

### *Sunset Laws*

3. An ineffectiveness of the decision-package ranking approach to meet changes in the level of funding.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there is the implementation problem. This kind of legislation cannot be introduced overnight and the introduction process presents serious problems.

Senator Muskie, who proposed a sunset law in the United States, is quoted as saying that "pilot testing would inevitably require selecting out certain programs or agencies for the initial trial runs." This, Muskie believes, "would jeopardize the principle of neutrality, thereby conceivably making the process politically unworkable."

As hon. members know, this whole subject of sunset and similar legislation is being examined by the Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability. The government will examine closely the findings of that commission and consider carefully any recommendations that may be forthcoming.

I can assure hon. members, however, that this government is too concerned about expenditures and program effectiveness to sit on its collective hands, waiting for a commission report. Many initiatives have already been taken to meet the kind of objectives I believe the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall) had in mind when he proposed this legislation. The roles of the Auditor General and the Comptroller General have been defined to ensure a measure of cost-effectiveness adjudication.

Performance measurement would quickly identify programs where the original goals were no longer being met. In the 1977 annual report on this continuing program it was stated that for project-type activities, the following certain basic steps are important:

- the establishment of objectives for the project and for each component;
- the selection of projects to be undertaken in light of priorities, objectives and available resources;
- the development of plans and cost estimates for each project;
- the establishment of suitable means for regularly monitoring performance in key areas such as actual-to-estimated costs, actual-to-estimated schedule of completions and actual-to-planned results for each project;
- the review or evaluation of results after each project is completed.

That 1977 report goes on as follows:

It is essential that performance measurement be considered an inherent and indispensable part of the program management process, since it provides the feedback that all managers need to control program operations and to render a proper accounting for the public funds entrusted to them.

The regular monitoring of the ongoing performance of programs is an essential element in the government management process, but it is not the whole story. It is necessary to subject programs to periodic, objective evaluations with a view to:

- changing and improving the ways in which programs are operated;
- clarifying program objectives;
- reducing or eliminating programs, or aspects of programs, which have become redundant or of a low priority;
- identifying programs, or aspects of programs, which may have increased in relative priority.

● (1640)

Treasury Board has recently approved a policy requiring departments and agencies to conduct such evaluation of programs, with the results to be com-  
[Mr. Béchard.]

municated directly to deputy heads of departments and heads of agencies and other appropriate levels of management.

In addition, the Treasury Board secretariat is actively encouraging departments to undertake A-Base reviews. These are internal reviews of the basic programs. The advantage of this system is that it is flexible and selective, overcoming the very serious problem of universality. This program does not, at the present time, provide for any parliamentary involvement but it does indicate the high priority given by the government to evaluation of its programs.

There are plans under way, as was indicated in the recent Speech from the Throne, for parliamentary involvement in program reviews. The government committed itself to providing members with an opportunity to become directly involved in the review process. Naturally, any review—and this includes sunset legislation—of federal programs would be restricted to those over which the federal government has total and exclusive control.

When you are examining federal government expenditures it must be recognized that only \$14.3 billion spending estimates of \$48.3 billion for 1978-79 are for the direct operations of the federal government. The biggest part of total spending—well over \$20 billion—is in transfer payments to individuals and the provinces. Sunset legislation as now proposed could not touch these programs that cross jurisdictional boundaries. That would immediately diffuse any effectiveness that it may have had to offer.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, the government does have control mechanisms in place. It is awaiting additional information and recommendations from a royal commission. Sunset legislation hasn't been an unqualified success in other jurisdictions. For all these reasons, and more, I cannot support this legislation.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

**Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek the consent of the House to go back to that portion of the daily routine of business dealing with introduction of bills, and to seek the consent of the House to waive the required notice so that I can have introduced a bill to conserve the supplies of energy within Canada during periods of national emergency caused by shortages or market disturbances affecting the national security and welfare and the economic stability of Canada.

**Mr. Steven E. Paproski (Edmonton Centre):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. We have been patiently waiting for the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen) to bring in this bill.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** So have we, Mr. Speaker. We are happy to consent to the introduction and