

Of course all Canadians want government to operate as efficiently as possible. Of course we want the Government of Canada to be accountable to people and to justify its programs. Of course we want to get rid of Crown corporations and agencies which no longer serve a useful purpose. But on the basis of the examples given by the Leader of the Opposition we certainly cannot support his proposal.

Canadians who have studied the level of government activity and believe governments should reduce the scope of their involvement and the share of the national wealth they consume, know that in order to achieve anything substantial it would be necessary not just to cut back on Crown corporations and agencies but to cut back on programs presently provided for the people. If one thing was obvious in the speech we have just heard it was that the hon. gentleman did not deal with programs which would have to be eliminated if there were a real intention to achieve the end proposed, that is, a significant reduction in the size of government spending and government's share of the national income.

I challenge speakers from the Conservative party who will follow to tell us which programs they would eliminate or restrict. Do they wish to cut back on health insurance or health care? Do they want to cut back on hospital insurance? Do they want to cut back the program of old age pensions? Do they want to eliminate or reduce family allowances or Canada Pensions? These are among the most expensive programs which the government, alone or in conjunction with the provinces, provides. If the Conservative party is serious about cutting back government expenditures, it is programs of this kind it will have to consider.

We have heard a great deal about Crown corporations. I join with the Leader of the Opposition in expressing amazement at the figure he produced—he told us we have some 340 of them. But Crown corporations have not been created by socialist governments—we have never had a socialist government in Canada.

An hon. Member: What is that over there?

Mr. Orlikow: Crown corporations were created in the past by Conservative and Liberal governments to meet needs which were not being met by the private sector. Consider the CNR. The rail lines were laid down by private investors with the help of huge grants of land and money from governments both federal and provincial. The companies' bonds were guaranteed by the Government of Canada. When the private companies went bankrupt the government created the CNR. Again, the Wheat Board was created by a Conservative government, as was ARDA. Are these the kinds of Crown corporations the Conservative party proposes we should get rid of? If they are, the case must be explained in much more detail.

The only two Crown corporations to which the Leader of the Opposition referred in the examples he gave were FIRA and Petro-Can. We can easily understand why the Conservative party opposes the operation of Petro-Can. That party is quite happy to leave the oil industry in the hands of the U.S. multinational corporations which control about 97 per cent of

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it. We do not believe the multinational oil corporations have been working in the interest of the Canadian people. We are aware of the fantastic increases in company profits. We have been fed stories which change from month to month and from year to year about the extent of the reserves available in Canada.

It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition should talk about cutting back on government expenditure at the same time as Conservative provinces are calling on the federal government to increase its activities in various fields such as the provision of employment, the provision of forestry services, and the funding of health care services. This would imply the expenditure by the federal government of more money and the employment of more staff to monitor that expenditure.

● (1602)

Conservative provincial governments are among the highest employers of public servants. According to Statistics Canada, in September, 1977, the province of Newfoundland, which has a Conservative government, had 23 provincial public servants per thousand population; the province of New Brunswick, which has a Conservative government, had 37.1 provincial public servants per thousand population; the province of Alberta, which has a Conservative government, had 26.2 provincial public servants per thousand population; and the province of Manitoba, which had a New Democratic government until recently, had only 14.9 provincial public servants per thousand population.

The Conservative party is saying, "Do as we say and not as our fellow Conservatives do." The New Democratic Party wants better government, and not bigger government.

When one looks at the federal public service, it is interesting to note the increase in the number of federal public servants. There has been an approximate 3 per cent to 4 per cent increase per year. At the same time as this increase is taking place, the increase in the number of senior public servants has been tremendous.

I should like to refer to the SX employee category, which is an executive classification for federal government employees. From 1968 to 1975 there was an increase in it from 381 to 1,260, an increase of over 20 per cent a year. Next, I should like to deal with professional employees, which is the category below the executive class. This category includes economists, lawyers, engineers and other specialists in senior federal government positions. During the period from 1974 to 1976, when supposedly the government had accepted the fact that a slowdown was necessary, their numbers increased from 5,938 to 7,521, which is an increase of almost 27 per cent, or over 13 per cent a year.

Did this tremendous increase in the senior level of federal public servants provide a better government? Did it provide a better service for the ordinary citizen? On the basis of my observations, I have to indicate that it did not. This is not the time to discuss why that took place, but it was a mistake of major proportion which is costing Canadians tens of millions of dollars.