

Finally, as stated by the sponsor of the bill, there are some \$1 votes listed in the schedule to the bill and described in the explanatory sections of the supplementary blue book, which was distributed to honourable senators some time ago.

● (1540)

Recalling as I do the fierce opposition voiced in this chamber in the past, I deem it necessary at this stage to draw the attention of this chamber to the section of the report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance under the heading of "Program Authorization by Appropriation Act." As previously stated in the course of this debate, the report was tabled in this chamber on November 29.

Far be it from me to criticize our new colleague, the sponsor of this bill, for apparently not being too impressed by the comments contained in this section of the committee's report. I merely wish to remind those honourable senators who were sitting on this side of the chamber in the last Parliament of their severe criticism of the use of \$1 items in appropriation acts for purposes of either program authorization by appropriation act or amending legislation. I fear that the frigid climate surrounding those now occupying the treasury benches might have dampened their past fierce opposition to the so-called \$1 items in appropriation acts.

For the sake of brevity I shall not deal at great length with the several examples described in the report of the National Finance Committee on the supplementary estimates (B) for 1979-80.

However, one of these examples is the Salmonid Enhancement Program of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans which was funded at a level in excess of \$20 million per annum for a period of three to four years. This program was authorized by an appropriation act. Treasury Board officials maintained that that type of program fell within the general mandate of the department and, therefore, no authorizing legislation was required, even though the cost was "fairly substantial."

The committee totally disagreed with the position articulated by the Treasury Board officials for reasons which will become apparent after discussion of the two other examples. The main concern of the committee with the Salmonid Enhancement Program was further heightened when a review of the department's statement of objectives, as contained in the main estimates for 1979-80 and the act creating the department, indicated that "community development," an objective of the Salmonid Enhancement Program, did not even appear to be specifically within the department's mandate.

VIA Rail is another example of a program where originating legislation was based upon an appropriation act—that is, a creation act. I am referring to Appropriation Act No. 1 of 1977. In this instance, the technique used was a \$1 vote. At the time the related estimates were being reviewed, Senator Manning objected to this use of appropriation acts wherein an annual expenditure of up to \$240 million was to be permitted in the absence of parliamentary scrutiny, other than that allowed in the estimates and appropriation act process. Two

years later, in supplementary estimates (B), parliamentary approval is being sought to remove that annual expenditure restriction—again without any provision for fundamental debate on the merits of the case.

Treasury Board officials stated that the Department of Transport was preparing a report to identify means of achieving a reduction of the cost of VIA Rail but, insofar as they were aware, the option of discontinuing the service—as was done in Newfoundland—was not under consideration.

The committee was sufficiently concerned with this escalating expenditure that it gave serious consideration to requesting the President of VIA Rail to appear before it.

Finally, the committee draws attention to the Canadian Home Insulation Program—CHIP. This Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation program is another example of program authorization by an appropriation act. The predecessor, the Home Insulation Program which operates in the provinces of Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia where most heating is by oil or oil-generated electricity, was authorized by Appropriation Act No. 1 in 1977. The main estimates for the fiscal year 1978-79 estimated the program cost at \$69.2 million.

The Canadian Home Insulation Program, which operates in all other provinces, was first estimated to cost some \$47 million in the main estimates of the fiscal year 1979-80. As a result of changes to the program design, effective April, 1979, this figure was subsequently revised to \$167.3 million in the supplementary estimates. A rudimentary calculation, based upon figures given by Treasury Board officials during the hearings, suggested that the cost of the program for the fiscal year alone could amount to \$250 million. It appears that the full cost of the Home Insulation Program has not yet been made clear to Parliament.

The Standing Senate Committee on National Finance was quite distressed as a result of questions raised during hearings. The continued need for such a program was questioned in view of anticipated changes in the price of oil which will provide added, and perhaps even sufficient, incentives to homeowners to insulate. The adequacy of the design of the Canadian Home Insulation Program was also questioned specifically in regard to the absence of targeting of incentives to reduce oil consumption in parts of the country where gas is available, or where oil-generated electricity used for heating purposes is a small portion of the total power generated.

I am, as no doubt many of my colleagues are, flabbergasted by the lack of reaction to this bill from our friends opposite. Indeed, I had expected my colleagues on the other side of the chamber to react very strongly to this type of legislation. I am also astounded by their abstention from using their classic excuse of inheritance from preceding governments.

Senator Olson: They should have at least done that.

Senator Langlois: I was sincerely hoping that they would make very good use of this golden opportunity to maintain their stand against this type of legislation, and to advocate more parliamentary exposure to the Canadian public. Failing