

Total government spending for last year will be around \$33 billion; almost 40 per cent of the gross national product. The question is, can the country afford this kind of extravagance at the present time? Considering the economic problems we face, I do not believe that we can.

Of this spending, approximately one half cannot be touched by parliament as it is in the form of statutory estimates which can be examined, but not reduced, by the House of Commons. Members of parliament, when asked to approve the estimates, do not receive government proposals in the form of meaningful programs in which objectives are outlined and justified on the basis of factual data. Because of rule changes in 1968-69, the estimates cannot be debated in detail but must be passed by a definite fixed date. These rule changes effectively curtailed the ability of parliament to hold effective reins on supply.

The result is that members of parliament must now spend long hours just trying to understand the format of the Blue Book estimates. Increasingly, moneys are concealed in the estimates and hidden in votes. The designation of votes which are hidden because of alleged security reasons is being used more and more often.

In the six short years of the reign of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), from 1968 to 1974, the numbers on the federal payroll increased by a staggering 27 per cent, a record rate of growth in the history of Canada. The government most certainly does need a watchdog. Let us check, too, just what the national position is today in regard to federal civil servants.

In 1946, just after the war, there were 31,088 permanent federal civil servants to minister to a population of 12,500,000, or 403 people per government employee. The cost in salaries annually was \$66,440,000, or \$5.30 per Canadian. In December of 1973, 27 years later, the number of federal civil servants had risen to 254,610, a ratio of one civil servant for 87 Canadians, and the cost had risen to the astronomical height of \$2,557 million. That works out to a \$115 tag for administration services for each of us.

This does not include the additional employees, numbering some 143,600, in Crown agencies such as the Canadian National Railway and Air Canada.

Neither do these figures include a temporary staff of 35,400. Regardless of its alleged philosophy to the contrary, it is abundantly clear that the Liberal party is involving the government more and more in practically every aspect of the lives of Canadians; nor is there the slightest shred of evidence that would indicate that it intends to reduce this involvement.

What this means is that at the rate of civil service growth which we have experienced over the past, in another 27 years, under Liberal guidance, by the year 2000 there will be 2,820,700 civil servants burrowing into every facet of our lives, while it will be costing us \$2,645 each for this service.

The most flagrant example of this in government ranks can be seen in the office of the Prime Minister himself. Indeed, in the years up to 1974, the total number of staff, personal assistants and advisers, has risen to 100 odd. Why then does the Prime Minister need a cabinet? The answer, of course, is that he does not. In effect then, we have a similar system to that of a president of the United States with all its abuses, but without the check of a congression-

Canadian Economy

al system. And our Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) stated that growth in government expenditure should be restrained.

Agriculture is a department which can very well illustrate the escalation of the numbers game. In 1946 there were 1,800 full-time employees of that department, which meant that the ratio was one federal employee to administer to the needs and requests of every 104 farmers. By 1973 that ratio had narrowed to one staff member per 24 farmers. At this rate, by the year 1984, there will be more bureaucrats in the agricultural field than there will be farmers.

With this vast body of employees engaged in the welfare of the farmer, who foresaw and planned for the drastic state that the industry is in now? Who worried then, and who is worrying now about the financial losses and anxiety that the farmer is enduring today? Agriculture cannot be viewed as a number of separate entities. It is a complete package, but a package with many components. The beef industry cannot be separated from the grain industry as each is woven into that of the other. A sound policy for administering the needs of the one must take into account the requirements of the other for the betterment of the whole.

Agriculture is not one of our more important industries; it is the most important. This fact was ably pointed out by the member for Battle River (Mr. Malone) in the House a short time ago, but as our most important industry, agriculture is not getting the priority it merits. Why are the farmers not more actively involved in working out improvements in their own industry? Rather than increase and improve some of the agricultural products in our country, the government has actually tried to restrict their production. As the welfare of agriculture depends on the efficient movement of grain, animals, and machinery, it is imperative that a viable transportation policy be developed.

Let us now examine just what the government has done to assist small business in this country. At the present time small Canadian businesses are caught in a cost-price squeeze. The Canadian Federation of Independent Businessmen has found that the small businessman is having to pay higher costs for his goods, and is forced into selling them at a higher price. In spite of this higher selling price and an increase in volume sales, only about one third of the businessmen have experienced higher profits.

As small business generates more employment, more real growth, and more tax revenue than does big business in Canada, it is time that the government realized that a comprehensive policy must include measures to stimulate small-business activity.

The massive amounts of money that are spent today on the unemployment insurance program are something that bears careful scrutiny also. An inquiry into its operation is definitely necessary—a public inquiry, not a witch-hunt, to get at the root problems of this debacle. Practical, sound solutions must be found to the fundamental questions which are arising from the mismanagement of the Unemployment Insurance Commission. Disincentives to work are built into the act and something must be done to eradicate them. It is most important to make a distinction between an insurance program and a welfare plan in which the contributions are merely another form of taxation.