

*Government Orders***THE ROYAL ASSENT***[English]*

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

• (1615)

And being returned:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate chamber the Deputy Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-73, an act to provide borrowing authority for the fiscal year beginning on April 1, 1995—Chapter No. 8.

Bill C-79, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1995—Chapter No. 9.

Bill C-80, an act for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the public service of Canada for the financial year ending March 31, 1996—Chapter No. 10.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 1995**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-76, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 1995, be read the second time and referred to a committee; and of the amendment.

Mr. John Bryden (Hamilton—Wentworth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say, being a critic of special interest groups, that I occasionally ruffle feathers. I have for a long time been expecting to hear knocks at my door. When royal assent happened it was a great pleasure to realize that it was not yet another special interest group but the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod. I am deeply grateful for that.

I was talking about special interest groups. I should like to take the opportunity to explain to the House a distinction that needs to be made in the context of my remarks. There are two basic types of special interest groups. There are those that provide services to the public. The government is very interested in seeing that happen. Many of them are charities and non-profit organizations. There is another category, the special interest group that is basically an advocacy group or a lobby group which pushes its own agenda.

The development of guidelines for ministers to cut funding to special interest groups is a brave move on the part of the government. It will require considerable courage on the part of cabinet ministers. They will be reviewing organizations wherein it is sometimes difficult to discern the difference between a group that is providing an important service to society and group that advocates for a particular category of society. There will be reaction.

• (1620)

Many ministers who try to ensure that limited government funds go where they will be most effective will be subject to a lot of criticism. Politicians do not generally like criticism. This is one of the reasons preceding governments never tackled special interest groups. The government is prepared to take that criticism and do what is right. That is very important.

Sometimes it is very difficult to know where best to cut funding to groups that provide services which may no longer be effective. Cabinet ministers will be confronted with the situation where occasionally they will issue orders, funds will be cut back by bureaucratic decree and some groups that deliver very important services to the community may be injured.

This is where the individual member of Parliament comes in. We on all sides of the House should help the ministers to cut spending in interest group areas and ensure the spending is cut in such a way that the groups which are doing good work in society are preserved. Certainly MPs know better than the bureaucracy who is most deserving in their ridings. Basically that is the responsibility of an MP.

I wish I could report that each ministry has issued a report or a description of its plans for cutting funding. This is not the case because the ministers are approaching a problem that has been in existence for a very long time. It will take a while to bring it under control. In some ministries it will be more difficult than others.

For example, the industry minister has moved very swiftly. Within weeks of the budget coming down he produced a paper showing a great number of groups that had traditionally received Industry Canada money for community programs. They may be businesses but they are still community programs. He moved very swiftly and many of the programs are slated to be discontinued. I look down his list and empathize with the minister. It is very difficult to cut some programs. However it has to be done and we can see that the minister has done it wisely and well.

Health Canada is a ministry with an enormous infrastructure for funding special interest groups of every sort, lobby groups, care groups, service groups: anything we would care to think of. It will take about three or four months before we really see what the health minister is doing in that regard. However I have good news. The health minister has moved to cut the funding of the