

The CHAIRMAN: Is there any further discussion along this line? It is very interesting and gives us food for thought for further consideration of these crown corporations.

Are there any further questions of Mr. Henderson on the estimates themselves or on the recommendations of the Glassco Commission in connection with changing the form of the estimates?

Senator McCUTCHEON: Could I ask Mr. Henderson a very broad question? I take it from what I have heard you say here today, and from what you said at a previous hearing at which unfortunately I could not be present, that broadly speaking you are in agreement with the recommendations of the Glassco Commission with respect to the form of the estimates and the financial management of the Government departments?

Mr. HENDERSON: The proper answer to that question, Senator McCutcheon, is that I am in agreement, and I sought to explain that at the last meeting; but I also pointed out, as clearly as I could, that the question as to the extent to which these individual recommendations might or might not be implemented is the prerogative of the executive, not mine.

Senator McCUTCHEON: I was not suggesting it was anybody's prerogative sitting in this room.

Mr. HENDERSON: But as far as the practicability of them is concerned and the question that the chairman mentioned of the importance of accountability plus the fact a number of Glassco's recommendations follow on ones I myself have made, such as the one we have been discussing in the estimates here today, I have been frank in saying I think they well merit the consideration that is being given to them.

Senator CROLL: If you have answered this I will see it in the record. I have always been impressed by the British approach to public accounts in that they take one department on a non-party basis and really go over it with a fine tooth comb. Each year they consider a different department. I do not know how they decide on what department to look at, but they adopt that method instead of the sort of hit and miss method of looking at all departments at the one time. Is it practical from our point of view that we adopt the same method? Surely, it would give us a better understanding of what goes on in a department if that department is studied in such an intense fashion.

Mr. HENDERSON: I think it would be excellent if you were to concentrate on the operations of one department, starting probably with the minister. In the same way you could choose one of the crown corporations and study it. I think that that would be of considerable help. It may interest you to know that the Public Accounts Committee this morning decided to call—at least this is my understanding from the way the discussion went—three crown corporations, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority and the National Harbours Board, over the next two months or so. During this past summer they called the C.B.C. before them over a period of six meetings, and from speaking to the president himself and to the Secretary of State I received the impression that they thought it was of assistance to them.

The Committee's review was restricted by its terms of reference to the accounts in terms of my report on those accounts. One thing I have not touched on is the fact that in respect of all these crown corporations, when I have completed my work at the end of the year and signed the statutory accounts, I issue what can loosely be described as a long-form report. It may run to 30 or 40 pages, and is addressed to the chairman and members of the board. In that report I go over the composition of the accounts and I make suggestions as to improvements in the system of internal control, and draw their attention to situations that need remedying in other directions. My