sonnel requirements for each of the first five years under the legislation if it were enacted. Some agencies occasionally furnish longer-run estimates of established programs also. But estimates presently available are scattered and incomplete, and outside parties, who can frequently estimate long-run revenues with tolerable accuracy, have an enormously difficult job trying to assemble a coherent forecast of expenditures for the whole Government.

Sensible decisions on tax increases and decreases depend importantly upon the relationship of the budget outlook to projected trends in the economy and on some general public and congressional understanding of what levels of total expenditure have already been committed by past decisions. Looking ahead several years should facilitate wise planning for fiscal policy to promote economic growth, and may help avoid waves of pessimism and optimism about the state of the Nation's finances that sometimes seem to plague us when there are only general feelings and no quantitative estimates of the amount of "elbow room" in the Federal budget.

The Commission recognizes that the task of making and publishing official long-range projections cannot be accomplished overnight. Yet, with time, it believes that the public will understand that longer-term projections are useful but necessarily tentative, and that the President is not, through these numerical projections, committed to supporting particular programs or acts of legislation. To be most useful, such longer-range projections should not incorporate mere guesses about decisions yet to be made, but should concentrate on (1) estimates of the future costs of present decisions, and (2) the revenues which would be forthcoming from a specified set (or sets) of economic assumptions. The difference between expenditures and revenues so calculated would indicate the magnitude of resources available for future decisions about tax reductions, expenditure increases, or debt reduction.

The Commission believes that public understanding of the longer-term outlook for Federal finances can be encouraged in various ways. This may lead up to the time—which we hope will not be far off—when official Government projections may be possible. We feel confident that these will receive public acceptance with the understandable limitations that such projections inevitably contain. Accordingly, the Commission recommends:

- ***Starting in 1968, one or more respected and established private research organizations should be asked to prepare five-year projections, consistent with the President's 1969 budget recommendations and containing the income and tax revenues which would be yielded by a high employment economy.*** Staff of the Bureau of the Budget should assist informally in this project if requested and as time permits. Since the research organization or organizations would take responsibility for these projections, they would involve no commitment by the President to a particular set of programs or forecasts. The projections should emphasize those future expenditure changes which flow from current decisions or projected workloads so as