

themselves. What they are going to have to judge, I suppose, is whether the Treasury Board is judging properly and acting properly where it finds departments have not been measuring up. This may make your role and that of the Public Accounts Committee and others in Parliament more difficult still. All in all, therefore, it seems to me that while this report goes in the right direction, it confronts us with changes in the way we carry out our duties, which we should undertake and which, I believe, we will be undertaking, because already the Government and Parliament have approved quite a number of these recommendations which will require us to change our approach and attitudes, and perhaps we shall make mistakes here and there as we work into the new procedures and the new spirit.

Now, if I might turn to a few of the specific recommendations—I do not want to comment on all of them by any manner of means—it seems to me that in regard to the ones relating to the estimates particularly, if I could refer perhaps to the royal commission report—

Senator CROLL: Mr. Chairman, before Mr. Bryce gets into specific recommendations, is this moment appropriate for questions on the generalities he has been dealing with?

The CHAIRMAN: Would you like to pause here?

Mr. BRYCE: Just whatever is convenient to senators.

The CHAIRMAN: Does it interfere with your presentation?

Mr. BRYCE: No.

Senator LAMBERT: I have a question I would like to ask Mr. Bryce, if he would care to express an opinion upon the sort of general perspective. Would it be possible to indicate a general total amount representing those statutory areas in which the expenditures might be regarded as irreducible and rather difficult to control? Also, on the other hand, a general class of expenditures where reductions might be effected with the assumed approval of Parliament? In other words, is there a line of demarcation where we could possibly get a picture of the area which might be considered as reducible, with the approval of Parliament, rather than the statutory, fixed amounts which are pretty well classified in the Estimates in relation to provincial agreements and so on? I think if that perspective could be given to us we might approach the thing from that point of view.

Mr. BRYCE: That is a question I did not come prepared with any figures to answer. I would say, first off, that what is reducible and what is not depends on the time that can be taken to make a decision or revise decisions already made, and what is regarded as within the art of the possible. For example, if you take our payments to the provinces under tax-sharing arrangements and things of this sort, these can be altered from time to time, and have been altered from time to time, even though they are provided by statute. You may recall that in 1961 the Government altered the formula relating to the manner of determining such grants. Well, it was altered again this year to restore, largely but not completely, the principle that was enacted in 1956. An item like that, if you look at it in any particular year, is hard to reduce because first it is embodied in the statute and, secondly, it is the result, if not of agreement, of a sort of arrangement that has finally been worked out after a lot of consultation with the provinces.

Again there are some important services which are provided for by appropriation and which we do not suppose anyone would seriously think of reducing because the public are dependent upon them. You take for example the operation of the Post Office which is a vital part of the working machinery of