

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): Last night someone remarked that it is all very well to get up and make a speech on this matter, but we do nothing about it. In the first place, I think the fact we did speak about it last night had a salutary effect, because it gave rise at least to part of the debate we have had this afternoon. It has not got through to the press yet, but that is no surprise to any honourable senator.

Now we have a further step to take, and that is the practical one of dealing with this matter in our committee, which is capable of and has the authority and power to do so. That committee will make a report, and when we receive it for consideration perhaps some action will become obvious. At that time we can decide what further practical steps should be taken.

Hon. Mr. Brooks: To see it does not happen again.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): Yes, indeed, to see it does not happen again, or to try to ensure that that kind of thing is not repeated. The outrage that people feel about matters of this kind has already been adequately described in this chamber for it to be unnecessary for me to make any further comment.

I believe that these are practical and can be effective steps; and I think the Senate will render a valuable public service if it embarks upon this path.

I do not want to speak further, but I must say that I am always glad to hear Senator Walker participate in a debate. There is one difference between the kind of speech Senator Walker made and the kind Senator Crerar would have made today, and only time will provide the test. But usually the most severe of Senator Crerar's strictures were reserved for the party of which he is a member. Senator Walker has not yet had that opportunity, but perhaps it will arise in due time! I do agree with him that the "box-car" figures contained in the Estimates today are staggering, but of course the growth of this country is also a staggering spectacle in numbers, economic development and in almost every way. The demand for public spending and for more and more from the public treasury certainly keeps the pressure on Government, regardless of who is in office. No one knows that better than Senator Walker. He was a member of Cabinet, and he realizes what these pressures can be, how demanding they are, and how difficult it is at times to resist them or even to

modify them. But I think every government tries. All I can say to him is that, in so far as governments can, all try to avoid extravagance and very few really succeed. This is the purpose of the scrutiny by Parliament of the spending.

I was more than delighted on the last occasion we considered an appropriation bill to hear Senator Aseltine stand in his place and commend the Senate for the work that has been done by the Finance Committee in dealing with the Estimates. Perhaps for the first time in the history of the Senate we have not had to listen to speeches, either from the Government or the Opposition benches, saying that we are voting huge sums without knowing for what they are voted for. Now the opportunity is available through the Finance Committee to examine the details of the Estimates. If we do not go into every detail, we can still undertake the kind of valuable studies through that committee that make it possible for the Senate now to say: We can deal with this bill on our responsibility as parliamentarians. It is curious though that the rules recently adopted by the House of Commons have now put the Opposition there at least into the position that the Senate Opposition once was in. Having restricted themselves to a certain limited time for consideration of the Estimates, the other day they had to put through a great many which they did not have time to debate. I do not think we are in that position in the Senate. There is no term fixed for the sittings of the Finance Committee: it continues to be seized with these matters; it can continue its work until just before the end of the session, when it brings in its report.

Hon. Jean-François Pouliot: Honourable senators, I am satisfied with what has been said by the Leader of the Government (Honourable Mr. Connolly, Ottawa West), the Acting Leader of the Opposition (Honourable Mr. Choquette) and Senator Grosart about the C.B.C. We live in different times from 10 or 11 years ago when the Right Honourable Louis St. Laurent was strongly criticized by the opposition front benchers because he complained about a C.B.C. program. The theory of the Opposition at that time was to give a free hand to the C.B.C. but the fact that Mr. St. Laurent was Prime Minister of Canada did not deprive him of his rights as a private citizen to express his free opinion about any program of the C.B.C. or anything done by any crown company.