

Adjournment Motion

The document contains a statement of the government's expenditure plan to 1983-84 and an analysis of that plan by policy sector and associated resource envelopes. It places the 1981-82 main estimates within the context of the total expenditure plan and highlights certain aspects of these estimates. Finally, one chapter each year will be devoted to special analyses of expenditure issues that are of current interest. This year, chapter 5 contains a reference paper that explains the different definitions of the size of the public service and analyses historical growth in the part of the Public Service which is controlled by the Treasury Board of Canada.

I would stress, Mr. Speaker, that this is the first edition of the Government Expenditure Plan. I fully expect that the structure and content of the document will evolve over time. As it is intended first and foremost to serve the needs of Parliament, I wish to urge hon. members to study it with care and advise me on changes and improvements that would enhance its value to them and to the Canadian public.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would remind hon. members of the commitment given by the Prime Minister in August, 1978, namely to provide Canadian taxpayers with more for less. The 1981-82 main estimates demonstrate the continuing commitment of this government to that objective.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen)—The Constitution—Query respecting telegram from British Columbia ecclesiastics; the hon. member for Halifax West (Mr. Crosby)—National Energy Program—Implementation in eastern Canada; the hon. member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake (Mr. Anguish)—Drought Assistance—Request for extension of boundaries.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

MAIN ESTIMATES, 1981-82

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE
TREASURY BOARD

The House resumed consideration of a message from His Excellency the Governor General transmitting estimates for the financial year ending March 31, 1982, presented by Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board) and read by Madam Speaker to the House.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, we have only been presented with these estimates a few moments ago. Therefore, we cannot give an in-depth analysis at this stage. Even so, we have seen enough to know and to feel a great disappointment that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) is engaged in the same old shell game, the same old con game, that has been going on with this government for so many years in the past.

The President of the Treasury Board said there had been a game played in the last day. The minister hears nothing and he learns nothing. The game played in the last 24 hours has been a game by the President of the Treasury Board who has attempted to tamper with the right of Members of Parliament in ways that have been gone into in detail in the last few hours.

The President of the Treasury Board has learned nothing, and will continue to learn nothing, and unless you, Mr. Speaker, bring him to account nothing can be done, because we have to look to you for protection from the kind of arrogance that was exemplified in that remark.

The minister made a fatal mistake in his statement. He said "these estimates are based on the same assumptions as in the budget". I am quoting his exact words. The budget was last October 28, almost four months ago. He said "the assumptions on which our spending estimates are based are the same as in the budget." Has he not listened in this House for the last couple of months? The assumptions in the budget of October 28 of the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) have all proven to be completely incorrect in the last several months.

The minister's budgetary document forecast inflation for this year to be 10.2 per cent. The inflation rate for this year, 1981-82, is already 12 per cent. How can these estimates be based on an inflation estimate of 10.2 per cent, as is the case, if it is on the same assumptions as in the budget? If that is the case, they are completely out of whack already.

● (1650)

Then, Mr. Speaker, there was an assumption in the budget, and the documents that accompany the budget, that the Canadian dollar this year would trade in the area of 87½ cents U.S. Well, what is it trading at today? Just between 83 cents and 84 cents. What was it last week? Down around 82 cents. That is another assumption in the budget last fall which was completely wrong, and that is going to raise the cost of the