



CANADA

Public Service 2000

First Annual Report to The Prime Minister on The Public Service of Canada

Paul M. Tellier

**Clerk of the Privy Council and
Secretary to the Cabinet**

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June 30, 1992

Dear Prime Minister,

In my capacity as head of the Public Service, I am pleased to submit to you this first Annual Report of the Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet on the Public Service of Canada. I also attach a companion volume entitled *Public Service 2000: A Report on Progress*.

In the 18 months since the publication of the Government's White Paper on the Renewal of the Public Service, much has happened that has affected the Public Service, and much has been done by way of reform and renewal. I am pleased with the progress we have made. It reflects above all the imagination and dedicated effort of many thousands of individual public servants. If there is any credit due for what has been

achieved, it belongs to them.

You will find in the pages of this Report and its companion volume clear evidence of progress toward the Public Service that Canadians will need in the years to come. You will see as well that much remains to be done. The Public Service is one of Canada's great national institutions. For more than 125 years, public servants have made a vital contribution to building and sustaining this country. I am confident that the changes we are making today to renew the Public Service will equip it to continue that vocation of service to the Government and people of Canada.

Yours sincerely,

Paul M. Tellier

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I

INTRODUCTION

...the policy for renewal set out in the White Paper will equip the Public Service to serve Canada and Canadians into the 21st Century . [1](#)

The First Report

In December 1989, the Prime Minister announced the Government's intention to reform and renew the Public Service of Canada to meet the challenges of the 21st century. In December 1990, the Government issued a White Paper setting out principles and specific objectives to guide the process of reform . [2](#) The White Paper called for an annual report by the Clerk of the Privy Council "on the state of the Public Service in general, and for the next five years on the implementation of *Public Service 2000* in particular." This is the first such Report.

I have been closely identified with *Public Service 2000*. That is entirely consistent with my role as head of the Public Service. Like my predecessors, I am responsible for advising the Prime Minister and the Government on the Public Service as a whole, and on measures that may be required to ensure its continued vitality and relevance to Canada.

This Report derives from that responsibility. It is a personal statement, setting out my own views on the Public Service today and where it is headed. It reflects the values and traditions of the Public Service as I understand them. It speaks to problems and challenges as I see them before us.

The Report is accompanied by a second volume that describes in much greater detail than would be possible here the many different dimensions of public service renewal in departments and agencies throughout the government. That companion volume, entitled *Public Service 2000: A Report on Progress*, fulfils the other half of the White Paper commitment to a public accounting of progress on *Public Service 2000*.

The *Report on Progress* contains dozens of examples of what has been achieved by individuals and groups in all parts of government to improve service to the public and maintain a professional Public Service for the future. I would hope these examples will not only inform the reader, but also inspire other public servants to use their energy and imagination to achieve similar progress in their departments.

Recipients of the Report

To whom is this report addressed?

- First, *to the Prime Minister* who, as head of government, carries ultimate responsibility to Parliament for the programs and services provided by the Government to the people of Canada. It was the Prime Minister who in December 1989 launched the process of public service reform and

renewal known as *Public Service 2000*.

- *To Ministers* , who are responsible for the programs and services for which Canadians pay taxes. As much as any member of the public, Ministers depend on the quality and timeliness of the services - the advice and the support - that are provided to them by the Public Service.
- *To Members of Parliament* , who are responsible for holding Ministers to account for their management of government.
- *To public servants* , who are both the authors and the subjects of public service reform. They have perhaps the most obvious stake in what changes are made to their workplace, and in better ways to deliver programs and services to Canadians.

Most important, this Report speaks to the interests and concerns of *the Canadian public*.

Canadians need and want the many thousands of different programs and services provided by the federal government in almost every area of Canadian life. Canadians have a major stake in the quality and effectiveness of Canada's Public Service. They will be the ultimate judges of the extent to which our project of renewal is a success.

Where are we today?

1991 was a difficult year for Canada, and for the Public Service. The current process of constitutional renewal preoccupies federal and provincial governments and raises concerns in the minds of all Canadians about the future shape of their country. Governments and their employees have had to live with continuing fiscal restraint, with all its implications for diminished program resources and more difficult relations between management and labour.

