

Economic Committee to provide revised estimates twice a year should go a substantial distance toward what is required in this area of keeping budget estimates current.

- Third, to clarify the changing status of the appropriations outlook while the Committees on Appropriations and other Committees are proceeding with their work, *it would be very helpful if the Congress could arrange for periodic reports summarizing the estimated effect of congressional action on the totals of appropriations, expenditures, and revenues as shown in the President's January budget.*

*The need for longer-term budget projections*

Not only does the public need more up-to-date information about how the budget is shaping up but it needs a further look ahead on the way Government expenditures and tax receipts are likely to develop in future years. Many individuals and groups have urged strongly upon the Commission the need for projections of Federal finances beyond the coming year. The Congress, the press, business and research organizations, economists, and others have pointed out that inability to see the broad future consequences of current budget policies and decisions is a major present weakness in budget presentations. Several organizations, including the Joint Economic Committee, have called for five-year budget projections. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Committee for Improving the Federal Budget has stated that "*the public should know . . . the amount of cost related to the current year but not to be expended until future years, as well as the impact on future years of both existing programs and proposed new programs.*"

It is apparent that many Government programs have larger future than current expenditure consequences which should be taken into account when they are initiated. Clearly, decisions made currently to embark on a major new military weapon program, to pursue certain objectives in space, or to accept certain Federal responsibilities in the field of education, for example, involve a commitment of future resources—and often at levels far greater than those required at the time of decision. If major decisions of collective choice such as these are to be made wisely, the public and the Congress need to have forward estimates, not only of the benefits and costs of the particular programs in question, but of the total budget of which these proposals are intended to become a part.

There is no doubt that internal long-range projections are both feasible and useful for many if not most Federal agencies. At present, Federal agencies are required to prepare and submit to the Bureau of the Budget multi-year program and financial plans as part of their regular annual budget submissions. These plans cover at least four years beyond the budget year. They can obviously be of substantial value to agency officials, both in considering their long-run objectives and in their current program management. Similarly, consideration of such plans by the President and his