

Inquiries of the Ministry

HOUSE OF COMMONS

INQUIRY AS TO PAY INCREASE FOR
MEMBERS' STENOGRAPHIC STAFF

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Robert Fair (Battle River): I should like to address a question to Your Honour. What action has been taken to increase the pay of those employed on the members' stenographic staff?

Mr. Speaker: I shall be glad to discuss the matter with the hon. member, but it is not customary to address questions to the Speaker when he is in the chair.

INCOME TAX

ADVERTISING WITH RESPECT TO RETURNS
AND REFUNDS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. K. Fraser (Peterborough West): I would like to address a question to the Minister of National Revenue, whose department has been sponsoring spot advertisements on the radio every day. This morning the announcer on CBL said—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Fraser: —that the government would return a generous refund on last year's income tax if the returns were sent in now. My question is, what is generous about returning a person's own money?

Hon. J. J. McCann (Minister of National Revenue): The announcement is by way of an advertisement, and is not intended to advertise generosity at all.

Mr. Fraser: That was the statement—"a generous refund".

Mr. McCann: This step has been taken with a view to getting the returns in quickly in order that the assessments may be made and the refundable portion collected in the months of January, February and March returned as soon as possible. The sooner the returns are in, the sooner the refunds will be made.

RADIO BROADCASTING

INQUIRY AS TO SETTING UP OF SPECIAL
COMMITTEE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Donald M. Fleming (Eglinton): May I ask the Minister of National Revenue if the government will proceed this session to set up a special committee on radio and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation?

Hon. J. J. McCann (Minister of National Revenue): Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is the intention of the government to set up the committee as soon as possible, and I expect to place a motion on the order paper this week.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS
IN REPLY

The house resumed, from Friday, February 17, consideration of the motion of Mr. F. H. Larson for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in rising to take part in this debate I wish to express my personal respects to the mover (Mr. Larson) and the seconder (Mr. Dumas) of the motion, who have discharged that duty in keeping with the customs of this debate.

As to the speech from the throne itself, it contains so little of a definite nature that any remarks which may contribute to the effective consideration of our problems necessarily must be related more to what the speech from the throne does not say than to anything it does say.

There was one significant comment in the excellent speech made by the hon. member who moved this motion, and did it so well. He said, at page 27 of *Hansard*:

I feel that I may be open to criticism for not taking issue with the government on some of the matters of a more contentious nature.

Then he went on to explain why, on balance, he felt justified in approving what they had done. That brief comment, however, reflected what is in the minds of so many members on both sides of this house. There has been widespread and justified criticism of the government since last we met; and that criticism is directed not only to particular acts of omission or commission by this government but also to the very important fact that neither parliament nor the people were given information which the government have admitted they had in their possession for some considerable time. That brings before us an issue which goes to the very root of the established principles of responsible government and, in turn, to the very root of freedom itself.

There comes a time when all wise parliamentary bodies must carefully examine abuses which have crept into their procedure and practices, and correct them before it is too late. Not only here in Canada but in other free nations as well the emergency powers, conferred upon the executive and

[Mr. Abbott.]