

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I must inform the government whip that I do not believe that is a point of order. Certainly as we all know there is representation from the various official parties.

**Mr. Williams:** Mr. Speaker, my point is that our representative on the board has assured us of these savings. The cuts are effective for this particular year. Therefore we are asking the House to recognize the savings and amend the estimates accordingly.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona):** Mr. Speaker, I have just a quick comment that has more to do with the member's remarks on the question of party discipline and the question of confidence.

I would like to say to him as a member of the Reform Party that members of the Reform caucus should be careful not to think that this kind of debate about free votes, party discipline and the confidence convention came to the House with them.

I recommend the member read the McGrath committee report on parliamentary reform tabled in the House in 1985. It was an all-party report, headed by Jim McGrath, a former long time Conservative member and then lieutenant-governor of Newfoundland. I was a member of that committee in which it was said that the Canadian parliamentary system was far too dominated by party discipline, that there needed to be a broader range of issues on which members of all parties felt free to vote as individuals rather than as party members.

I made my first speech calling for more free votes in the House in 1981. By way of advocating a little humility, I just say there were people advocating this kind of flexibility in the House of Commons before those guys came along. If the member wants to read the McGrath report, I would recommend it to him.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** I regret the member's time for questions and comments has elapsed.

**Ms. Marlene Catterall (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure today to speak about the main estimates for budget year 1994-95.

These estimates represent the fulfilment of the government's commitments to Canadians. They also represent a balanced approach to promoting economic growth in jobs while taking steps to reduce the deficit.

These estimates reflect the fact that there are no quick and easy solutions to the financial issues which confront Canada. It is essential that Canadians understand this in order that they may be able to make with us the difficult choices which lie ahead. I am therefore pleased to have the opportunity to talk about some of the highlights and significance of these estimates.

### Supply

First it is important to set these estimates in the context of the government's fiscal plan. When the minister tabled his budget in February of this year he said that it represented the first stage of a two-stage budget. That budget has set the country on the road to economic recovery, but there is still a great deal of work now being done to prepare for the second stage of the budget.

As we promised, the government has launched a number of initiatives and reviews which will enable us to accelerate our progress down that road to economic recovery.

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It is important that the government take action but it is also important that the government take the time to take the right action.

[Translation]

For example, the President of the Queen's Privy Council and Minister responsible for Public Service Renewal is reviewing the programs of every department. He is also reviewing the structure of every commission and federal organization. Moreover, he is co-operating with the provinces to find ways to reduce overlapping and duplication. These measures will ensure more efficient and affordable government services to Canadians.

As for the Minister of Human Resources Development, he is currently conducting the most comprehensive review of the social security system in Canada since that program was put in place. It should be clear to everyone that the government intends to do what is necessary, and to do it in a responsible way, from a financial point of view. The results of these reviews and other initiatives will be made public as early as this fall, so that they can be discussed in the most open budget process ever put in place by a government.

Canadians will have a say in the critical decisions which will have to be made. At that point, we will have reached the second stage of the budget.

[English]

As the President of the Treasury Board said in the House when the main estimates were tabled in February, the estimates set out the details of \$160.7 billion in planned expenditure for this fiscal year. Overall program spending, which is total spending less debt service charges, is increased by just 0.7 per cent.

Spending on most government programs has been reduced. The operating budgets of government departments have been reduced by \$400 million, with further reductions of \$600 million to come in the next two years. Defence cuts total \$745 million this year alone, with more to come. Grants and subsidies to business have been substantially reduced. The government has frozen the wages of public servants for a further two years. This action has reduced the cost of providing necessary services