

Tabling of Reports

Mr. Benson: I move that the message of His Excellency, together with the estimates presented this day, be referred to the committee of supply.

Hon. J. W. Monteith (Perth): Naturally, Mr. Speaker, it is very hard to comment on these estimates at any great length today, they just having been tabled. I should like to mention that they seem to be going up, up and up all the time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Just like the cost of living.

Mr. Monteith: The minister said how these expenditures will have to be paid for will be learned when the budget comes down. We will be interested to know how the people of Canada are going to be asked to pay for this \$7,950 million plus the \$332 million odd for various loans and allowances. The minister failed to mention the amount estimated for the Canada assistance plan. He indicated that important items are to follow, and that there are changes in the form of the estimates which will make it very difficult at this moment to compare them with others.

We shall be interested when the Minister of Finance brings down the budget to learn how we are going to meet these huge expenditures.

Motion agreed to.

MARITIME UNION TRUSTEES

TABLING OF ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1965

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Labour): I wish to table two copies in English and two copies in French of the annual report of the board of trustees for the maritime transportation unions for the period January 1, 1965 to December 31, 1965.

[*Later:*]

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I also have a question for the Minister of Labour arising out of his tabling earlier today of the annual report of the maritime trustees. Has the minister copies of the report available in sufficient quantity for distribution to members of the house?

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Speaker, I understand additional copies are being run off today and I hope they will be available within a day or two.

[Mr. Speaker.]

BRIDGESSAINT JOHN—TABLING OF PRESS RELEASE
ON SAINT JOHN THROUGHWAY COMPLEX

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I ask permission of the house to table a joint federal-provincial press release on the subject of the Saint John harbour bridge throughway complex. This release was given to the press in Fredericton on Friday, February 11, 1966.

It will be recalled that the Prime Minister, in a press release of February 10, 1965, announced the government's intention to seek parliamentary approval for the provision of special assistance to the bridge portion of this project. The bridge has long been considered an essential link in a trunk highway system, particularly as a connection between the Atlantic region and New England. This assistance was to involve an agreement between the federal government and the other parties involved whereby funds would be advanced annually by the federal government to cover the difference between toll revenues and operating costs. These advances would be recovered in subsequent years when toll revenues become adequate for that purpose.

The expenditure on the bridge to date has been made on the basis of an approval of the project by the municipal development loan board, which is providing a loan of \$3,800,000. Completion of the bridge proper is estimated to cost not less than \$17,100,000.

It did not prove possible during the last session to bring the matter before the house. Moreover, during the latter part of 1965 it became apparent that the costs of the bridge and the throughway were going to be considerably greater than the original estimate and that there was some question locally as to whether the location and type of bridge and throughway originally proposed were the most satisfactory. Consequently it became necessary in December to call a halt to all new work on the project pending a comprehensive reassessment by a committee of federal and provincial experts supported by outside consultants.

The committee has now reported, and each government has accepted those recommendations pertaining to it. The main recommendation affecting the federal government is that the bridge proceed basically along the lines originally planned. The federal government has informed the Saint John Bridge Authority of this acceptance and that the federal