

treasury board that have come from various parts of this chamber. I have been alarmed at the numerous thrusts that have been made at that essential board, made by hon. members, coming from almost every party, and I want to give the minister my opinion for what it is worth. I do not think these attacks represent the considered opinion or attitude of the vast majority of the members of this house; I am sure they do not represent the considered opinion of the vast body of taxpayers in Canada. So far as I am concerned, and I think so far as the house is concerned, in these days of high taxation we should lend all possible support to the Minister of Finance and the treasury board instead of trying to weaken the confidence of parliament and the country in that valuable organization. When I hear demands from every quarter for increased expenditures, with nothing said on the other side, I sometimes fear for the future of this country. Therefore, I hope the minister will not pay too much attention to the attacks that are made on the one organization that is trying hard to protect the interests of the taxpayers.

No matter what may be our ideas in regard to economic and monetary matters; no matter whether the government obtains money through taxes, or by borrowing, or by printing it; whether it is this government, the provincial governments or municipal governments, in these days we must realize that when we spend money, in the last analysis that money has to be paid for in one way, and one way only. It is paid by the labour, by the sweat of the brow of our taxpayers, high and low, or else from the savings of those people which have been earned by the sweat of the brow and accumulated through habits of thrift. We must remember that in each constituency there are thousands of individual taxpayers who for the first time are paying direct taxation to the federal government. What is more, there are thousands more whose direct taxes have been increased to an extent never before thought possible or necessary. When I go back to the people of my riding, and they ask me whether or not it would have been possible to relieve their burdens a little through exercising a little care here or a little care there, a little more economical organization, I have to tell them that I do not know. I cannot give them that assurance. I have not that assurance myself, because the procedure we follow in dealing with estimates is not such that I can secure that measure of information which would enable me to give that assurance.

I know that in view of the colossal amount of money necessarily being spent in the prose-

cution of the war there are many hon. members who will say, "But after all, the point discussed by the hon. member is very insignificant." Well, I confess I am attacked by that feeling myself. But when I go home I find a most effective corrective when I see the care, the planning, the labour and the energy expended by little groups of people in every community who, loyally and voluntarily, are carrying out the plea of the Minister of Finance to promote the sale of war savings stamps. The sales in each small community are comparatively small, but when taken over the whole dominion the amount is most impressive. I was delighted that in his budget speech the Minister of Finance saw fit to pay tribute to these small groups of workers. Many of these people are overworked and have suffered the headaches involved in the production of munitions and food, under very difficult circumstances. When I see these people, regardless of class, regardless of party and of circumstance, voluntarily and willingly throwing themselves into the sale of war savings stamps and war bonds, I am convinced that the tribute of the Minister of Finance was well merited. I believe we owe to those people the assurance that if there is any method capable of adoption which will result in better administration, in economies here and there to lighten the burden of taxation being imposed upon them, then I think it is our duty so to act in their behalf.

I suggest therefore, Mr. Chairman, that this method be adopted. I believe nothing better calculated to promote economy and efficiency in administration could be done than the appointment of a fairly small select committee, with wide powers of examination, to whom all estimates would be referred for examination and recommendation. Possibly they would not be able to handle all departments in one year, but they could work on one or two. I believe this would be of the greatest assistance to the government, and that it would help to bring about a better and a more economical administration. Nothing could be done more calculated to assure the people of Canada that we are carrying on the work committed to us with the same degree of care, economy and frugality repeatedly urged by the Minister of Finance on the people of Canada. I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the government seriously consider the formation of that committee at the next session.

Mr. ILSLEY: I greatly appreciate the remarks of the hon. member, and I should like to hear more speeches of the kind made in this chamber. I have the feeling, as I sit month after month, for five or six months, that the