

Victoria is extremely important. However, it was raised today during Oral Question Period, and for the time being, as far as today is concerned, the Chair does not feel this question is so urgent it should be debated immediately.

I therefore repeat: Although the question is important, it is not as urgent today as the hon. member for Victoria would have us believe.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

Hon. Gilles Loiselle (President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)) moved that Bill C-91, an act to amend the Financial Administration Act and other acts in consequence thereof, be read a second time and referred to a legislative committee.

He said: On November 1, Bill C-91, an act to amend the Financial Administration Act and other acts in consequence thereof was introduced in the House. The amendments this bill proposed for consideration by the House are largely technical in nature. I do not anticipate that the hon. member will find much with which to take issue in this bill.

In leading off debate, I would like first to describe the government's purpose in proposing these amendments to the House, and then describe the most significant of them in further detail so that hon. members can appreciate their significance and understand why they make sense and why they should be passed as quickly as possible.

• (1530)

This bill amends some 70 sections of the Financial Administration Act. The bill has been drawn together after considerable thought and a lengthy consultation process into a package of amendments designed to do a number of things.

First, they would improve the management of the federal government's cash inflows and outflows. They would streamline internal administrative processes that have tied the hands of our management in the past. They would clarify roles, responsibilities and authorities so that accountability is increased and uncertainty is decreased.

Government Orders

They would increase the efficiency with which government programs and services are administered. They would permit Public Service employees and managers to offer better service to the public by cutting red tape and giving more flexibility to fund delivery of services.

Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the government's aim in coming forward with these amendments is to prepare the federal government's financial administration practice for the increasingly complex and competitive 1990s and beyond.

An hon. member: And the GST.

Mr. Loiselle: Mr. Speaker, the government must remain competitive with advances being made in the private sector. It must be prepared to cut its costs of operation further and to work more efficiency. It must measure up to the increasingly demanding expectations of Parliament, the Public Accounts committee, the Auditor General, and all taxpayers.

Bill C-91 contains some amendments designed specifically to help our program managers achieve some of the spending cuts and management improvement that were contained in the December 15, 1989 announcement and to open up new opportunities to save money in the future when it is appropriate to do so along the same lines.

By permitting the introduction of new efficiencies, these amendments would make a significant contribution to deficit reduction which will benefit all constituents. At the same time, they would improve the consistency and fairness with which the government's user fees are applied, which I am confident is important to all members.

[Translation]

Bill C-91 also supports the goals and general direction of the government's ongoing Public Service 2000 initiative.

Mr. Speaker, Members of this House are aware that Public Service 2000 aims to cut back on red tape and internal constraints that have long impaired the efforts by Public Service managers to improve program efficiency. "Constraints to productive management", as the Auditor General has referred to them in the past, have prevented many government departments from becoming what he referred to more recently as "well-performing organizations".

They have also resulted in low morale among government managers and employees who seek only to serve the public in the best way they know how.