

temper of the house is one which favours fairly free expenditures. From every quarter and from all parties we have demand after demand for the pouring out of government funds on one project or another. I stand against a great deal of it, as best I can. My advocacy of the position taken by the hon. member might be considered as professional, in view of my position as Minister of Finance. It gives me a great deal of encouragement when I hear speeches such as the one which has just been completed. But may I tell him that in case he may underestimate the influence of a speech of that kind, he ought not to do so, because, let me assure him, it has influence, and it is good.

With regard to the appointment of a committee to examine estimates, let me say that from my point of view I should not want that committee to have the power to recommend increases in expenditures, because, if it did, it certainly would make such recommendations. For instance, if such a committee were to examine the estimates for the Department of Finance I am sure, if they understood the work many of my staff are doing and the salaries they are receiving, they would recommend increases in salary in many instances. The end would be effected only if there were no power to recommend increases. If such power were given to a committee one would be subjected to pressure from every part of the house to correct this or that situation, and the allegations would be made that certain injustices were being done—and in most cases there would be no injustice.

Mr. REID: Especially if we were drawing near to an election.

Mr. ILSLEY: Yes.

Mr. McLEAN (Simcoe East): The rule applying to all committees is that they cannot make recommendations of that kind.

Mr. ILSLEY: But, within the rules, they can recommend that the government give consideration to the advisability of increases.

Mr. NEILL: It would lead to log-rolling.

Mr. ILSLEY: Yes, exactly. In that connection I would draw the attention of hon. members to recommendations—a long list of them—pointing out to the government the advisability of an increase here, an increase there and an increase somewhere else. In many instances these recommendations are traceable to political pressure—possibly I should not say political pressure exactly, but to pressure by certain special sections of the population.

Mr. REID: Which would be political.

[Mr. Ilsley.]

Mr. ILSLEY: Yes, which would be political. If that qualification were added, I believe such a procedure would save much time for the minister and departmental officials, and I would not see anything wrong with the hon. member's proposal. From my point of view, however, the condition I have stated would be necessary, and it is one which I believe would be objected to. I think members of the committee would say that in order to make an intelligent report they would have to have power to recommend increases as well as decreases. If they had that power, the reports of such committees on estimates would develop into reports recommending to the government consideration of the advisability of considerably increasing the government's outlay.

Mr. GRAYDON: I listened with a good deal of interest to what was said by the hon. member for Simcoe East (Mr. McLean). I have no desire at this time to enter into a lengthy discussion because I think that would be entirely inappropriate, but I wish to point out to the minister, to the hon. member and to the committee that we get reforms only by exploring the various avenues through which reforms can be accomplished. During both the early and later stages of this session I suggested to the government, and I think this suggestion might be repeated to-day, that this problem which has been brought up by the hon. member and spoken to by the minister, is one of the important problems which face members of parliament and the government in a war-time session such as this.

I think there is a feeling in the country and in this chamber that there are many reforms that could be made and that the machinery of our parliament could be brought up to date and some of the cobwebs swept away. I felt that this problem should have been tackled at the beginning of this session by setting up a committee which would have had as its special responsibility the investigation of how this parliament could more efficiently serve the people of Canada at this particular time. The call for parliamentary reform is an urgent one, and one which needs repetition at the present time. The reform suggested by the hon. member for Simcoe East is one which I think all of us would want to consider most carefully, but he should be commended for having brought it before the committee, as should other hon. members who have made similar suggestions.

I am hopeful that at the beginning of next session the government will appoint a committee to look into the whole problem of our rules of procedure and the organization of