This is not an easy time to reform institutions or to try to renew a spirit of service and excellence in an institution as large as the Public Service. Yet despite the obstacles, and despite events such as the 1991 public service strike, I am still able to report genuine progress in reform and renewal across a broad front of activity in all parts of government. This is shown clearly in the dozens of examples cited in the pages of the companion volume to this Report.

Are we progressing as fast as I would like ? No, but steady progress is being made and I believe that the process of change now has its own momentum, quite independent of those of us at the centre of government. Reform continues because individual employees, at all levels, understand the need to refashion their workplace, and to refocus their efforts on service. That in itself is a major accomplishment.

Has the Public Service been transformed in the 18 months since the publication of the White Paper ? No, but that would be unreasonable to expect. I will say that the process of transformation is under way, and that the Public Service of the year 2000 will be very different from the one in which we are working today:

- it will be doing those things that only government can and must do;
- it will be more representative than it is today of the Canadian population it serves;
- it will contain people with different skills, including current employees with new skills, working in organizations of different size and structure than the traditional department;
- most important, it will be led and managed in a new way: one that is more oriented to service and to results and much more aware of the importance of individual initiative in contributing to improvements and efficiencies.

Throughout all these changes, I am confident that the Public Service will be guided, as it is today, by its traditional values of professionalism, political neutrality and service.

Are we now doing business in a fundamentally different way ? No, but we *are* changing the way we do business - we are more focused on cost and value for money, increasingly oriented to results, and more receptive to innovation. Over time we *will* be serving Canadians differently and better.

Do all public servants understand the need for renewal and the direction which that renewal ought to take? Not yet, but that is because in the end people change themselves, and that takes time.

The essence of *Public Service 2000* is to change the way people in the Public Service see themselves and their work. In this respect, *Public Service 2000* is really a very simple idea, though it has perhaps taken us all a while to realize just what it was we were aiming toward. Our objective is to give all employees the encouragement and the tools they need, so that they can use their ingenuity to do the best possible job for Canadians. This is what I mean by a "change of culture." Getting to that new culture is what *Public Service 2000* is all about.

What we have achieved to date in this process of renewal is due to the dedication of many thousands of individual employees working at all levels of the Public Service. It also reflects the leadership and commitment of managers who can see that to provide the best possible service to Canadians they must put their trust in the people who work for them. Only by investing in people, and by encouraging initiative, can we meet the challenges that lie before government and the Public Service in the years to come.

.....1	Prime Minister's preface to <i>Public Service 2000: The Renewal of the Public Service of Canada</i> , (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1990).
.....2	<i>Ibid.</i>

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II

1991 IN REVIEW

The renewal of the Public Service will not be achieved simply through legislative and administrative action ... It requires fundamental changes in attitudes by Public Servants, by Ministers, by Parliamentarians and ultimately by the public. [3](#)

1991: Key Events and Milestones

1991 was a year in which measures to further the goal of fiscal restraint had a direct impact on the Public Service. The events of the past year show that the path of renewal is not an easy one.

The 1991 Budget

The 1991 Budget was aimed in part at further reducing the costs of government. This was necessary not only to keep the Government's fiscal house in order and maintain progress on reducing the deficit, but also to demonstrate to Canadians that the federal government was prepared to set an example of restraint in its own operations and notably in its own wage levels.

Wage Restraint

It was announced after the Budget that there would be no increase in public service wages and salaries - for both unionized and non-unionized personnel - for 1991-92 and an increase of up to three percent in 1992-93 and 1993-94. The salaries of Deputy Ministers and other Governor in Council appointees were also frozen. Later it was announced that performance pay for executives was suspended for one year. The loss of performance pay meant an average reduction of five percent in take-home pay for Deputies and executives.

Ten Percent Reduction in the Executive Group

At the same time, the decision was taken to reduce by 10 percent the number of executive personnel in the government - the roughly 4,750 most senior public servants below the level of Deputy Minister. This means that by 31 March 1993 there will be at least 475 fewer executives working in the Public Service. As of 31 March 1992 there had been a reduction of 362 executives.

