

Supply

It has taken 45 people out of program administration, where the average salary is \$41,000. Yet when we move up into the area of economic, sociology, and statistics, where the average salary is over \$57,000, we see an increase in numbers. When we take a look at the executive category, where the average salary is \$79,000, again we see an increase in numbers.

These are the types of things we questioned in committee. Yet what did we find? Stonewall. It cannot be changed. Why? I do not know why. I ask the government why.

When we take a look at page 258, on goods and services, again we find that comparing the actual 1993-94, where the spending was \$264.097 million, it has gone up to \$319.997 million, an increase of about \$55 million. We ask why. We get the answer from the witnesses and the senior bureaucrats who have come before our committee. We make recommendations. Is this justified? Can that be justified? Is there a good reason for these increases? When we find there is not and we make the recommendations for the cuts, what do we find? They stonewall.

That is why we feel a mockery is made out of the estimates process. That is why this Liberal government, with its commitments to good government, transparency, responsibility, open government, and a clear way to manage this country, has fallen far short of its responsibilities. Its broken promises litter the floor with the way it has taken every promise in the red book, ignored them, and passed them over in favour of what the government would consider pragmatic government.

We are looking for responsible government. We are looking for principled government where the government lives up to what it promises. That surely is not too much to ask. That is why we are saying confidence on the estimates must go. If the government feels threatened by a defeat on any particular motion then let it be followed by a motion of non-confidence. If it survives that non-confidence, then there is no threat.

• (1630)

If we could introduce that as a matter of policy then the opposition and the government could work together to ensure that the Canadian taxpayer gets value for money on the \$165 billion that we spend on their behalf. This is what we are asking for and it is what Canadians expect.

Mr. Mac Harb (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat surprised to hear the hon. member attacking the public service of Canada when we know we have one of the finest public services in the world. I do not think taking a cheap shot at them was really called for in terms of what they are contributing or what they earn.

I will quickly move on to make the point that this government did something that was unprecedented when it opened up the process. It is the first time in the history of this country that a government has done a preconsultation on the budget.

I was elected on a set of promises that my party made during the last election. When I run I run as a member of the Liberal Party. To that extent, my responsibility is to vote with the party at least on the issues my party ran on during the election. For me to do otherwise is unfair.

At the same time, I have mixed feelings about having this open for every member of Parliament to vote the way he or she likes. If we are going to do that, then the government no matter which party it is in the future, will have to spend the vast majority of its time lobbying individual members of Parliament so they will vote for it. The reality is that the responsibility of a government is to carry through on what it promises the people during an election period.

How many times has the hon. member stood and voted against his party? During this past one and a half years we have seen the Reform Party day in and day out voting as a block. I am not saying that is wrong, but how often has the hon. member voted independently?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Speaker, first, I did not take any cheap shots at the civil service. I just mentioned the pay scales. I pointed out that the government seemed to be protecting those at the top while cutting those at the bottom which I do not think is fair.

I want to respond to the hon. member's main point where he said that he felt his job as a member of Parliament was to stand by the platform on which he was elected. On page 20 of the red book, the Liberals promised to reduce the professional and special services budget of the government by 15 per cent. He may read this on page 20 of the red book if he has not read it already. I presume he has not since he is standing here today saying he stands by the policies he ran on at election time.

The professional and special services budget has increased by \$136 million. If the member is going to say that he stands by the platform on which he was elected, he will vote against the motion that approves this \$136 million because two seconds ago he said it was the platform by which he sits on that side of the House.

The whole thing we are trying to point out is that Liberal broken promises are littered all over the floor. This is another one which was just repeated by the member over there.

My final point is that on several occasions members of the Reform Party have voted against the block of the Reform Party which totally defeats the point he made earlier on.

Mr. Strahl: Without any disciplinary measures.