

Senator POWER: It involves the brains of every deputy minister.

The CHAIRMAN: But it still is not cyclical budgeting.

Senator CROLL: But it is cyclical forecasting.

Mr. BRYCE: The next group of recommendations is on page 99 of the report. They are briefly that departments and agencies be given the necessary financial authority and be held accountable for the effective management of the financial resources placed at their disposal. I think we all agree with the spirit of that and there only remains the practical problem of getting the departments equipped and ready to do it in time.

Senator POWER: Is it suggested that they have not been given that up to the present time?

Mr. BRYCE: The Glassco Commission argues that the detailed scrutiny of their transactions and everything they do by Treasury Board and the Civil Service Commission and others have watered down their real responsibility and therefore it recommends that they should be given more clear-cut responsibility and then held accountable.

Senator POWER: Does it not have to go before Treasury Board?

Mr. BRYCE: They have to go before Treasury Board to get their programs and budgets approved, but not every transaction.

Senator POWER: Such things as increases in salary, and so on?

Mr. BRYCE: They should have more discretion in classifying jobs and in awarding contracts and in deciding what supplies they are going to need.

Senator POWER: I don't know what poor Mr. Ronson would have said about that.

Mr. BRYCE: He is still about and you could ask him. The next recommendations are:

The Treasury Board continue to lay down policies on financial and administrative matters common to all departments and agencies, but in a less restrictive manner.

I think all departments and agencies will say "amen" to that but it has to be more clearly defined.

That departments and agencies be granted more discretion in the negotiation of contracts.

Mr. Balls indicated that the Government moved in that direction some weeks ago.

That greater use be made of per diem rates and other measures to simplify travel regulations.

I think we are all in favour of that, but the difficulty is when you start setting per diem rates that you have to decide whether you need a bigger per diem to spend a night in Montreal than in Toronto or Winnipeg. Then another question is, does a senior officer get a bigger per diem rate or not, or does a man who is travelling half his time get a smaller per diem rate than the man travelling only occasionally. There are numerous practical problems, but a widespread view is that this is sensible and that we should try to set standard per diem travelling allowances.

Senator CROLL: There are numerous complaints on that account.

Mr. BRYCE: The next recommendations, on page 100, are those to which I have already referred about pre-audit. You have heard from both Dr. Davidson and Mr. Balls, and as I indicated at the beginning, I would rather not express an opinion on this at this stage until I can study it in more detail.