

and is welcome to the Government. But it presents formidable difficulties. Institutions are slow to change, and so are attitudes. We in the Government at Ottawa are trying to find ways to meet the demands for accountability, for consultation, for the right to be heard. The experience to date has not always been happy, and the success to date could at best be called modest.

Take for example the White Paper on Taxation. The Government made clear that it was not a draft tax bill, but a paper intended to stimulate wide discussion among the public and to bring forward the expression of all kinds of views, opinions and suggestions. To this extent it could only be called a resounding success. Nevertheless, each time the Government dropped a proposal in response to cogent points made, this was hailed as a Government defeat. Each time a proposal was added, this was regarded as a victory at the Government's expense.

My colleague, Ron Basford, recently introduced a Competition Bill to regulate certain business practices. After it had been widely discussed in the business community the Government decided that it should be withdrawn and brought back in a different form. An excellent example of consultation, yet the response has been that here is another example of Government ineptitude.

I do not suggest that all the fault lies on one side. As we feel our way toward a new kind of contract between Government and people the principal onus is on the Government to devise means to give effect to the new accountability, new forms of consultation and new opportunities for the people to be heard as Government goes about its business. I can fairly say that we are trying very hard and you will forgive me if I add that in what we are trying we are taking very considerable political risks.

The second reason for the urgent search for a new contract between Government and people is the growing disenchantment with economic growth - sometimes equated with progress - for its own sake. A few years ago this disillusionment was largely confined to the youth culture and disadvantaged groups in our society. I believe it is now affecting the whole of our society. President Nixon - not noted as a negative thinker - said in his State of the Union address last year:

"Never has a nation seemed to have more and enjoyed it less".