

will go into another study with a view to seeing if we have not estimated too much. That is the general procedure followed until we appear before the Treasury Board.

Mr. FULTON: We hear it suggested sometimes—and we want to be fair in this committee as well as anywhere else—that we do know that the Treasury Board officials—just as all ministers know—that the Treasury Board is going to give the estimates a pretty severe scrutiny, and therefore the tendency is for you, as it were, to pad your accounts in the expectation that some of them will be cut out. I want to ask whether first of all for your answer to the question: to what extent do you, as a deputy minister feel that there is in your field services a tendency—which is only a human tendency—to inflate the estimates? And secondly what is the general pattern of your experience when you go before the officials of the Treasury Board with regard to their slicing what you submit to them for approval.

Mr. FORTIER: As far as padding in concerned, that is not something which is practiced to my knowledge. And as far as this department is concerned I can say that every time we put something in the estimates it has to be justified.

Now it may be that when a director makes a suggestion about the organization of his branch there may be a different point of view as to how we would reach that objective and how much money would be required to reach that objective. But it is not padding. We will look at what is wanted to achieve and then reach a decision.

The discussion with the officials of the Treasury Board would be of a similar nature. I look upon an official of the Treasury Board as a kind of financial adviser to us; and where we can make a reduction we do so.

Mr. FULTON: I shall not ask you to pick any particular item out of the hat, but can you tell us as a result of the scrutiny by the Treasury Board officials, whether it does not frequently happen that there is some reduction or slicing of the amount you have been asking for?

Mr. FORTIER: We do come to some reductions after our review of some particular estimates, but you see, the estimates are prepared by the branch in August and throughout September, and some time in December when they go to the Treasury Board, four months have gone by and we may see the picture differently, sometimes, from the way we saw it in the summer, because we are closer to it. We will also know that the things we have foreseen as having to do in the coming fiscal year—that we can do them during the present fiscal year. So therefore we can take cuts, and we agree very readily to that.

Mr. FULTON: Do I understand from you that it is fairly general experience that in the actual process of reviewing your estimates there are reductions made over a very broad field from what you have originally asked for?

Mr. FORTIER: There is a cut from time to time all the way through because the field staff may not know as much about it as the headquarters, or the headquarters may now know as much about the policy or problem to be settled; and so at every stage there is a very strict review of each item.

Mr. HENRY: Do you ever find, in the light of your experience, that they might have gone up in isolated cases?

Mr. FORTIER: No, we do not have that experience.

Mr. MICHENER: This is interesting. I am required to see who is right at the top, so to speak, on public policy. The Treasury Board is supposed to be the ultimate executioner; but let us see if there is not some objective. Perhaps Mr. Smith could tell us that when he is budgeting himself in August, and you duly appear with \$30 million which is being put forward as the departmental estimates—