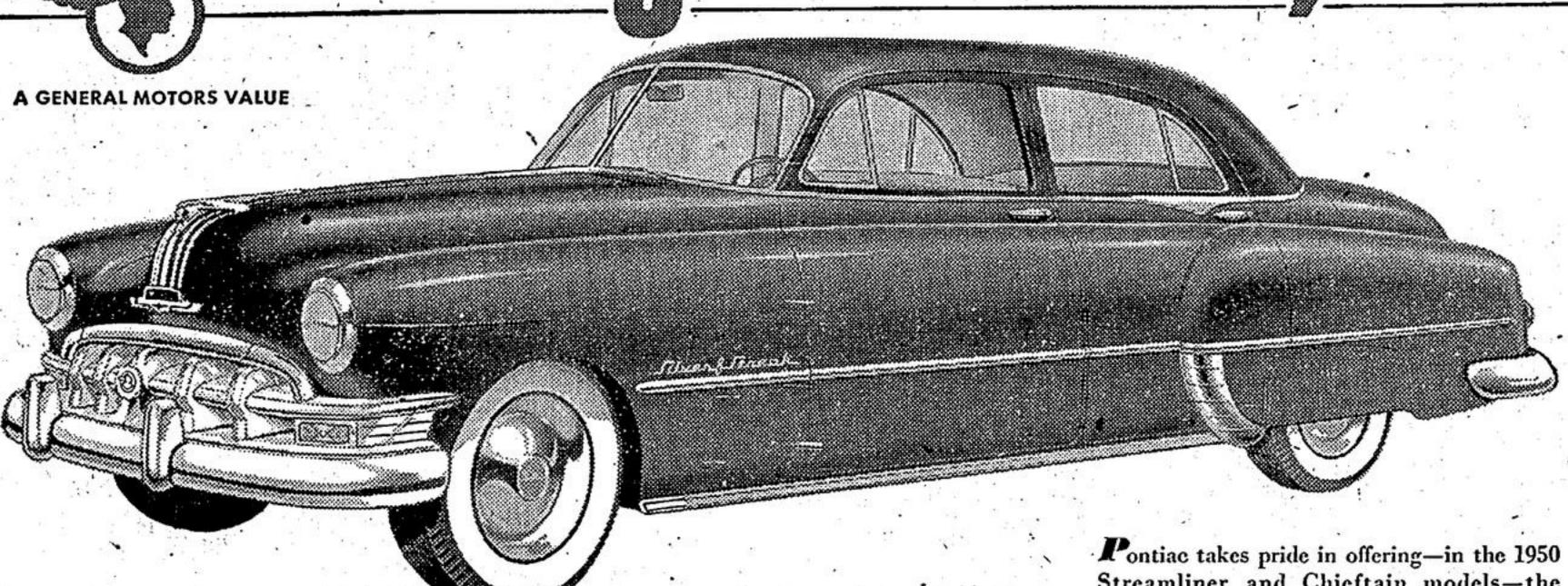




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OTTAWA LETTER

(By J. E. Smith, M.P.)

Budget-day is always a highlight of a parliamentary session, and Tuesday was that big night. Prebudget day discussions were notably free of any large scale tax reduction predictions and for that reason there seemed to be less interest than on some former occasions. Nevertheless galleries were filled and practically all members, were in the House to hear the country's financial state-ment and declaration of tax policy for the coming year.

The Budget is a very lengthy and detailed review of our financial affairs and read to the House by the Minister of Finance takes

about two hours.

For obvious reasons contents are a closely guarded secret until announced in the House. Members make representations during the months of budget making giving the Minister their ideas on what the budget should contain, and outlining just what tax revisions should, in their opinion, be carried out. Business groups and organiza-. tions from all over Canada make presentations on behalf of certain industries but the Finance Minister while carefully hearing all these presentations makes no commitments in advance of budget-

Press representatives receive copies of the budget speech early in the afternoon but are closely guarded in closed quarters like a jury until the speech is delivered in the House.

Tax reductions last year amounting to some \$375 million were so substantial that no large reductions were expected this year, but there will be very general satisfaction throughout Canada that despite those large reductions last year our financial position to-day is so satisfactory.

Like all budgets Mr. Abbott's 1950 presentation did not suit everyone and there were minor disappointments that this or that adjustment or reduction was not made. However, in the over-all reception it is considered a sound business-like budget, reflecting a healthy sound economy and one which augurs well for the future prosperity and development of Canada.

Defence Estimates Estimates before Parliament for National Defence total \$425 million, an increase of \$42 million over last year. This figure is many times greater than our expenditure for defence in the years before the last.

Expenditures for the Royal Can-dian Navy have increased from \$67 million last year to \$82 million for the coming year. The increased cost is mostly accounted for by the construction of three new anti-submarine escort vessels, one Arctic patrol vessel and four mine sweepers.

The R.C.A.F. expenditure will be increased from \$138 million to \$168 million to cover costs of new, fighter aircraft and extensive radar equipment.

The expenditure for the Army is being slightly decreased because of the urgent requirement of the other two Services for equipment.

Cigarette Smoking One of the older members of the House is Rev. Dan McIvor, a United Church minister from Fort William. He has been a member continuously since 1935. Born in Ireland in 1873 he came to Canada when he was 21 but still has an ardent love of the old land. This session the Rev. Dan has a resolution before the House urging the appointment of a special committee to consider "the cigarette problem, its effect on moral, mental and physical health, especially teenagers and unborn children, fire hazard and other related details." Hidden Taxes

G. Hansel, another member, Social Creditor from Alberta, has a resolution on the Order Paper asking the government to introduce legislation which would make it compulsory to reveal on the price of all commodities, that portion of the consumer purchasing price covered by taxation of any kind. He aims to lead a crusador against hidden taxes of any kind.

Oldest Member The oldest member of the House is J. E. Mathews, M.P. for Brandon, who defeated former P.C. Leader John Bracken in the last election. "J.E.", as he is popularly known, is 81 but could pass for many years younger. He walks erect and with a sprightly step which would do credit to one many years his junior. Last summer he travelled to Geneva, Switzerland, on a special government mission representing the Department of Labor.

Brazil is the newspaper man's dream country. There the law exempts journalists from taxes.

Mink are the most numerous and valuable of farm-raised fur-bearing animals in Canada.

Anglers like to catch, but don't think much of the Dolly Varden trout, because of its cannibalistic tendencies.

Wood ashes, dug in around the roots in the fall, gives lilac bushes winter nourishment.