

Control of Government Expenditures

Mr. Drury: Then perhaps I should not say directed his attention, but directed his remarks. So the fact is that the suggestion that these expenditures have been growing out of control is not borne out by the facts relating to total expenditures. I will not dwell any more on that particular item.

In making his litany of complaints, the hon. member for Peace River referred to worshipping at the temple of bureaucracy. That is a temple at which I do not worship, though perhaps he does.

Mr. Baldwin: You are in it.

Mr. Nowlan: You built it and you own it.

Mr. Drury: If the hon. member for Peace River is prepared to worship at my feet, I do not like it but I will accept it. Like the disposable public expenditures that I have mentioned, the bureaucracy itself has also not been growing out of control. During the past ten years the average rate of increase in the size of the public service has been 1.5 per cent. I think this represents a much slower rate of growth than the increase in responsibility for the very large, new expenditures, public benefit schemes, such as the Canada Pension Plan, the guaranteed income supplement, the reform of the income tax system and the issue of capital gains. The additional people required to administer these programs—

Mr. Douglas: How much do you pay into the Canada Pension Plan?

Mr. Drury: The government of Canada is required to provide the administration for the Canada Pension Plan. We are talking here about numbers of people, about growth in the federal bureaucracy. I am saying that in spite of these new large programs, growth in the population of Canada, and substantial growth—something of the order of 9.5 per cent per annum—in the gross national product, the size of the public service, including departments and departmental corporations but not including, of course, the CNR or armed forces, has been of the order of 1.5 per cent per annum during the last 10 years.

Mr. Baldwin: But your casuals employed under contract arrangements take the figure up.

Mr. Drury: I am sure the hon. member would hardly represent that contractors' form part of the bureaucracy, certainly not that part of the bureaucracy of which he calls me an element.

The next item the hon. member mentioned and with which I propose to deal concerns the form of the estimates which, in his view, calls for some criticism. I can only assume that this criticism is based on lack of opportunity to look them over; I think it could hardly be lack of intelligence. The fact of the matter is that the present form of the estimates was the unanimous recommendation of the public accounts committee which gave the question long consideration, I suggest much greater consideration than the hon. member for Peace River has given the new form of the estimates. The committee was impressed with the fact that the revised form of the estimates now disclose more in the way of intelligible information than has ever been given to parliament before.

[Mr. Basford.]

Again I make the point I have made in the past, that power is based on knowledge, and that knowledge is power in the kind of institution we have. The government's endeavours to provide information to the public and, indeed, to members of the opposition apparently so overwhelmed those hon. members that they have not been able to assimilate it all and, consequently, they have had to take exception to the size of this great big, thick volume known as the blue book. There is too much information in it, and it confuses them. The hon. member cannot understand it.

• (1640)

Mr. Baldwin: It is not properly put together.

Mr. Drury: If the hon. member feels that it is not properly put together, let him make specific suggestions.

Mr. Baldwin: I already have.

Mr. Drury: Let him make those suggestions to the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, the body which gave consideration to the new form. That committee, including the chairman, unanimously adopted the new form and—

Mr. Baldwin: One chairman of that committee made recommendations which have never been followed.

Mr. Drury: I can only say that it is perhaps fortunate that they were not followed, because the subsequent Tory chairman in my view was correct in not paying attention to the recommendations of an earlier and less competent chairman.

Mr. Baldwin: He was not allowed to carry out those recommendations, because the majority of committee members would not let him.

Mr. Drury: The hon. member suggests that there should be votes on all opposition days. Apparently the ability of the opposition to articulate grievances or, indeed, to find grievances is so limited that by about half past eight in the evening on an opposition day there is no way of compelling opposition attendance except by requiring a vote and ringing the bell.

Mr. Baldwin: No, no. The minister has that all wrong.

Mr. Drury: We thought that we would establish a system in this House involving proceedings that are sufficiently interesting to command the attention and presence of hon. members without the sort of school boy announcement that would call them in for a vote on every one of those extra 25 days. Surely, it is a most unsatisfactory commentary on Parliament, and on the conduct of the opposition, when the only way of getting the attention of those hon. members is by ringing the bells and calling for a vote.

Mr. Baldwin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I know the minister would not want to mislead the House on what I said. I think I must, under the Standing Orders, correct him and say what I had in mind was that I hoped some of the boneless wonders who sit behind him would be prepared to vote on motions that are not confidence motions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!