A government-wide program of "de-layering" in departments was also introduced. This has resulted in the elimination, in all but a very few cases, of any more than three layers of executive management below the Deputy rank in any department of government.

The 1991 Strike

Public service wage restraint was strongly criticized by the heads of the public service unions. They pointed

out that federal wage settlements since 1985 had been consistently below those in the private sector or in provincial public services. They noted that, contrary to the image of the Public Service as over-paid and under-worked, the average salary of their members was much less than commonly believed. ⁴

Despite efforts on both sides to avoid a damaging work stoppage, in September of 1991 the Public Service went through its first national strike in over 10 years when members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the largest public service union, went on a legal strike in an effort to get the Government to change its position on wages.

The strike was a significant event, both for those on the picket lines and for those who were trying to maintain programs and services in the meantime. Canadians who were denied access to government services during the strike were reminded of the extent to which they depend on those services in normal times.

The strike created real tension not only on the picket line, but also in the workplace after strikers returned to work. Public Service managers and employees faced the challenge of rebuilding an atmosphere of trust and teamwork among colleagues who may have been on different sides of an obviously emotional issue.

Al-Mashat

The Al-Mashat affair also captured public attention in 1991. It was a difficult experience for all concerned, and one from which no individual or institution emerged unscathed. The affair caused many people, both inside and outside government, to think carefully about the doctrine governing the accountability of Ministers and officials. The principles are clear—Ministers are responsible to the House of Commons for what is done in and by the Government; officials are responsible, for what they do, to their superiors and ultimately to Ministers. Annex III of the *Report on Progress* sets out the principles and their practical application very clearly. I want to draw them to the attention of all public servants in order that they may have no doubt as to where they stand in relation to the responsibility of their Ministers and their own accountability.

Priorities and Objectives for the Past Year

In May 1991, I set out five priorities for Deputy Ministers for that year in relation to public service renewal. Those priorities were:

- introducing service standards and client surveys as ways to improve service and to build a continuing dialogue with clients;
- reducing the number of levels of management in departments to improve efficiency and flexibility;
- increased delegation of authority, especially to the regions - again, to improve front-line service;
- improved career planning, especially with respect to women;

- fostering the work of "councils for change" in departments, as mechanisms to ensure continuing progress in reform and renewal.

The companion document, *Public Service 2000: A Report on Progress*, reviews in detail what has been achieved in these areas over the past 18 months.

Progress in the Five Priority Areas

In some areas, such as *reducing the number of levels of management*, progress has been clear. As noted above, with very few exceptions, there are now no more than three levels of executive management below the Deputy Minister level. In other areas such as *service standards*, the pace of change has been slower but is now accelerating as departments realize the benefits to be gained by developing standards in consultation with their clients.

There has also been substantial progress with respect to *delegation of authority*. Delegation to departments from central agencies has generally increased, in some cases quite substantially (though not always to the degree desired by departmental management). Delegation *within* departments varies, as it should. Departmental circumstances are not the same, and the capacity of managers at different levels in different departments to exercise delegated authorities properly varies depending on their experience, training and program size. This is an area where I look for continued progress over the coming year.

The term "*councils for change*" refers to departmental fora that bring together a representative group of employees to foster innovation and renewal, particularly on "people issues." Virtually wherever they have been tried they have been useful in helping to launch and reinforce the process of change in departments. I would expect them to become a continuing feature of good management in government.

The area where the record is most ambivalent is that of *career development*. On the one hand, there have been many positive things done in departments and agencies to improve training and development, to foster mobility and to make better use of people. These initiatives are described in the chapters of the accompanying *Report on Progress*. Many of these new programs have already had a positive impact on the jobs and careers of employees; they are not just plans or statements of good intention.

At the same time, the scope of these initiatives has been limited. This is particularly true in areas such as employment equity and career development for those in support staff positions. I am not satisfied that we are yet making the fullest use of the immense reservoir of talent available in the Public Service. I am not yet able to report "full speed ahead" on the acquisition of new skills by our employees. This area - career development - remains an important challenge for the coming year and will remain so in the years ahead.

