

Supply—Privy Council

spending last year \$600,000 and this year \$584,000 on investigating the status of women.

I could also refer back to the estimates of \$668,000 and \$1 million for the B and B commission. This is a total of approximately \$3 million for two investigations. The people in the Atlantic region are very conscious of their responsibility in relation to these two areas of endeavour, but for the life of me I cannot see the logic of approving an expenditure of \$584,000, on the royal commission on the status of women, and at the same time robbing the fishermen of the Atlantic region. My question is very simple: What logic is there in the thinking behind the decision to appropriate approximately \$600,000 to support the royal commission on the status of women.

[Translation]

Mr. Rondeau: Mr. Chairman, what strikes me in the items under consideration in the house today is that, last year, we gave \$2,658,000 for the various royal commissions. This year, we are being asked \$2,105,000 for five different royal Commissions and we do not know how much those commissions will cost once their work is over nor how much we will have to spend in the future for other inquiries of that kind.

We recall, for instance, that the Glassco commission cost a lot and that the government has taken from it a few good ideas concerning the improvement of its services. But the cost of the royal commission, as against the practical benefits obtained by the government, is out of proportion.

This is what strikes me. Those commissions sit and spend government money. We do not know when they will be through with their work but we are being asked year after year to vote new items. What will be the final cost of all those inquiries?

● (4:40 p.m.)

So, Mr. Chairman, in two years from now, we will have spent the tidy sum of \$4,763,000 for inquiries only, and the government always seems interested in having new inquiries opened.

For instance, I should like the President of the Treasury Board to give us information regarding the royal commission on the status of women in Canada. Who were the members? What remunerations were paid? I should like that the assistant to the President of the Treasury Board to give us this information which I think he has. We would like to know, if possible, when this commission will end its sittings and when we shall get a report?

[English]

Mr. Walker: In answer to the specific question concerning the status of women royal commission, may I say that it is anticipated the report of the commission should be available by the end of 1969.

I wonder if I might say that I have considerable sympathy for many of the views concerning royal commissions that have been expressed here today. In speaking from this seat it may be difficult for me to express a personal opinion, but I do so in any event. I have often wondered—because there are some commissions which are better than others—whether some of the work done by commissions might not just as well have been handled by members of the other place, or by a special task force. I do not speak for the government in saying this, but I do believe that as members of the House of Commons we might look into something along this line in the future, so that our colleagues in the other place might undertake the work being done by some of these commissions. I hope this will not provoke an argument or discussion, but I should like to let the members of the house know that I certainly share some of the feelings that have been expressed here today.

[Translation]

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Chairman, I represent the riding of Abitibi.

With regard to item 15, I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary for his explanations and I quite agree with him that the members of the Senate could very well do part of the work undertaken by some of the royal commissions. I should also like to say that I greatly admired the report of the Senate committee on aging. I think the members of that committee did a very good job and they should be encouraged to pursue their work in other fields. Indeed, I believe they would be prepared to do so, for we have noticed for some time past that increasingly younger representatives are appointed to the Senate, and I think they could accomplish some excellent work.

Now, I would like to ask the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) whether he knows if the government intends to establish other royal commissions in the near future, as we would like to know ahead of time.

[English]

Mr. Lundrigan: Mr. Chairman, I am wondering about the usefulness of spending something over \$600,000 for a royal commission