

we in the kind of parliamentary system that does not protect the minister? A minister may come to cabinet and ask for something for his department, but the government may feel that because of other priorities or lack of revenue, or because it is time fiscal policies were geared to putting less into the economy, government spending should be reduced.

I believe our parliamentary system of government could not work if a minister had to make public his submissions to cabinet, and this is what the hon. member is asking for. He is asking for the forecast of a minister, a forecast the minister may have arrived at over three, four or five years before going to cabinet or the Treasury Board and fighting his point. Because there is only a certain amount of money available from taxes and other sources of revenue, and because the Treasury Board, the Minister of Finance and other ministers responsible in this area so recommend, the cabinet may decide on priorities which apply not only to that particular department but to all departments. The hon. member may want a system of government that would make available what he asks for, but I do not know of any system which works that way.

A program forecast is a study by a certain department and a forecast of its expenditures for existing or future programs. It seems to me that is the reason we have a cabinet and the reason our type of parliamentary government has an executive. As the hon. member for York West explained, the executive is responsible for presenting programs to parliament, and if they do not work the executive is also responsible. I do not see how a government could function if this type of motion were accepted and forecasts were tabled in the way the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore (Mr. Grier) suggests. The hon. member for York West also explained this point in regard to the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

That brings me to the famous evaluation reports. In committee the minister explained that there was no conflict between what the Treasury Board had said in an answer on March 14 and what he had said. The type of evaluation that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury) was talking about is being made by the department. Like other departments, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce does not spend money without questioning how it is spent. Every year when the minister goes to Treasury Board with his estimates, he is responsible for them to cabinet, to Treasury Board and ultimately to this House.

Evaluations are being made, but there are different sorts of evaluation. What the members of the New Democratic Party seem to want is independent evaluation. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) explained that to me in a committee not long ago when he said he would like to see independent evaluations made. Maybe this is possible, but if any evaluation reports are to be made public they will have to be from an independent body. If you ask a government official who is hired under contract or employed by the public service in a government department to make an analysis of a program or to evaluate it, he will probably take a critical stand. Perhaps he will take such a stand because he wants to improve the program. Are we to put that official on the block and say the evaluation report is to be made public? I do not know

Disclosure of Documents

any government which functions that way. I wonder if the NDP governments in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia do that.

● (1750)

Mr. Stevens: Let us deal with Ottawa.

Mr. Breau: Mr. Speaker, members of the opposition want to deal with Ottawa because they are ashamed of what their provincial supporters do. They suggest that Ottawa should do something else. The fact is that Ottawa has the same problems as any province. I say this to illustrate that it is not possible to do some of the things the notice of motion suggests. It would not be possible to do them if this matter had been raised in the Ontario legislature or any other legislature that operates under our system. I do not know of any parliamentary system in the world in which any member of the executive, while preparing forecasts and submissions for the cabinet, would make them public.

Mr. Stevens: Surely no government is as secretive as the one the hon. member supports.

Mr. Breau: I wonder what kind of student of parliamentary affairs the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens) has been. That cabinet proceedings are secret is well established; I think this applies to any form of government.

Mr. Stevens: Tell us about this government's tinkering.

Mr. Breau: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member could have made a speech had he wanted to do so. I do not know of any government in Canada that operates that way. I should like hon. members to tell me whether there is any parliamentary government which makes public submissions of ministers to cabinet. That system just could not work. This is also true in business. If the board of directors asks somebody in the company for an analysis or an evaluation, that analysis is not made public. The evaluation is for the board of directors to consider and it is confidential. I do not know how any government could function if such evaluations were made public. They are made for the purposes of the department, to enable it to evaluate programs. I do not see how we could make such evaluation reports public and maintain the type of government that we have in Canada.

The hon. member also spoke about parliamentary controls. I do not think program forecasts or evaluation reports have anything to do with parliamentary control. I admit that the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore supports a party that does its homework, as is evident when members of that party come to committee and examine officials and ministers. All opposition parties are not like that. I have seen many instances which illustrate this. Indeed, I remember when the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gillespie) appeared before a committee to present his supplementary estimates and members of the Conservative party were not interested in questioning him on the programs being submitted; they were concerned about procedural questions and making headlines. That is their privilege.

Mr. Stevens: Stick to the facts.