

Mr. SCHREYER: I wanted to ask, Mr. Chairman, if the task of sifting out, or tracing down, errors and correcting them would not somehow be expedited in the process of going over to automatic data-processing? In the actual process of programming for automatic data-processing it seems to me there would be a good opportunity for this to be done.

Mr. BALLS: We think, Mr. Chairman, that there are very real opportunities ultimately for the data processing application, but, as I mentioned earlier, our first concern is to ensure that our basic record that we hold now is accurate. This is the first step. When we are satisfied with that then we can proceed to current recording on data processing application.

This, I might just say in passing, is an area with which I and my officers are very deeply concerned at the present time. I think the Comptroller's office has probably more data-processing applications than any other user in Canada. We are very, very much alert to the opportunities for the use of this equipment, but we also want to be very sure that, when we do apply it—it is very costly equipment—we apply it efficiently and economically. We certainly have this in mind. This is one of the long range programs that we have before us. The task force which I mentioned in my statement specifically referred to the possibility of this, and this is one of the items on our agenda.

The CHAIRMAN: I think I had remarked that we had heard both sides, and that the Committee would be interested to know if there was greater efficiency and that fewer errors were occurring.

I think I had asked the Auditor General if he wanted to say anything in this regard.

Mr. HENDERSON: I would like Mr. Long to speak to this, if I may, Mr. Hales. He has some figures.

Mr. G. R. LONG (*Assistant Auditor General*): Mr. Chairman, as was indicated in our note on page 38, it was on May 14th, 1959, that we wrote to the Superannuation branch and suggested that, before authorizing a benefit, their procedure should include an examination of the employee's contributions in relation to his salary and the documents on file. If I understand Mr. Balls correctly, I think he has said that within the next three weeks this is going to be introduced.

Mr. BALLS: My comment, Mr. Chairman, was that a system that is essentially the same as that recommended by the Auditor General will be introduced. The technique will differ slightly.

The CHAIRMAN: But it will achieve the same purpose.

Mr. BALLS: It, I am sure, will achieve the same purpose. Our feeling is that it will be a more efficient system.

Mr. LONG: Of course, we were not dealing with any particular system or technique; it was simply that errors were made, and there are still errors being made although Mr. Balls has improved the branch. There are still current errors, but using this check at the time of the superannuation benefits going into effect, these errors will be caught before they do any real damage. This is what we have been after. If this is done, and done properly, we will not see errors after this, because they will all be caught. They have to be caught.