

Government Orders

The budget implements a wide range of spending cuts amounting to \$1 billion this coming fiscal year, 1992-93, and \$7 billion over the next five years. It broadens and deepens the expenditure control plan which we first introduced in the budget in February 1990 and extended last year. It does so in a way that does not affect major transfers to provinces.

Defence spending is being cut by \$2.2 billion over the next five years. Departmental non-salary operating budgets are being reduced by 3 per cent. This will save \$150 million next year and \$800 million over the next five years. The government will restructure and streamline the operations of government to improve both efficiency and service to Canadians. Some 46 agencies, boards, commissions and advisory bodies will be eliminated, deferred or merged with other operations or privatized.

Government communications budgets will be reduced by \$75 million per year. The number of government publications will be substantially reduced.

Growth in Canada Mortgage and Housing funds for social housing will be limited to an average of 3 per cent per year.

The Prime Minister and all ministers will have their ministerial salaries cut by 5 per cent beginning April 1. This follows the decision taken last year to impose a one-year freeze on ministerial, parliamentary and public service pay.

I listen to the opposition moan when we talk about the 5 per cent cut. I can remember when members of the Progressive Conservative government took a pay cut back in 1986 or 1987 I believe it was. All members on the government side took a pay cut as did ministers and as did the Prime Minister. It was offered to the opposition parties to do the same thing; they did not take it. They did not take the cut at that time. Now, when we take a cut in salary, they are over there moaning and groaning. They have not experienced it so I can understand why they are moaning and groaning over there.

Maybe it is because they cannot travel first class any more, maybe that is why they are moaning over there. First-class travel for MPs, senators and senior public servants already restricted will now be eliminated and international travel will be reduced as well.

I boarded a plane in Toronto to go to Montreal three weeks ago and the only passengers in first class were two NDP members. The Liberal member who was on the plane and yours truly were at the back.

An hon. member: I was at the back with you.

Mr. McDermid: That is right, exactly, but who was riding up there? The socialists were riding up in first class. They cannot do that any more. None of the members of the House of Commons can do that any more.

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. As one of those two members who were riding up front, I want to make it very clear that we were upgraded for free by the carrier because we had to fly to Montreal instead of Ottawa, which was our planned destination.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is not a point of order; that is a point of debate.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, certainly I did not mention any names, but if he wants to admit that he was up in first class I might point out that there was lots of room in business class and in economy on that same plane. Now that was a benefit provided the hon. member by a private company, Air Canada. I wonder if he reported that to the desk up here. Listen, these socialists, I have to tell you; great fun.

Let me get back to my comments if I might. In addition, the government will strengthen the cost recovery and act more aggressively to collect outstanding tax liabilities. We have outstanding tax liabilities of some \$8 billion of which \$4 billion are uncontested. This is money owing, not to the government but to the taxpayers of this country.

Crown corporations no longer required for public policy objectives will continue to be privatized. We have privatized over 24 corporations so far, returning about 50,000 to 60,000 employees back to the private sector. I think this is very important, and we will dispose of surplus assets as well.

As a result of these and other streamlining actions, the government will reduce overlap and duplication both within the government and within the private sector. A number of measures will also be taken to improve service to the public. The government will continue to make the tough choices necessary to manage our program expenditures within the limits of the proposed spending control act which was announced in last year's budget.