

The Economy

At the same time as those tremendous increases at the top have occurred, there has been a steady, continuous increase in the hiring of temporary employees for relatively unskilled jobs. I am referring to secretarial help, filing clerks and so on. Also at the same time there was an explosion in the number of contracts which have been let for studies by various departments into present and future governmental policies, and examination of administration or internal operations.

The amount of money allocated for contracts has increased continuously. I should like to compare 1973 with 1974. During those two years in the Department of Agriculture there was a 131 per cent increase in the amount of money allocated for contracts; in the Department of Fisheries and the Environment there was a 104 per cent increase; and in the Department of National Health and Welfare there was a 179 per cent increase. Those examples indicate that the increases amounted to over 100 per cent in those years.

Also I have figures for term, casual and other temporary employees for the years 1971 to 1975. It is not a complete list, because it is difficult to get one. Over those four years there has been an increase of 133 per cent.

Government has permitted senior level bureaucrats to grow at an unprecedented and unwarranted rate. We have been told that has stopped, which is the case every year, and usually we find the government has found a way around the so-called freeze, and is spending more money and hiring more people. My party is suspicious of what has happened.

I should like to return to the motion we are debating today. The principles of the motion cannot be accepted. The concept that the percentage of the gross national product, which is now devoted to providing services by the three levels of government, can be sharply cut back cannot be accepted, particularly at a time when the private sector is not operating at full capacity. It would be a disaster for the three levels of government to cut back sharply. That would not be productive. In fact, it would simply increase the percentage of unemployed Canadians, which is much greater than it ought to be at the present time. Because that is the situation, the New Democratic Party cannot support the motion proposed by the hon. Leader of the Official Opposition. We propose to vote against it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat surprised when I read the motion introduced by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Clark).

At last the Progressive Conservatives realize that the government administration has complicated matters but as the spokesman for the New Democratic Party stated a while ago, they have yet to see that when they were in power they operated exactly as the Liberals do right now.

Generally speaking, the motion advocates setting up a committee to consider the possibility of putting an end to government intervention in certain areas, a curb on the excessive use of regulations under legislation introduced in the House and

the removal of some government agencies to improve the planning of the budget. On the whole, those are wise suggestions. However one must realize that the government administration is inefficient.

● (1612)

Not long ago we were discussing the problem in the Post Office and the increase in the cost of postal services in Canada. Recently the Prime Minister said that Canadians might very well have to get used to not having their mail delivered at home. In other areas, in growing municipalities, they say they can no longer afford home delivery of mail. We have come to the point where we can see multiple mail boxes installed on the street corners downtown. The Post Office gives half the services it used to give three or four years ago and we have to pay three times as much as we used to. Things have gone down to the point where it is impossible to know when a letter will be received. The service stinks and that is due to a large extent to the increase in the number of public servants, to the increase in the handling process. That is what makes the costs double or triple. And then we are told that we are going to keep on paying without getting our money's worth in service and even that the services we were used to will be cut down.

The Post Office is just one area. For instance they mentioned Air Canada, the so-called unity crisis, the east-west confrontation, and we realize that this government agency cannot provide adequate service to the Canadian public. I have just returned from a trip to western Canada and Quebec. When I fly to Vancouver I pay as much as I would to go and bask in the sun down south or in the Caribbeans, where a company systematically refuses to give Canada any publicity, exaggerates costs and provides to its customers a deplorable service which is not in line with the price of the ticket. Bureaucracy is on the rise again.

Remedies exist. I could mention the fact that we had to fight to obtain at least two official languages spoken on board Air Canada planes. I could even fly from Vancouver to Edmonton where people were served in two languages, either English or German, but not French. That is the approach taken by Air Canada, a corporation which is unable to provide the service we are paying for, which ought to be able, with the assistance of the government, to provide a service superior to that of any other airline, but which just simply cannot. I was dealing this afternoon with a matter which again demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the government, and on two occasions the Chair had to urge me to put my question, for there are cases which date back to 1970-72 when agreements were signed by the government.

The matter I raised this afternoon during the question period was related to the post office in Rouyn where it had been agreed in 1972 to start the construction of a new federal building in the riding of Témiscamingue, and indeed funds of \$200,000, \$250,000 and \$300,000 had been allocated for three consecutive years; but after those funds have been spent, we hear in 1978 that they are not going ahead with that building, that it has to be delayed for a year supposedly, as they say in