

been called a mini-budget. In that budget the President of the Treasury Board undoubtedly noted that expenditures had gone up some \$800 million as far as the government was concerned compared with the figure last seen when the then minister of finance in the Clark government brought in his budget, and the deficit had widened on a budgetary basis from \$10.4 billion to \$14.1 billion. In view of that, in view of the fact that the Minister of Finance did not give us a five-year overview as to where the ongoing expenditure, revenue and deficit figures were taking us in Canada, and in view of the confirmed—and I am pleased to hear this—attitude of the President of the Treasury Board, would he now table a five-year review as to where the assumptions used by the Minister of Finance when he entered the throne speech debate in this House would lead the country in expenditure, revenue and deficit terms?

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Chairman, I have no intention of tabling any such projection at this time. In addition, that question should be put to my colleague the Minister of Finance, who, after all, is in charge of the fiscal framework. I believe his remarks on that evening to which the hon. gentleman made reference were quite clear in that regard.

Mr. Stevens: Once again I think the House must remind the President of the Treasury Board of what his responsibilities are under section 5 of the Financial Administration Act passed by the Parliament of Canada. The minister, through the Treasury Board, is specifically required to pass on all matters relating to financial management, including estimates, expenditures, financial commitments, accounts, fees and many other items which are set out. In view of the fact that the previous Clark government set the pattern and tradition of showing ongoing expenditure and revenue levels for the Government of Canada—as recently as January 22 an update was done to show what would have been the expenditure and revenue levels without the Crosbie budget and what the expenditure levels would have been with the Crosbie budget—would the minister indicate what justification he has, other than being beaten back by cabinet colleagues, for not showing those figures to the Canadian public at the present time?

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member is given to theatrics far more than substance. He knows full well what was said that night by the Minister of Finance. He also should know full well, since he is my predecessor in office, what the responsibilities of the President of the Treasury Board are. He is asking me here when we are studying the estimates for 1980-81 to furnish not only an expenditure forecast for the next four years but also to furnish a revenue forecast for the next four years. Perhaps the hon. gentleman enjoyed playing the role of minister of finance and president of the treasury board when he occupied that latter post, but I have no intention of doing so. If he wishes to discuss the estimates, which we are here prepared to do, that is the purpose of this Committee of the Whole this afternoon.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, perhaps if the most temerarious President of the Treasury Board in history is unwilling to give us both expenditure and revenue figures which are going

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to affect all Canadians, would he at least give us his own expenditure projections—and let him not tell the House that he does not have them—based on the assumptions used by the Minister of Finance when he introduced his mini-budget? Would he give those expenditure levels for the next five years?

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Chairman, as I have indicated, I have no intention today of furnishing any expenditure levels. We are here to examine the 1980-81 estimates.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, would the President of the Treasury Board, then, say whether there is any reason why members of this House should not assume that the figures which were published by the Treasury Board on January 22 in a press release are not true today? They indicated that total spending by the year 1984 would reach \$82.731 billion if the Crosbie budget was not passed. The Crosbie budget figures showed a saving to the Canadian public of \$7 billion on the basis of the assumptions used. Can he deny that if there is not some change of events, approximately \$83 billion will be the spending level authorized by his department, as forecast on January 22?

• (1600)

Mr. Johnston: As I recall, the hon. gentleman is referring to some political propaganda which was prepared by his office in the course of a general election campaign, and I am not prepared to accept such propaganda, if you like, which was not even prepared by the Treasury Board but by his own office, as having any relevance to the fiscal framework of the present government.

Mr. Stevens: Mr. Chairman, I am rather startled at how ill-informed the President of the Treasury Board is. I am specifically referring to Treasury Board of Canada press release 80-3 which, as I stated, was issued on January 22. So far as expenditures are concerned, the figure was based on projections given at that time by his secretariat. Does he wish to clarify this and to state that he misled the House unintentionally, and that in fact the expenditure figures were prepared by his secretariat?

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Chairman, my understanding is that the figure may have been obtained from the Treasury Board because clearly the hon. gentleman was incapable of preparing that kind of information himself; but in so far as the assumptions underlining those projections are concerned, the hon. gentleman must admit that they were his own.

Mr. Stevens: In plain English, then, we have it established that, on the basis of figures prepared by the Treasury Board, the expenditure level, if something is not done, will hit approximately \$83 billion by 1984. I leave it on the record that an open request has been made to the President of the Treasury Board, who professes that he believes in five-year planning, to give the figures to the Canadian public as to where he sees expenditures, and, we hope, revenue figures and deficits, will take us, on the assumption that were behind the mini-budget introduced by the Minister of Finance.