

sum as in the preceding year. The \$15 million to cover the grant of \$500 for each house built during wintertime is \$5 million less than the \$20 million grant of a year ago.

I should also express my thanks to Senator Brooks for his comments about the meetings of the Standing Committee on Finance, and I assure him that we propose to continue these with a view to finding the answers to any questions concerning the estimates.

Senator Brooks went on to avail himself of what I would call the second aspect of an interim supply bill, that is, to voice some criticism of the Government. While I do not necessarily agree, and may in fact disagree with what he said, nevertheless I do respect his right to make this criticism. It seems to me that this is a proper exercise of the right to debate an interim supply bill.

This is one of the privileges and rights that Parliament has when the Government comes seeking interim supply. But, I would add also that while that right or privilege can be properly used, it can also be abused, as can other privileges. While pointing out that it has been correctly used in this chamber, I would suggest that honourable senators might be interested in reading the debates of the House of Commons over the last ten days on this bill.

Senator Isnor raised the question of the effect of some of this work at Montreal on navigation in the harbours of Halifax and Saint John. As I come from Toronto I shall not enter into a debate as between the needs of the harbour at Montreal and harbours in the Maritimes, but I do think that this is a subject that might be pursued at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance, at which time we can obtain further information.

We have always listened with great interest to Senator Crerar, and it is good to have the benefit of his wisdom and long experience in the public life of Canada. He voices the feelings of us all when he speaks of inflation. I have the same strong feelings on this subject as he has, although I am not quite so concerned, perhaps, about the total amount of the public debt. It is true that the figure of \$40 billion is a large one, and it is also true that a large part of it does not represent productive assets. Perhaps that test is one of the better ones to apply to the public debt. However, this year the gross national production of Canada should run to \$46 billion, and that has to be compared with the gross public debt of all levels of government of \$40 billion.

To put this in terms of an ordinary person—I know this is not a proper comparison, but it is, nevertheless, a comparison that may occur to anyone—a man owing a total amount of money that is less than his annual income would not be considered to be heavily

in debt. That is one comment I have to make. I know it does not answer in full Senator Crerar's argument, but if you were to go back over the history of government financing in Canada you would find many occasions on which the gross public debt in comparison to the gross national production has been at a higher ratio than it is at present. I qualify that statement by saying that I am not a proponent of greater public debt. I am saying simply that there are other factors to be taken into consideration when dealing with it.

Honourable senators, I think I have dealt with the questions that have been asked. As I have said, I shall endeavour to obtain information with respect to those I cannot answer, and that information will be available at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance next Tuesday.

Hon. Mr. Crerar: May I ask Senator Leonard a question? Would he agree that the degree of inflation we have produced during the last 15 years has been an important factor in the increase of our gross national product?

Hon. Mr. Leonard: Yes, I agree with that.

Hon. Mr. Smith (Queens-Shelburne): The same factor has been important in respect to the greater public debt.

Hon. Mr. Leonard: Yes, you have to put the same factor against the increase in the public debt, if you are going to talk about real production. The comparison is still between \$40 billion and \$46 billion.

Motion agreed to and bill read second time.

THIRD READING

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

Hon. Mr. Leonard: A glance at our Order Paper will indicate to honourable senators that there is very little, if anything, left on it. We have had a debate on this bill, and if it meets the convenience of the Senate I move, with leave, that the bill be given third reading now.

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed.

ROYAL ASSENT

NOTICE

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that he had received the following communication: