

all of the remarks which are uttered in relation to any of these measures. The sensitive briefings required before these bills are advanced have not yet been completed.

Senator Flynn: I suppose it would be more difficult for someone on your side to deal with these bills than it would have been for us.

Hon. Royce Frith (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, as the Leader of the Opposition has said, we have had these bills before us previously, and because of that it is hoped that not all of these measures will have to be referred to committee. There will be some, of course, which we will want to refer to committee. Our committees, however, are not yet established. As soon as they are, it is hoped that, for the very reasons Senator Flynn has mentioned, we will be able to clean up that part of the order paper expeditiously.

Senator Perrault: With your enthusiastic co-operation.

Senator Flynn: I understand the subtlety of the argument.

Hon. Hazen Argue (Minister of State for the Canadian Wheat Board): Honourable senators, last evening, in my absence, the Honourable Senator Roblin asked when we would be proceeding with Bill S-6, to amend the Two-Price Wheat Act.

Bill S-6 is a technical bill. It removes from the law the provision to pay a subsidy for two-price wheat, and this needs to be done in the reasonably near future. I hope to be in a position to go forward with this bill before too long, and I would hope, at the time I do move its second reading, to be able to announce the policy on the two-price wheat system that will replace the present policy.

THE ESTIMATES

STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT OF THE TREASURY BOARD AND THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

Hon. Jacques Flynn (Leader of the Opposition): Honourable senators, I have a question for the Leader of the Government. I see now that the Minister of State for Economic Affairs has come into the house armed with a big book containing all the answers. I hope he plans to make full use of them. It will be quite a different Question Period from what we have had over the past week, if he does. So if the Leader of the Government is unable to reply to my question, perhaps Senator Olson can.

Can the Leader of the Government tell us, in view of the discrepancy between Mr. MacEachen's estimates and those of the President of the Treasury Board, which precise figure we should use in respect to estimated expenditures? There is a difference of approximately \$2 billion between the two figures given. Which figure should we use, the higher or the lower?

● (1415)

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of State for Economic Development): Honourable senators, I am sure that Senator Flynn realizes, if he read the speeches of the President of the Treasury Board and of the Minister of Finance, that the

differences were explained very, very carefully. It is that the amount that was in the blue book was the estimate prepared by the previous government, and the amount of something less than \$2 billion—I do not have the figure on the tip of my tongue but it was \$58.3 billion as opposed to something like \$60.1 billion—was explained by the increase in debt service charges and oil compensation payments since those estimates were prepared.

Senator Flynn: It seems to me that the President of the Treasury Board did not caution the house as to the different figure at which the Minister of Finance had arrived. I was just wondering if, as it appears in some of the replies obtained from the Minister of State for Economic Development, sometimes the right hand of government does not know what the left hand is doing.

Senator Olson: Well, that may be the history of the past nine or ten months, but I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that that situation is changing. The explanation was complete and clear and there was no contradiction between what the Minister of Finance said and what the President of the Treasury Board said. What was in the blue book were the estimates, unamended, which had been prepared. If we had sent them back, then all the printing would have had to be redone. That was explained very carefully. But the Minister of Finance raised that figure by the amount I explained a few moments ago, and he explained why it went to \$60.1 billion. It is because of what is now known to be increases in cost of servicing the public debt plus some increases in the statutory provisions for providing for the oil compensation program. So they made it very clear that they knew when they tabled the blue book that it would likely be higher than that, and of course Parliament will see some supplementary estimates to take care of that difference. I would be very happy to arrange to send the Leader of the Opposition the words that explain that clearly and precisely.

Senator Flynn: You mean in the speech of the President of the Treasury Board?

Senator Olson: One or the other or both.

Senator Flynn: I think you will have to couple them to some extent. In any event, the reply to my question, if it had been given simply and directly, would have been, I gather, that the higher figure is the estimated amount of expenditures.

Senator Olson: I think that is correct—by the time we get the supplementaries in to take care of what was explained.

STATUS OF WOMEN

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

Hon. Martha P. Bielish: Honourable senators, my question is for the Leader of the Government. Liberal governments have always been verbose in promoting the advancement of women to positions of direction and authority. Why is it, therefore, that of the six parliamentary task forces recently established and approved by cabinet not a single one has a female chairperson?