

this was the reason that this was not done in this particular case. The general policy is to so advise annuitants and contributors.

The CHAIRMAN: Well, this brings up a point I would like to clear up. I understand that the department sees the Auditor General's report before it goes for printing. This particular item 52 would go to the department of Finance, you would have an opportunity of reading it over, and you would send it back to the Auditor General and it would be printed. Why would you not correct the Auditor General's report, as you have done here now, before it gets into this printed form?

First of all, is it a fact that the department sees your report before it is printed?

Mr. HENDERSON: Mr. Chairman, the text of my statements in my report are sent to the deputy ministers in each of the departments with the question as to whether or not the facts are right.

The extent to which they wish to brief me further, or add additional information, is a matter of relationship between us, and I am always pleased to receive any comments which they wish to send, and in some cases they extend into further discussion.

In the case of this particular note, Mr. Balls was good enough to say in his statement that he did not have any criticism of the figures, or the factual information contained in there.

The criticism is my own, for which I accept full responsibility. The decision as to the information I shall give to the House is my responsibility. But I seek in all these cases to temper my approach with fairness, at the same time carrying out how I conceive my responsibility to the House of Commons.

The CHAIRMAN: I agree, Mr. Henderson, with that.

Mr. Balls, why would you not have a sentence added to section 52 to say that the widow was 82 years of age and that you did not wish to alarm her?

Mr. BALLS: I have the information, Mr. Chairman, which I submitted to the Auditor General in regard to his comments for 1965, and also what Mr. Bryce transmitted in this connection, but I have not got a reference to this item in relation to 1964. I think at the time that this was regarded as a policy consideration that really fell within the purview of the Treasury Board.

Mr. LONG: Mr. Chairman, might I say something about this? I would not want to let you get away with saying that Mr. Balls has corrected something here that was in the note.

Our concern in this note was that we did not know, and we still do not know, if anybody had collected this money and kept it. It is true that this was an 82 years old widow and this was not mentioned in the note. There was no suggestion that other action should have been taken in her case, but all widows in their eighties are not poor and many widows in their eighties, I would suggest, are very proud. She might be very disturbed if she thought that somebody in Ottawa had decided they had to write off something which she had received by mistake, which she would not want to keep.