

evasion of government responsibility. Because our country is so scattered and contains few great centres of population, the matter of television might well be remitted to a commission; but to clutter up its proceedings with a multitude of other references is likely, in my opinion, to very largely destroy its effectiveness.

This proposed commission is to investigate the activities of agencies of the government relating to radio and films. Well, I suppose that is one way, although it may be a very expensive one, of shutting off discussion of these things in the house. Then we are to have an investigation of research,—“research,” the broadest word in our language. It can include anything and everything. Has anyone the faintest idea what is meant, or how far it will extend? Also, “the preservation of our national records, a national library”. For years the press and the people of this country have been urging the government to establish a national library. About two sessions ago, I believe, the matter was discussed in this house, and at that time it was stated, and the statement has not been challenged—I have checked the truth of it by reference to the librarian—that Canada and Siam were the only two countries in the world without a national library, or its equivalent in the form of state libraries which supply the people with material. It is too bad that since that discussion little Siam decided to establish a national library, so that today, in this respect, we find ourselves alone in the world. And now we are told that we have to set up a royal commission to decide whether we ought to have a national library or not. Can it be possible that Canada is so far behind all other countries in initiative that we find ourselves placed in this position.

I could go on, but I do not wish to bore you or take up the time of the house.

Some Hon. Senators: Go on.

Hon. Mrs. Fallis: I could go on to speak of the activities designed “to enrich our national life, and to increase our own consciousness of our national heritage”—presumably by contact with organizations abroad. What lovely vistas are opened up of extensive travel to find out how we may enrich ourselves culturally, because of course we shall have to go abroad to see what other nations are doing in a cultural way. Possibilities of that kind are almost unlimited. I ask honourable senators: Has anyone the faintest idea how long this commission would have to sit to fulfil

these functions, or what the cost to the country would be?

I hope that when I have finished, nobody will rise to read me a lecture, such as was read in another place, on the theme that “man shall not live by bread alone”, and on the necessity of enriching and encouraging the cultural and educational life of this country; because, as I said at the beginning, with all these objectives I am in complete accord, and would support anything within reason which would achieve them. But I do not consider that this proposal is within reason.

Honourable senators, what is parliament for? For what do we, or the members of the other place, receive our indemnities from the people of this country? Is it not that to the best of our ability we shall grapple with and solve the problems of this country as they arise from day to day? To me, this proposal is nothing but an evasion of a responsibility which ministers and members of parliament should assume. I except, as I have said, one or two outstanding and far-reaching questions. But some of the matters to be referred to this commission are, I believe, purely the responsibility of the ministers and of parliament, and should be dealt with as such.

If the government does not feel equal to the task, perhaps a Senate committee could be set up to deal with them. The membership of this chamber includes persons outstanding in their particular lines of activity, men of experience, of vision and of love of country. We have in this house honourable senators who are second to none in the legal profession of this country. Is there any reason why the Senate should not use some of its spare time in helping to solve these problems—with the exception, as I have said, of two or three more difficult, far-reaching, and perhaps more controversial questions, which could be left to a royal commission? I submit to you, honourable senators, that if we took a stand in conformity with this principle, we would help to justify the existence of parliament, we would be carrying out some of the duties for which parliament was constituted, and we would save the already overburdened taxpayers of this country from having more and more burdens heaped upon their shoulders.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Howard: Honourable senators, I move the adjournment of the debate.

The motion was agreed to.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 3 p.m.