

The Budget—Mr. Perrault

I suggest that they do a little more research into some of the figures they use, because between 1968 and 1969 federal expenditures rose from \$6.09 billion to \$12.058 billion. Provincial-municipal expenditures rose during the same period from \$4.317 billion to \$13.734 billion. Between 1958 and 1968 there was an increase in federal government outlays of 98 per cent. Over the same period of time, expenditures by provincial governments and municipalities increased by 218 per cent. As a result, the share of total expenditures accounted for by the federal government in 1958, which was 58.6 per cent, declined sharply to a 1968 level of 46.7 per cent of total expenditures. This is said to be a spendthrift federal government with an insatiable greed for taxation moneys. The fact of the matter is that during recent years the federal government has done everything possible to channel much of this money back into the provinces, so much so that the percentage of total expenditures is dropping.

It should be noted as well that there is a large increase in federal expenditures under the heading "Transfers to other levels of government". Between 1958 and 1968, these expenditures increased from \$663 million to \$2.4 billion, an increase of nearly four times. So that the image of a federal government with an insatiable greed for new taxes is false. In fact, there has been almost a 12 per cent decrease in the federal share of total expenditures in a ten-year period.

I should like to mention two matters of concern to the people of my province, and I think to many other people in Canada. British Columbia takes second place to no province in Canada in the contribution which her sons and daughters have made to the armed forces. Many of them live in my constituency and I would be remiss in my responsibility as a member if I failed to bring once again their plight and the problems of veterans in all parts of Canada to the attention of this House.

The Woods report contained 148 separate and distinct recommendations. It is 1,500 pages in length. It is an important document which has been given serious study by members of the Veterans Affairs Committee, meeting on 30 or 40 occasions. Having heard from veterans organizations in all parts of Canada, having held public meetings and cross-examined many witnesses, the committee is about to report. It is my understanding that hearings will terminate next Tuesday, and then the committee's report will be written. I hope

the report can be brought to the House before the end of April at the very latest. When the report is tabled, I would urge the government immediately to draft appropriate legislation to enact into law needed reforms.

Some areas are of special, critical importance. We must as a first priority give attention to the plight of the multiple and severely disabled. The entire review procedure needs strengthening and improving. There must be major reform in this area. After two wars that exacted such an awesome and terrible toll of Canadians, the veterans and their survivors were told that a grateful nation would always remember. Those words will be but a hollow and cruel mockery unless we as members are prepared to enact the reforms which our veterans have required for so many years.

Together with other members I am disappointed that we have in this budget no increased funds for our senior citizens. In recent months I have engaged in frequent conversations with senior citizens and have made price checks in retail stores both in Ottawa and in my own constituency of Burnaby-Seymour. It is a grim experience to talk with these senior citizens who are attempting to obtain the necessities of life out of meagre incomes which are being eroded by inflation. These are the people who built this country. They earned a dollar when it bought a dollar's worth of goods. Today they are the tragic and prime victims of an inflation which extends no special compassion or concession to them. I regret that they were not included in the minister's budget message and I hope they will not be forgotten for long. I hope that within a short period of time we will provide them with more assistance.

Surely in light of the inflation that has taken place in recent years, we should first of all upgrade senior citizen allowances to decent, liveable levels, and then attach these pensions to a special senior citizen cost of living index which will accurately reflect any changes which may occur in the living costs of the older people in our economy.

There are some features of the budget which are very commendable and have not been touched on by some speakers. The government proposals to extend by three years the existing fast write-off for water pollution control facilities, and to make similar depreciation rates available for facilities for reducing air pollution are good proposals. The fact that the line is being held on taxes is also