

Anti-Inflation Program

every government in Canada goes through this exercise once a year. The requests for expenditures come in from the departments, they are cut down, gone over, and cut down again. Every government goes through this. To talk about cutting \$1½ billion from estimates that the government has been working on is an indication of the mentality of the government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Notice that the President of the Treasury Board will not disclose the total from which he is cutting that \$1½ billion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: He says he had estimates of November last. Well, he must have added them up. If he cannot add them up I am sure there are some people in the public service who must have added them up. Mr. Speaker, he must know what the total of those estimates was last year.

When you claim that you are cutting a billion and a half dollars, if you are acting in good faith you would tell what you were cutting from; you would tell the House what the total was before you cut, and you would tell the House what the total is after you cut.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: There is a very good reason why the minister has not told the House—because a lot of this is very phony.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: It is a public relations job. He says he is cutting a billion and a half dollars from the estimates, Mr. Speaker. About half of those alleged cuts are non-budgetary. About half of them are outside the budget. Let us forget for a moment how hon. gentlemen opposite applauded the government when it drowned its own children, like Information Canada and CYC.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The biggest single cut is outside the budget—some \$330 million in direct financing to the CNR. What a cut! The CNR is being invited to go out and raise that money publicly rather than borrowing it from the government. That is the biggest single cut that the government has made.

Mr. Trudeau: What of the hardship?

Mr. Stanfield: Real hardship!

Mr. Trudeau: What are you complaining about?

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take the time of the House to go over what the Auditor General said.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): You don't dare!

Mr. Stanfield: Well, I will. If you want it read I will read it out. The Auditor General said:

[Mr. Stanfield.]

The study leads to one clear conclusion: the present state of the financial management and control systems of the departments and agencies of the Government of Canada is significantly below acceptable standards of quality and effectiveness.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: And that is not Maxwell Henderson.

Mr. Stanfield: Yet the President of the Treasury Board stands in this House tonight and says:

... there seems to be nothing that we can do which will not mean a reduction... which will not cut grants or contributions to some cultural or social or industrial development activity; or which will not cause a decline in some government service; or which will not restrict the funds available for employment creation.

The minister will not admit the validity of the Auditor General's comment upon the operation of the Treasury Board and the government. The minister comes before the House trying to pretend to the Canadian people that there are not vast sums of money being wasted. I put it this way, Mr. Speaker—those fellows spill more than a billion and a half dollars each year.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: What is so painfully obvious tonight is that the government has no philosophy—no continuity of rationale in its economic approaches.

Mr. Jamieson: Like the Tories.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, if the minister wants to take the time I will be happy to take him through elections in recent years.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: Here is what the minister said about the government's approach to inflation. It had three main purposes; first, to reinforce its attack on inflation through encouraging increased supplies of goods and services. Well, that has taken rather a sad blow from the sloppy introduction of the controls program. The second purpose was to act directly against high prices where this was practical. And the third one—listen to this carefully—was to alleviate the adverse impact of rising prices on all Canadians, particularly those with lower incomes.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: As far as the third aim is concerned—to alleviate the difficulties of Canadians on low incomes in the face of inflation—it is abundantly clear from tonight's announcement that the government is quite prepared to fight inflation on the backs of millions of Canadians who cannot afford the burden.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (2050)

Mr. Stanfield: I say that removing the indexing of family allowances for this year is contrary to anything the government has stood for, if it ever stood for anything. Certainly it is contrary to what other parties in the House have advocated, namely, the protection of low income Canadians against inflation. Indeed, Sir, the mere exist-