

*Federal-Provincial Relations*

What I am trying to say is that these matters have to be decided on the basis of political discussion between the federal and provincial governments. I do not believe an office in Ottawa for federal-provincial relations will either solve or hinder a solution to the problems. If the federal government would try to co-operate with the provinces, rather than trying to follow what can only be described as a system of confrontation, we would be much further ahead in reaching an agreement acceptable to both the federal and provincial governments. I am not as convinced as the Prime Minister that we need this position.

Before resuming my seat, I wish to raise a matter which I think is important. This proposal is simply one small illustration of it. I refer to the tremendous proliferation which has taken place in the number of senior civil servants employed by the federal government. On December 9 a reply was tabled, in response to a question I placed on the order paper almost on the day this parliament met. My question asked:

● (1600)

By department, what was the increase in the number of senior officers, SX 1, SX 2, SX 3, SX 4, for each year from 1968 to 1973, or in the case of new departments, commissions, agencies, etc. from their inception to 1973?

Although I have some idea of what has taken place, I can only say that the answer shocked me. I quote:

The increase in the number of senior SX officers for each year from 1968 to 1973 for all departments and agencies of the public service was as follows: in 1968 there were 381 senior SX officers. This total rose . . . to 895 in 1973.

That represents an increase of almost 150 per cent in just five years. In the last half hour I tried to obtain information about the salary ranges, but without success. However, one of the hon. members from the Toronto area asked a question which was answered a few days ago. It was question 718, and hon. members can find the answer at page 2048 of *Hansard*. He asked:

In 1973, how many public servants earned gross remuneration in excess of \$30,000, \$36,000 and \$40,000, and in each case what was the aggregate amount paid to them?

The answer was as follows:

In 1973, 873 public servants received salaries in the range \$30,000 to \$35,999 for an aggregate of \$27,981,071; 308 public servants received salaries in the range \$36,000 to \$39,999 for an aggregate of \$11,667,894, and 86 received salaries of \$40,000 and over for an aggregate of \$3,776,364.

I am not one who believes that any employer, certainly not the federal government, should underpay any of its employees, but I want to say, speaking for myself and, I believe, for all members of our party, that we are of the opinion that a very hard look needs to be given to this increase, amounting to almost 150 per cent in the last five years, in the number of senior civil servants in the executive class, people who, I am sure, are getting more than \$25,000 a year.

We believe the government needs to provide people with the services they require. We believe in having an efficient public service and in paying public servants adequate salaries. But we do not believe it was really necessary to expand the ranks of the senior civil service from 381 to 895 in five years.

[Mr. Orlikow.]

I want to say, too, to the Prime Minister and to members of the government that, while we have never preached restraint as a solution to Canada's economic problems, it is long past the time when the government ought to show restraint in the appointment of senior civil servants at what we consider to be salaries which are very high and, in some cases, too high. Having said this, I must add that we do not intend to vote against the bill or to hold up this debate at any great length. We shall reserve our final decision until the committee has had an opportunity to discuss this question in detail.

[Translation]

**Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to say a few words on Bill C-38. The purpose of the bill is merely to create the position of secretary to the Prime Minister's office.

Madam Speaker, I am somewhat surprised by that bill and I wonder if its main purpose is not to create another position at the Prime Minister's office who has increased the positions from the start while he said at the beginning of his term that he would try to reduce bureaucracy in Parliament. I think that we cannot congratulate him in that respect. Most people would say that there are too many public servants in Ottawa. I do not object to efficient public servants nor to a certain number of them, but when they are too many, Madam Speaker, one has to protest. It is like a merchant looking after his business. If he needs twenty employees, but hires forty, he will be told that there is something wrong. We also need 500,000 public servants. We have 800,000. There is something wrong which some have pointed out before me: it is the duplication of positions throughout the country as a result of that so-called profitable federalism which has been praised for many years.

● (1610)

The taxation powers the federal government acquired with the consent of the provinces allowed it to do what it is doing now, creating this government that I call a government of technocrats. That is the kind of federalism we have now.

With its tremendous taxation power the government interferes in all areas of exclusively provincial jurisdiction and while all this is taking place the provinces are crying that they want their taxation powers back. And here we are keeping still with all the money that can be collected in the form of taxes saying, we are keeping our taxation power to make a more equitable redistribution across the country, to help the underdeveloped areas and give all Canadians a chance to share in the wealth of this country.

I do not suggest that the intentions are bad, because they are very good, but the actions in general are bad because there is a realization that the government starts by paying itself well off before thinking about poorer provinces. Before thinking about redistributing we kept everything we needed here, then we used our spending powers before letting the provinces have the crumbs. The provinces are crying, and rightly so, although they too have their faults.