

today was, as always, kindly, courteous and well informed. In fact, I doubt if anyone sitting in this chamber has a greater innate kindness than this gentleman, and he would be the last to reflect, directly or otherwise, upon this chamber and its operations. However, because he did not amplify the statement he made, I suggest that inadvertently he has cast a rather serious reflection upon us, for he said that in this session the Senate is being paid more to do less than ever before in its history.

Now that is a dangerous truism, because it lacks the amplification to which I referred a moment ago. The reason this chamber has done less work should be clearly stated, because if the usual newspaper practice continues, this will be the butt around which our discussion will be reported in tomorrow's newspapers. The reason is not because of an unwillingness or an incapacity on the part of the Senate, but because the House of Commons did not make it possible for the Senate to function as diligently and regularly and at the same cost as it normally would.

Honourable senators, lest there be some among us who might be inclined to impute blame to some other body, I say the reason that the Senate has not functioned as diligently this session as in other years is due entirely to the conduct of the House of Commons.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: I thank my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Connolly, Halifax North) for giving an explanation which probably I should have given. However, my remarks were based on the item in the estimates mentioned yesterday by the sponsor of the bill (Hon. Mr. Leonard), who said that an increased amount had to be put in the supplementary estimates because of the increased length of the present session. I am sure the public must know that the responsibility for this is not on the shoulders of the Senate, and could not possibly be. However, I am very pleased indeed that my honourable friend called attention to what should be obvious.

Hon. T. A. Crerar: Honourable senators, the compulsion is upon me to say something about this supply bill. We have had a number of these bills this session, and, of course, in the working of our public economy it is necessary for Parliament to pass upon and approve the expenditures before the money is spent.

Sometimes I wonder just how valuable that procedure is. Under the previous government, occasionally I expressed my disappointment at the growth of expenditures and of the dangers I felt they constituted to Canada. I am bound to say that I see very little change, if any, which has come about as a result of

the change in administration. The growth of our spending, for instance, for the servicing of our debt is shown in our estimates.

I think my good friend the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Brooks) was astray, if I understood him aright, when he spoke of the cost of servicing our public debt.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: That is true.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: As a matter of fact, the amount provided in the estimates, which we are covering today in part, is a total of \$1,037,893,000. That is not an inconsiderable sum of money. That covers the interest and annual amortization of bond discount, premiums, commissions and so forth, and the cost of servicing and of issuing new loans, which by the way is \$2,893,000.

It is interesting to reflect that 27 years ago the total budget of Canada for all purposes was around \$550 million. That is, it was about one-half of what we have to appropriate now for interest alone to service our debt. That gives an indication of the growth of our debt.

I do not hold with those economists who say public debt is on the whole a good thing. Their theory is that if the Government spends a lot of money it is distributed all over the country and the economy as a whole benefits from it. There are margins within which that may in a measure be true. But you have to consider that public debt is not different in its application from a debt incurred by an individual. An individual may incur debt for a useful purpose. He may incur it to increase his production, and the production of wealth; and I would not want to be understood as out and out condemning going into debt. However, if we look at the purposes for which we are spending money we find that a great many are not associated with the production of new wealth, and therein lies a very great danger.

We are in a spending mood in Canada today. I shall not endeavour to assess the reasons for that, but our governing bodies, from top to bottom, are spending freely, too freely, with the result that the total obligations of the federal Government, direct and indirect, along with the provinces and municipalities, is now over \$40 billion. That is a serious state of affairs. So far we have managed to get along without a great deal of challenge or criticism; but I would point out to this house that the inflation that has taken place in this country has been a pertinent factor in the increase of all these obligations. When we consider that in the last 15 years inflation has increased in this country by almost 37 per cent—that is, we have increased the gross national product over this period of time by almost 37 per cent through