Overall Assessment of Progress

Shortly after the launch of the initiative, I remarked that *Public Service 2000* is "10% legislative change, 20% change in systems, and 70% change in attitudes and practices within departments and agencies." [5](#)

The overall objective of these changes is better service to Canadians and to their Government. The

following sections assess progress in those terms.

Improvements in Service

Bottom-line improvements in service are the real touchstone of our success in *Public Service 2000*.

Service improvements are driven by individual Ministers and their departments, and often by individual work units and employees. They are not a matter of direction or control from outside the department, though central agencies can facilitate service improvements by cutting red tape, delegating more authority and generally fostering innovation.

Public Service 2000: A Report on Progress lists many examples of specific improvements that have been made in departments such as Revenue Canada Taxation or Fisheries and Oceans. These changes involve quantifiable improvements in responsiveness to clients that would be the envy of any large organization in the private sector.

Many of these improvements in service are noticeable to Canadians, as virtually anyone who has had recent dealings with their local income tax office would attest. Forms are simpler, service is faster, technological innovation is obvious. Similar kinds of improvements - whether in turnaround time for passport applications or access to electronic bulletin boards for suppliers - can be found in every department and agency. These improvements have been delivered despite an actual *decrease* in available resources.

But Canadians are aware that their hard-earned tax dollar does not seem to return as much in programs and services as it did in years gone by. They are right. In 1984, Canadians were receiving \$1.33 in programs and services for every dollar they paid in taxes; the remainder was borrowed. Today, as the Government continues its program of fiscal restraint, Canadians are still paying their tax dollar, but a growing share is being used to pay interest on the debt. What this means for the Public Service is that we cannot buy our way to better service. We have to get there through innovation and by removing bureaucratic obstacles to efficiency. That is what we are doing in *Public Service 2000*.

A Commitment to Consultation

We are taking important steps toward greater consultation with Canadians in the development of policies and the delivery of programs. It takes time to change people's attitudes, and we still have a long way to go before we reach the level and quality of consultation which Canadians and their Governments expect. Nevertheless, we are making progress.

Under the guidance of Ministers, more and more departments are working in close cooperation with their clients in changing programs, or developing new ones.

For example, Employment and Immigration's National Labour Force Development Board, with its several regional offshoots, was created as a way to give employers and labour a major stake in decisions on the allocation of training funds. It represents a significant change in how the government does business.

Other examples include the extensive consultations undertaken by Revenue Canada, Customs and Excise before implementing the GST, and by Statistics Canada in the preparations for the 1991 census.

The general point is that the Public Service is serving the Government and Canadians with a new sense of commitment to the views of clients. The result should be better policies and programs, and better understanding among Canadians about their government.

A Change in Organizational Culture

Through *Public Service 2000*, we are trying to create an environment in which public servants can be more responsive and more innovative by giving them a real stake in the services they provide to Canadians.

Change is happening, often in ways that are difficult to quantify but nevertheless real. More and more government organizations, for example, are involving employees in the definition of departmental objectives and levels of service; more and more are adopting mechanisms for upward feedback and other means of improved internal communication. All departments are coming to realize that successful decentralization depends on trust in employees to provide better service.

In many places, we are seeing the first signs of a real transformation in management culture. The old "command and control" model is not dead yet, but it is rapidly being replaced by a new kind of institutional culture in which people are valued and decisions are taken with much greater input from those who have to implement them.

The Deputy Minister Community

Deputy Ministers serve Ministers directly; they are responsible, at the officials' level, for the leadership of institutions with multi-billion dollar budgets and tens of thousands of employees; they exercise legal management authorities bestowed upon them by the Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission; they deal on a daily basis with client groups of all sorts. By exemplifying the values of *Public Service 2000*, Deputy Ministers can demonstrate to all their employees that the process of reform and renewal is alive in their departments. For all these reasons, they play a key role in the broader process of public service renewal.

Better communication at senior levels has been one of my personal priorities - through weekly breakfast meetings with all departmental deputies, annual retreats, twice-yearly sessions with the community of Assistant Deputy Ministers and a variety of other mechanisms. Effective leadership is based on good communications and a collegial approach to work. That is one of the principles underlying *Public Service 2000*.

