

Main Estimates

changes in estimates levels for these departments these transfers should be borne in mind. All of these responsibilities would be financed in the new department given Parliament's approval of the Organization Act and of these estimates.

Another large apparent increase in the estimates, that for external affairs, reflects a decision of the government to combine under the direction of external affairs the administrative support services for the overseas operations of several departments. It is hoped in this way to achieve greater efficiency in such support services. The increase in external affairs is offset by decreases in the other departments.

● (2:30 p.m.)

Last year when I tabled the main estimates I drew the attention of hon. members to the new form of the estimates which I said evidenced our attempts to "improve the process of resource allocation and to better inform Parliament and the people of Canada of the objectives, operations and costs of the departments and agencies of government".

Because of the importance this administration attaches to informing the people of Canada about the processes and decisions of government, we are going one step further at this time. The tabling of the estimates is being used as an occasion on which to provide a greater amount of information about the estimates to the people of Canada in the form of a special booklet which will be distributed to all members of the House today and which is being made available to the press. The booklet will be available through Information Canada across Canada upon request of members of the general public. It is entitled "How Your Tax Dollar is Spent"—a taxpayer's introduction to the spending plans of the government of Canada for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 1971.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Drury: I cannot claim authorship. The booklet describes the process by which the government reaches its decisions in the allocation of resources to recommend to Parliament in the estimates. It describes as well the allocation recommended for the particular year 1971-72 in terms of the priorities of the nation and consequently of the government.

Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West): Mr. Speaker, if it had not been indicated that the document that was handed to me a few minutes ago came from the President of the Treasury Board I would have thought that this was also one of the products of Information Canada because it seems to me that this document tends to dissimulate and to conceal from the Canadian public the size—here I refer not to the nature of the expenditures but to the totality—of the expenditures proposed by the government which of course must be raised by taxation from the Canadian public. Perhaps this may be seen as some justification for the insistence of the Minister of Finance that he was going to increase taxes by his ledger-deman in connection with revisions of the income tax; perhaps this is one of the reasons.

[Mr. Drury.]

We see that there is an increase of some \$900 million in the budgetary expenditures for this year, and we are going to see how this is done. I have not had a chance to examine all the tables to see just where this money is going to go. One increase outside those to which the minister referred briefly—I do not know who had a look at it—is another \$25 million for the four DDH destroyers in the Department of National Defence. The Minister of National Defence is now of the opinion that these ships are too specialized. The hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) was Minister of National Defence when the plans were being advocated and it was decided to build the ships. But we also know that in 1963 the plans for four new ships were scrapped by the Department of National Defence because the then minister thought the ships were not specialized enough. All I can say is that along with a lot of the expenditure and reorganization in the Department of National Defence which has cost a great deal we have had some six damn fool years with the net result that the armed forces are now in green uniforms. Were it not for the economic conditions in the country today and the fact that so many of the men are aged by their pensions, we would not have half the men that there are in the forces today. This is one of the contributions that went through a few years ago before the coming to this house of some of the clappers at the back of the ministry who now talk about the green uniform. If they had known the armed services of some years ago, they would recognize what a different force it then was.

Having said that, it is interesting to note that even though we are now considering Bill C-207 the government has gone ahead and organized the estimates book on the basis that this legislation is going to be passed. The Minister of Fisheries and Forestry has been suppressed. We are to have a department of the environment, and all the representations of my colleagues from the Atlantic provinces and from others from the Pacific coast with regard to maintaining the identification of fisheries are going to go for naught. Why? Because the coffin has been nailed down. The book of estimates, which no doubt was printed many weeks ago, was set up in this form. The government has no intention of acceding to any suggestions that might be made, and I do not suppose they would even accede to the representations of the present Minister of Fisheries and Forestry who would like to continue in that role and give some entitlement to the important fishery industry.

We will want to know, and we will study this, how much all the ministries that are now being proposed under Bill C-207 will cost. It will be a very interesting question to put forward. We know that these estimates will go before the committees, but notwithstanding the statements made by the President of the Treasury Board last year and again this year that the new format of the estimates will render them more readily intelligible so that they will convey greater information, I put it to you that it is the government and not Parliament that proposed the new rules of the House. I can point to the members and ministers who are responsible for the new rules. We were then steamrollered into passing them.