

• (3:20 p.m.)

Mr. Sharp: The hon. member wanted to spend more.

Mr. Monteith: Now the minister estimates that the expenditure for 1969 will be \$10,300 million. There are no cuts, as we have been led to believe. Actually there is an increase of 4.5 per cent over the 1968 figure. Here is an illustration of the incomprehensible attitude of the government toward spending, and its ruthless disregard of the fact that the spending is now out of hand.

I should like to deal briefly with the manner in which the minister and the government are attempting to hoodwink the public with regard to spending cuts. First let it be made very clear that there are no cuts in next year's expenditures. The minister has stated that they will be 4.5 per cent over those of the present year; that is, the expenditures in 1968-69 will be 4.5 per cent over the expenditures for 1967-68. This is a point which the public should keep in mind when the government talks glibly about cutting back. There are no cut-backs; there are only increases.

The minister says that the details of the cuts will be given by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Benson). What cuts? Does he mean the cuts in the 1968-69 estimates? The 1968-69 estimates have never been tabled in this house, and until they have been tabled they cannot be discussed. If they are discussed, they must be tabled so that parliament will have them before it. We cannot embark upon a responsible financial discussion on the basis of figures which exist only in the realm of fantasy.

We have dealt with the estimates for 1967-68. The estimates for 1968-69 are not before the house; they have not been tabled. There has been no motion to go into supply; yet, the minister proposes to put before parliament a lengthy discussion dealing with various estimates still to come, and presumably cuts to be made. How does it advance parliament to have the government say here: We have saved a lot of money because we have decided not to go ahead with a number of things which we could have gone ahead with if we had wanted to go ahead with them.

Mr. Sharp: Has the hon. gentleman changed his mind about old age pensions?

Mr. Monteith: That is simply ridiculing parliament. Everyone knows how estimates are drawn up. They are drawn up in the

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departments. The officials lay down their requirements and meetings are held with Treasury Board officials. Invariably the requirements are reduced in whatever proposition the government of the day thinks best. Up to that point, however, the estimates have no official existence. It is simply a travesty for the minister to come here and place before this house the results of the discussions at the official level.

The estimates have no official existence until passed by Treasury Board and printed in the blue book. If they have been printed in the blue book they should be tabled, and we should go into supply in order to discuss them in the way provided under our rules. If they have not been printed and approved, then they do not exist and we cannot waste the time of this house discussing matters which, as I said, are in the realm of pure fantasy, because the government wants to appear as though it is saving when it really is spending recklessly. The government is not making any cuts; it is still increasing expenditures. This kind of procedure is out of order and is a hoax on all Canadians.

Mr. Sharp: Do you not agree with your leader?

Mr. Monteith: If the government wants to show that it is cutting back on expenditures, let it come before this house with the 1967-68 estimates in printed form. Let it show how much it has reduced the items in those estimates, which are now running 15 per cent above last year. Let this government point out in detailed form what it has cut out or by how much it has reduced the estimates which currently are operative. They said they had reduced the estimates for 1967-68. Those presumed reductions have never been made known. We asked for them when these particular estimates were before parliament for discussion. The fact is that not one single cent has been cut either in 1967-68 or in 1968-69 from the estimates passed by Treasury Board. The minister knows it. He should stop trying to hoodwink the people of this country.

The government has followed a policy that is unrealistic and lacking in honesty. In order to meet the figure of expenditure, namely the \$10,300 million which has been proposed, the minister is having to increase personal taxes on the small taxpayer.

Mr. Sharp: That is not so.