

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, we will take that under advisement. Are there any comments from the members of the committee particularly at this time?

Mr. HENDERSON: May I add one thing further: that on November 5th, the President of the Privy Council in following up the Glassco commission report tabled a list of items, of which item 17 indicated that they were going to give attention to this subject, and would likely be submitting some material to this committee which would be all to the good in obtaining some action here.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The next item is the form of the estimates.

Mr. HENDERSON: With respect to the form of the estimates, I do not know if Mr. Steele is here today.

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, he is with us today.

Mr. HENDERSON: You might care to ask him to speak on this subject regarding the proposition dated September 30 addressed to you.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you first, for the benefit of the new members of the committee, indicate the nature of the problem that has been referred to Mr. Steele, and what would be given in reply? Would you please come up to the head table, Mr. Steele? May I at this time introduce to you Mr. Steele, secretary of the treasury board, an organization with which we have had some experience at one time or another. Mr. Steele has been good enough to come here at my request, and he has also placed before me a statement on the particular matter, which I think you will find in the material distributed to you this morning. He delivered a copy of his statement in both English and French.

As he is very keenly interested in this item, I think probably the members of the committee might like to discuss it with him and question him on it as well as Mr. Henderson. Perhaps Mr. Henderson would outline the problem briefly, then we might ask Mr. Steele to comment on it.

Mr. HENDERSON: On page 1 of the memorandum you will see the heading "Form of the Estimates". It runs through page 2, and at the bottom of page 2 I have some comments to make on it. And if you will be good enough to turn to page 3, and direct your attention to the last two paragraphs of my comments on page 3 I say:

In my opinion it is a matter of vital importance that the form in which the estimates are presented be improved. Expenditures of public funds at the level at which they exist today are of such importance to the Canadian economy that it is essential that the estimates be presented to parliament in the clearest and simplest manner possible. Only on this basis can parliament be expected to give the proposed expenditures the scrutiny and consideration they should have.

It is my opinion that more effective progress could be made in developing improvements in the form of the estimates and laying suggested improvements before the committee were the secretary of the treasury board to consult with the Auditor General before presenting further proposals for the consideration of the committee. The form of the annual estimates determines in large measure the manner in which the subsequent accounting for expenditure is maintained and reported to parliament in the public accounts and this, in turn, is important to the Auditor General in relation to his responsibilities to parliament.

As I stated here, the proposition before the committee is to reduce the number of votes and I referred to this in the second paragraph in my comments on page 2. But since we have Mr. Steele with us today I feel I should turn the floor over to him so that he may outline his proposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you mind outlining to the committee the problem as you see it and the suggestions you have made, Mr. Steele?