

Finance says Canadians today cannot afford everything at once. However, this is precisely what it seems we are trying to do, and without giving everything the necessary careful consideration. I should like to quote from remarks which the Premier of Manitoba, Mr. Roblin, made in discussing this subject a short time ago. He expressed great concern over the size of these spending plans, and called for a closed conference between the federal Government and the governments of the provinces to establish a list of priorities and to work out a timetable. This suggestion is very sound, and I am sure it will be discussed when the provincial premiers and the federal representatives get together. Mr. Roblin said:

I feel there is a sense of urgency about my request. If the Government's pension plan and health services proposals are considered as unrelated matters, the cost will be enormous and the country will be in for a bad time.

He went on to say:

Canadians generally want better pensions.

There is no question about that.

We believe that Canadians also want better education for the young. How can we best phase these competing demands into the tax-paying capacity of our people?

I am sure that is where he had in mind the idea that certain priorities should and must be worked out.

The *Montreal Gazette*, in its issue of July 15, commenting on Premier Roblin's proposals, said:

Premier Roblin's call for a federal-provincial conference to consider the country's economic priorities in relation to its tax-paying capacities is only a plea for the best use of our resources. It is hard to see that there is any alternative. The idea that we can all do everything at once and no matter how much, defies reason and abandons responsibility.

Honourable senators, I think the Premier of Manitoba is to be commended for the responsibility he has shown to the country as a whole. His ideas are sound. Such a conference, I think, is not only necessary, but urgent as well. In this era of so-called co-operative federalism, we have the provinces demanding a greater share of corporate and personal income taxes while at the same time the Government continues to push ahead with new programs that can only add to the burden of the taxpayer.

It seems to me that our efforts during these days of prosperity should be directed towards

balancing the budget, cutting down on unnecessary Government spending and generally trying to hold the line on Government spending. That is why I was delighted to see our Finance Committee undertaking a study of the recommendations of the report of the Glassco Commission, and to note the progress that has been made in their application. I should like to see this committee meet more often. I should like to see it have the opportunity of making a closer study of the financial situation and of making the practical and helpful recommendations which the present membership is well equipped to make.

Hon. M. Wallace McCutcheon: Honourable senators, we are engaged again in this ritualistic process of passing an appropriation bill which will provide Her Majesty with money to carry on the work of the Government for, this time, three months, plus the necessary extras. With that I do not disagree.

I assume that the honourable Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Connolly, Ottawa West) is going to request us to waive the rules, and this afternoon I do not disagree with that. But the reason we were prepared to waive the rules on the last occasion was that we had re-established the Finance Committee which was going to look into the estimates and into Government expenditures, not in the way in which it is done in another place but by taking two or three departments this year and two or three departments next year, and making themselves acquainted with them and producing the kind of reports which might be helpful to both the Government of the day and the department concerned. This is what was done by the Finance Committee some years ago.

The fact is, as the honourable Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Brooks) has pointed out, that the Standing Committee on Finance has met four times. We are in the hands of the chairman. I am sorry to say this in his absence, but I think the chairman of the Finance Committee has lost interest in the committee. I think he has been more interested in certain other matters—

Hon. Mr. Brooks: Banking.

Hon. Mr. McCutcheon:—with respect to which we do not need to go into detail this afternoon. On a subsequent occasion—perhaps at the end of October—if we have made no more progress than we have today, then I will stand with my honourable friend Senator O'Leary (Carleton) and will see to it that the next appropriation bill does not pass except in accordance with the strict terms of the rules.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition has referred to this question of expenditures,