

The Address—Mr. St. Laurent

There are some items that have been severely criticized, but they do not amount to very substantial sums. We have heard a lot about possible savings that might be made in the administration of these social services. I was glad to see that the hon. gentleman himself was shying away from the \$500 million that had been mentioned as a possible saving resulting from a commission such as the Hoover commission being set up in Canada. The whole amount to which such a commission of inquiry would apply is something of the order of \$621 million. It would be rather difficult, therefore, to squeeze \$500 million out of that. I submit it would be difficult to squeeze \$100 million out of it, unless some of these services were going to be eliminated. One thing that has been severely criticized by the hon. member for Peterborough West (Mr. Fraser) is the film board. Even if you cut that out altogether, all you would save would be \$3 million.

Mr. Fraser: I never said to cut it out.

Mr. St. Laurent: That is just the point; when you get down to something specific you would be glad if it did not cost so much but you would not cut it out.

Mr. Fraser: I said to just clean it up.

Mr. St. Laurent: Even if you did, all you would save would be \$3 million. A lot of criticism has been levelled against the government because of the tremendous extravagance in travelling expenses. Well, they are large and amount, I think, to about \$46.5 million. You could not cut that out without leaving in Korea the troops we have there, without doing away with the rotation system; and I am sure no hon. gentleman would want to do away with the rotation system for the men who have served and who are serving in Korea. If travelling expenses were eliminated you would have to keep the members of parliament here all the time. No one would want to do that. You would have to eliminate everything that is expended on foreign representation abroad. I believe the international situation is such that no one would want to do that. They want it done properly, but they want it done with due regard to proper economy. They do not want to cut it out.

Even if we cut it out, even if we cut out all the expenditures incurred for the so-called publicity, we would hardly arrive at \$100 million. On the other hand, if you took into account only some of the things that the hon. gentleman has seriously recommended should be done—I have them here and I shall give the details following the dinner recess—they amount to something over \$600 million.

I believe the hon. gentleman would have rather serious qualms about balancing the ones against the others.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. St. Laurent: Mr. Speaker, when the house took recess for dinner I was endeavouring to give some sympathetic consideration to the difficulties which the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Macdonnell) might have to face if, in the near future, he had to present the budget to this house. I had first of all tried to find what items of expenditure it might be possible for him to compress. I had been guided in that search by the amount of criticism that had been directed against certain of the activities this government has carried on while in office. There has been much criticism of the film board; but even the elimination of everything connected with the film board could account for only \$3 million. Then I had also mentioned criticism of the cost of travelling, removal expenses and so forth, which amount to \$46,500,000 but which, of course, could not be entirely eliminated because it would be impossible for the administration to function at all if a substantial portion of these expenditures were not continued in effect.

Another chapter of our activity that has come under fairly severe criticism from time to time is the C.B.C. But even if all government activities in connection with the C.B.C. were eliminated, all that could account for in reduction of expenditure would be \$8,250,000. Another item that I had set down was the elimination, for instance, of 10 per cent of the civil servants, mainly in the Ottawa area. That would be a considerable slice of the administrative work which it is suggested is not carried on with sufficient regard to proper economy. That might make an item of \$41,500,000.

Another item which has been frequently criticized as being nothing but government propaganda is the expenditure incurred in respect of publicity, personal relations advertising, amounting to \$17,500,000.

Altogether these items would make a total of \$116,750,000. I am sure the hon. gentleman would not find it possible to eliminate all of these items. I think he would have considerable embarrassment in making any substantial reduction in them. For instance, the elimination of government activities in radio broadcasting would be a reversal of what has been the policy of his party from