

people, and in this debate today I detected frustration. As a citizen I have known frustration for many years, and I know that many people feel that same frustration when they have a government over which they have no control.

We cannot support this bill, Mr. Speaker, primarily because it is an open ended bill. It is like a farmer going down the road with a truck which has lost the end gate and the grain is spreading all over the place. That is what is happening here. The government must make better use of the facilities already at their disposal rather than increase the membership of the House. Increasing the membership is just like spreading a lot of icing over a cake that has fallen to try and fill the holes.

The frustration I speak of is felt by a great many Canadians when they are trying to deal with the bureaucracy of government. The government tries to give the impression that it is caring for the people, but really every time a piece of legislation such as this is introduced it creates a heavier burden on them. The increase in membership of this House of Commons suggested in the bill could cost the taxpayers something in the neighbourhood of \$1 million. I believe each member of parliament costs about \$60,000 or \$70,000 per year, so the increased cost of a larger membership is obvious. It does not mean better government, however. Just today in this House we heard member after member of the Privy Council say that he was responsible for a certain area or region of this country. That is not what democracy is about, Mr. Speaker. That tendency leads to a dictatorship and nothing short of it.

Since I have been a member of this House I have noticed that the government does not make use of the provincial governments. In fact, it tends to erode their authority. This also deprives the individual of the most advantageous government at the municipal level. I could list several programs that the present government has initiated, such as OFY, LIP and DREE, which could well be handled at the municipal level with the guidance of the provincial government. The present policy of the federal government is wrong and the people know it; that is why they become so frustrated with the administration at all levels.

Much time of members of parliament is taken up in dealing with the shortcomings of such programs as unemployment insurance, old age security and family allowances. These programs could be administered at the provincial level and perhaps some even at the municipal level. When the municipalities of the country hold their annual meeting, one of their major complaints is the lack of co-operation they receive from senior government; the provincial governments cannot give that co-operation until they have the authority from the federal government. I urge the government to give more authority to provincial and municipal governments for the administration of these programs. Certainly I believe that we must have a strong federal government, but that does not mean to say it should meddle in the business of provincial governments.

The bill before us proposes to increase membership of the House of Commons by 15 seats, and I imagine we could tolerate that over a period of time. But the bill also suggests 307 seats by 1981. We should consider the cost of

Adjournment Debate

this to the taxpayers. If they do not receive benefit from this extra cost their frustration will increase.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it ten o'clock?

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS—EXPORT OF WATER TO UNITED STATES—GOVERNMENT POSITION—REQUEST FOR EXPLANATION OF FORMER MINISTER'S POSITION ON EXPORT OF WATER

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that we still do not have a consistent and clear statement of policy from this government on the very important question of the export of water. Back in early October when I delivered my maiden speech to this House, there was the clear implication from the hoots and snickers from back benches that all of my concern about the government's non-policy on the export of water was simply a figment of my imagination. When I brought up the contradictions of former Liberal ministers on this question, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) jibed that my assertion that the government had no policy regarding water export was simply not true.

● (2200)

Thinking this response odd, especially in light of the research that I have done on this subject, I asked the Minister of the Environment (Mrs. Sauvé) on October 18 whether she is in favour of the export of Canadian water to the U.S. As the minister responsible, she then enunciated government policy, which was a flat no, she was not in favour of the export of Canadian water. Contradicting herself two weeks later in response to another question, in which I again asked what the government's policy regarding water export was, she said, "We have no policy."

Seeing the gross confusion among senior cabinet officials, I thought perhaps I should try to get clarification once and for all. So today I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) whether or not he was in favour of the export of Canadian fresh water supplies for good hard cash, and he contradicted all of his ministers by answering "Yes".

I ask, is the answer yes, no, or maybe? I thought that when cabinet ministers spoke, they spoke after they had discussed positions in caucus and arrived at a unified decision. Apparently this is not so. I thought that the