Since my appointment as Clerk I have given particular attention to the management of the community of Deputy Ministers. This group of 50 includes approximately 30 departmental deputies and another 20 or so persons serving as Associate Deputy Ministers or carrying out other senior functions. One of the key objectives of *Public Service 2000* has been to ensure that the men and women at this most senior level of the Public Service have the leadership, communications and management skills to lead the institutions of

government successfully in the years ahead.

I am particularly pleased with the progress we have made in recent years with respect to the representation of women in the Deputy Minister community. At present, 10 of 50 Deputy Ministers, or 20 percent, are women. This is a higher percentage than in the Executive Group as a whole, and nearly twice the representation that existed in 1984. I am committed to similar progress with respect to members of the other employment equity designated groups.

The representation of Francophones in the Deputy Minister community remained much the same between 1984 and 1991 at about 30 percent.

Another of my priorities in relation to Deputy Ministers has been to increase the time they spend in their positions. In 1986, Deputies had been in their jobs for an average of 18 months; by 1991, average time in position had increased to 29 months, and about 40 percent of Deputies had been in their jobs for three years or more. This steady increase has allowed Deputies more time to learn about their departments and thus better manage the entire range of departmental activities. It has also enabled Ministers and Deputy Ministers to get to know each other well and to work together effectively as a team.

A successful reform exercise must be top-down as well as bottom-up. By paying more attention to the management of the Deputy Minister community, and by holding Deputy Ministers more clearly accountable for how well they manage people and organizations, we are sending a strong signal to the entire Public Service that reform is a continuing priority.

Legislation

On 18 June 1991 the Government introduced Bill C-26, the *Public Service Reform Bill*. This omnibus legislation incorporates changes to the *Public Service Employment Act*, the *Public Service Staff Relations Act* and the *Crown Assets Disposal Act* that are together intended to give statutory effect to the goals and values of *Public Service 2000*. The Bill was developed through a long process of consultation with employees and with public service unions.

The passage of the *Public Service Reform Bill* will create the statutory framework necessary for a modern personnel management regime in the Public Service. It will permit changes in classification to increase mobility and opportunity for employees. It will allow for the more rapid deployment of employees from one job to another at the same level, with their consent. It will provide the necessary legal foundation for the establishment of employment equity programs. It will simplify collective bargaining and permit better and more constructive conflict resolution. It will streamline provisions relating to termination and demotion.

It would take too long to enumerate all of the changes that the *Public Service Reform Bill* will bring to the Public Service. The key point is that this legislation will have a significant and positive impact on the way in which the Public Service will operate in the years to come.

Systems

Here again, we have passed some important milestones, including:

- *the introduction of Operating Budgets*, which will give departments and agencies much greater flexibility in allocating resources to meet changing program needs;
- *the creation of Special Operating Agencies*, a new organizational form that brings a business-like bottom line to the operation of business-like functions in government;
- *the creation of the Executive Group* with fewer pay bands;
- *the systematic delegation of greater levels of authority* from the centre to departments, and within departments out to the regions, in personnel, finance and administration;
- *making common services optional* in areas such as architecture, engineering and tenant services;
- *the establishment of "councils for change"* as departmental fora where employees at all levels can be involved in shaping improvements in people management;
- *the development of mission statements* to articulate a clear, shared raison d'être and bring about a client-centred culture in departments.

One critical area where progress will be essential in the coming year is *classification*. Of all the system-wide reforms undertaken since the White Paper, classification is one of the most important. A simpler classification structure will provide greater flexibility within organizations; it will improve mobility and opportunities for career advancement.

Consensus on the Need for Reform

For many thousands of public servants, *Public Service 2000* has become a reference point on which they can base changes they want to make in their workplace. The goals and values of *Public Service 2000* are cited not just by managers seeking new efficiencies or greater productivity, but by employees at all levels. They have perhaps the biggest stake in the quality of their working environment and the quality of services delivered to Canadians.

Obviously, not all public servants or public service unions would endorse the changes that have been made so far, or those that are now being proposed to Parliament. Given the events of the past year, and the fact that change is inevitably disruptive and often threatening, universal approval would be too much to expect.

