providing similar services will look for opportunities to collate service delivery.

In the smaller communities, existing offices of one department will serve as the service delivery point for several departments, responsible for dispensing basic information on programs and services and providing forms. This process has already begun using the Canada Employment Centres as service delivery points for other government departments.

Representatives from these departments will link with Canada Employment and Immigration to establish the exact way in which the employment centres can be used to provide residents of these communities with direct access to a fuller range of services.

The new concept of special operating agencies was introduced in December 1989. This structure gives managers the wherewithal to run their organization more like a business, with greater focus on results and the bottom line.