

*Glassco Commission Report*

As the house is aware members of the government, both in office and earlier in opposition, have been convinced that for a good many years there have been substantial areas of public administration where considerable and even large savings could be effected without injury to the public welfare. While in opposition we pressed for several years, without avail, for such a study to be made along the line followed in the United States by the commission headed by ex-President Hoover. The reports and recommendations completely justify, as we see it, the action taken in appointing this commission. To begin with, the government is in general agreement with the basic philosophy of the commissioners as expressed in the reports, and I expect that most of the recommendations they have submitted will be carried out and at the earliest possible date.

In the introduction to the first report it is stated that substantial economies had already been achieved and additional money saving proposals were being studied by departments and agencies. These developments are presently being assessed and will be reported to the house in due course. In other cases recommendations made by the commission have already been put into effect by particular departments and agencies on the responsibility of individual ministers since volume I was received.

Senator McCutcheon, Minister without Portfolio, has been designated by the government as the minister responsible for the appraisal and implementation of the royal commission's reports. He will have the assistance of a special cabinet committee as well as treasury board, to which he is being appointed for this purpose. He will also be able to call on the assistance and advice of public servants as required in the detailed consideration of the means of carrying out what the government decides should be done.

Volume I of the reports, which contains many proposals involving legislative changes or transfers of responsibility, is being carefully studied by ministers. Priority is being given to report No. 2 on financial management, in which there appear to be many detailed recommendations capable of early implementation. There are as well a number of recommendations concerning the form and nature of the estimates in the public accounts that will require some consideration by the public accounts committee of the house as well as by the government as a whole.

As I stated on November 12, the government does not plan to reach final decision on the major recommendations of the royal commission concerning the functions of treasury board and the civil service commission

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

until the further volumes of these reports have been received and studied.

The report on paper work and systems management contains many pointed suggestions for improvements in the work of departments, many of which are within the present jurisdiction of the departments themselves without any need for enabling legislation or specific cabinet directives.

We agree with the commissioners that the federal government should be aggressive in the development of administrative techniques and efficient management practices so as to secure the substantial savings which would result. The commission has placed much emphasis on the need for training in management and administrative techniques and practices as a prerequisite for the attainment of these economies. We have accordingly asked the civil service commission to make an assessment as a matter of urgency of the persons skilled in this work presently available in the public service, and of the extent and nature of the training which would be needed to make possible the earliest inauguration of the programs required to fill the gaps.

The government expects individual ministers and departments to consider and implement on their own responsibility many of the detailed suggestions in this particular report on paper work and systems. It should be stressed that in many instances the commissioners have cited practices in a particular department or agency merely by way of illustration of a principle which is of general application. The reports will therefore be closely studied by all departments and agencies whether or not they have been particularly singled out for specific mention.

In the second volume, report No. 5 on real property and report No. 6 on purchasing and supply each includes major recommendations on the transfer of responsibilities which the government will consider shortly. We have, however, taken action on two recommendations. Immediate effect is being given to the commission's recommendation that the Department of Public Works develop and maintain a complete inventory of real property owned and leased by the federal government and its agencies. I would add that substantial progress has already been made with this. All departments, including the armed forces, have been directed to undertake a thorough going review of their stores control and buying practices in the light of the commission's comments and recommendations.

Report No. 7 on transportation makes a number of recommendations which are now being considered by ministers in particular departments concerned. We have decided to set up a traffic advisory group as the commission has proposed to advise on the move-