

*Transport Budget Forecast*

It may be that the real problem for the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore is that he has not yet learned to make full use of the information that is already provided to him. I noted in *Hansard* for last May 24, when the hon. member spoke to an identical motion concerning the program forecasts for the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, that he made some remarks concerning the blue book, the estimates. He referred to the blue book as a "veritable sea of figures". He pointed out that he was a new member in this House and "perhaps a member who has been here for a generation or longer may be able to find his way through them". He conceded that the presentation of estimates had been altered somewhat in recent years, but he still found that the blue book's program descriptions and outlines of objectives shed no light on the expenditure programs detailed in its pages. Frankly, I find this difficult to understand.

The hon. member seems to believe that the way to comprehend this "sea of figures" is to dilute it by adding 10 or 20 times as many figures. He wants to count the branches on the trees and forget about the forest. As the hon. member has indicated that he does not understand what the blue book is all about, perhaps a few words of guidance would be appropriate. Of the 600 pages in the blue book, the first 50 provide valuable summary information. There is a description of the contents of the book and the method in which the information is presented. This is followed by a number of statistical tables. These tables provide total information by department covering both budgetary and non-budgetary expenditures, and also show breakdowns in terms of operating, capital and grants and contributions' spending.

Another table deals with man-years by department. There are presentations of the estimates by the various functions of government and by standard objects. Another table presents major budgetary items showing the division between estimates to be voted and those that are statutory. In these tables, the new estimates are compared to the estimates for the present year. There is a wealth of information for a new member to digest in just these first 50 pages of the blue book. They provide comparative data which indicate clearly the major areas of importance established by the government.

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The blue book then presents considerably more detail on the programs of each department and agency. The estimates of the Secretariat of State, for example, run to some 60 pages in the 1973-74 blue book, and those for the Ministry of Transport cover 50 pages. Each departmental section begins with a general summary. This is followed by a subsection for each program. The various votes, statutory amounts and non-budgetary items are shown for the program. Then the program's estimates are displayed against the component activities, showing expenditures for operating, capital grants and contributions and non-budgetary items. Any revenues or free services received by the program also are displayed.

There is a brief written description for each program, including a statement of its objectives and sub-objectives. Expenditures also are displayed by standard objects. There are details on the manpower planned for the program. Grants and contributions are itemized. In all cases

[Mr. Turner (London East).]

the new estimates are compared to the current year, and in several tables the actual expenditures for the previous year also are shown.

The subject of the motion today is the production of the program forecast for the Treasury Board. Section 28 of the 1973-74 blue book contains 13 pages of information on the Treasury Board, including the National Research Council of Canada which reports through the President of the Treasury Board. I will not go into full detail, but I would like to point out that the Treasury Board's estimates are displayed under three programs: central administration of the public service, government contingencies and centrally-financed programs, and employer contributions to employee benefit plans. The program concerned with the central administration of the public service is broken down into six activities: expenditure, management; personnel management; evaluation and planning; administrative policy; departmental administration; contributions to superannuation accounts. The expenditure, management, activity has an authorized level of 100 man-years. I would like to read the description of this activity that is contained in the blue book. It reads as follows:

Expenditure, management—On the basis of the analysis of departmental plans and programs to recommend to the government the acceptance or modification of specific expenditure proposals in order to: reflect the priorities which the government assigns to the objectives; increase the effectiveness of existing and proposed programs; increase the efficiency with which the manpower, facilities, equipment, materials and supplies are used in the operation of programs; and to develop the estimates for the approval of parliament.

I understand that the 100 man-years in this expenditure, management, activity—with considerable help from the other 555 program man-years in activities such as planning and evaluation, personnel management and administrative policy—are devoted full-time to the examination of the various expenditure plans of departments and agencies, not the least of which are the program forecasts.

If the hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore is having difficulty comprehending 600 pages of blue book information, I doubt that he could do a better job with 10 or 20 times that amount of supporting program forecast data. A large number of man-years at the Treasury Board are devoted to integrating the program forecasts of individual departments into a comprehensive package that is related to the over-all objectives of the government and to the available resources.

I would think that the departmental program forecasts would only be meaningful when they were examined in such a total context. Efforts by opposition members to select isolated proposals for scrutiny would not be a contribution to the better understanding of the government's intentions; and clearly it would be impossible, given the volume of data and the time available, for any member of this House to make comprehensive use of all the program forecasts.

The hon. member for Toronto-Lakeshore suggested in earlier remarks on this subject that he would settle for some form of edited version of the program forecasts. I submit that such an edited version already exists and is presented to all members of parliament and to the public. It is called the blue book. This is the book that individual members of parliament should in their studies deal with