But even the critics would not deny the need for change and renewal inside the Public Service. And the many points of agreement on all sides over such things as the need for classification reform, the need to cut red tape, the need to focus on service, the need to invest in training, the importance of good communication - these prove more eloquently than any statement of policy or any survey of employees, that public service reform is not an option, but a necessity.

.....3	<i>Ibid.</i> , p.104.
.....4	The average salary of members of the largest union - the Public Service Alliance of Canada-in 1990 was \$33,066.
.....5	"Revitalization and Renewal," a speech to the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service, January 1990.

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III

CHALLENGES FOR 1992

Areas for Special Attention

Obviously, there are areas of government where the pace of change and renewal is slower than in others. Change is good news for some, and bad news for those who have a personal or professional stake in the status quo. Change creates anxiety in the minds of many public servants who are struggling to cope with downsizing and resource restraint.

These are all realities of life in large institutions. They are not unique to the Public Service. They are factors in any process of institutional change.

Combatting Scepticism

It is the employees "in the middle" who are often the most sceptical of the promises held out by *Public Service 2000*. They are the ones who recognize the need for change but are perhaps uncertain or apprehensive about how to bring it about. They have a strong commitment to their vocation as public servants and to their clients in the public. Yet they are also doubtful about whether the reforms they see around them are genuine, and whether those changes will really benefit the Public Service.

These attitudes are healthy ones. They reflect the traditional independence of thought and sense of personal commitment that have long characterized the Public Service. Today, the challenge for public servants at all levels is to demonstrate that reform is real, that change is in the best interests of all employees, and that only through a renewed Public Service can we serve Canadians in the manner they deserve.

Renewal on the Front Lines of Service Delivery

In people terms, the process of reform will have succeeded when the employee on the front line - the person working at an airport service counter or an inspection station or an Employment Centre - has the motivation, the opportunity and the support that he or she needs to serve Canadians as well as possible.

Priorities for 1992

The Public Service has a vital contribution to make at this critical time in Canada's history. I see three particular challenges before us in the coming year.

Service

Our first challenge for 1992, as I see it, must be to deliver meaningful progress to Canadians in the area of service. This means in particular:

- defining, applying and communicating standards of service;
- achieving perceptible improvements in the efficiency and quality of service delivery, at lower cost, through mechanisms such as co-location and "single-window" services announced in the 1992 Budget;
- giving Canadians tangible proof of positive change, in order to maintain their continued support for public service renewal.

Departments that have made the greatest headway to date in improving their services are those that have worked closely with their clients. This should continue to be a priority for all departments in the coming year. Consultation, regular feedback mechanisms such as client surveys, and simply keeping the lines of communication open will make a real difference to the quality of programs and how they are implemented.

People

The 1991 strike had a traumatic impact on the Public Service. The strike strained relationships within the workplace and caused many public servants to think hard about their values and their sense of vocation. Lessons were learned by management, by the unions and by all employees. *Our second challenge, therefore, must be to consolidate the process of healing and renewal within each work unit so that our capacity to serve Canadians is not impaired, and so that the process of positive change can continue.*

Deputies must attach a special importance to:

- communicating with their employees;
- ensuring they understand where the process of reform is headed;
- dealing fairly with them over matters such as downsizing and resource restraint;
- preserving funds for training; and
- implementing departmental assignment programs to give employees broader exposure and experience.

Deputies and their management teams must demonstrate to all employees that the values of *Public Service 2000* are expressed in the daily life and work of the department. Nothing could be more important to the credibility and the success of this entire process of reform.

Internal Communication

A third challenge relates again to the internal environment and to the various efforts that have been made to improve communication within departments and especially between headquarters and the

regions. We are making profound changes in how we deal with external clients. I think we need to pay equal attention to internal consultation, for essentially the same reasons - better programs and better services to Canadians.

Conclusion

In this difficult environment, the first duty of public servants is of course to *serve* - with continued loyalty and dedication, with hard work, with imagination, and with a sense of love for their country and respect for their fellow citizens.

The second duty of the Public Service is to continue the task of retooling itself. If Canada is to survive and prosper, it will be in part because it enjoys the benefits of a committed, modern, flexible and professional Public Service. This will be one of our most important legacies to future generations.

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