

The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker

● (1250)

Government expenditures are on the increase and there is no attempt at control. Budgetary expenditures on September 26 totalled \$9.2 billion, some \$1,800 million more than the same period in the previous year. Where is this nation going? I am not going to get into a discussion of inflation as it no doubt will be dealt with at length during this debate, but I do suggest that this government could have acted.

What is the government's excuse now? It says it is waiting for the budget. We have had budgets and budgets over and over again during the last three or four years with nothing to meet the serious situation of inflation. As I listened to the unveiling of the Speech from the Throne I could only come to the conclusion that its purpose was simply to becloud the fact that our financial situation in Canada is very serious and to put the blame on international causes when at least 55 per cent of inflation here in Canada is the result of inaction on the part of this government.

Why has there not been some action taken? There is nothing to prevent the government of Canada, even without a budget, from doing something about the awful interest rates which today make it virtually impossible for people in all walks of life to continue. The government has the power to do something and does not have to wait for a budget. Why does it not act now?

I remember very well that when I was Prime Minister the great banking institutions of Canada came to me seeking my agreement to legislation removing the 6 per cent ceiling on interest. I asked them what their purpose was, and they said it was to make the financial situation more flexible. I asked them whether they intended to use such legislation and they said no, at which time I said that under the circumstances my answer was no.

People in Canada today are aroused as never before. The government won an election and boasts of it. I do not object to that feeling of exhilaration that comes from victory, but where is Canada going? If it is going to follow what is set out in the throne speech I wonder what the consequences will be?

This brings me to something that happened on Monday on Parliament Hill. I stood against violence weeks ago when the situation at Kenora showed a degree of dangerous chaos. I said that those who were raising the trouble among the Indians were not the responsible ones but were troublemakers obtaining their inspiration from the United States. What happened here on Parliament Hill will be known throughout the world as an indication that we in this nation are in no different position than other nations, many without the same background and tradition of respect for law.

However, I must add that the government of Canada must bear a large share of the responsibility for what happened as a result of its inaction and the official decision that the minister would not meet with the Indians without the meetings being subject to certain qualifications he wished to impose. That is not the way to deal with difficulties and problems, and certainly not the way to deal with the first race of our country.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

I have no sympathy for what these people did, but when I heard that the government refused to meet with them, as it was reported, I feared for the consequences. As an indication of how serious this matter is let me point out that yesterday the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, himself a full-blooded Cree, speaking with the magnificent record he has had during the years, to the benefit of his people, spoke out strongly and definitively. That is an unusual thing for a representative of Her Majesty, provincially or otherwise.

I say to the government through you, Sir, that I have no consideration for the irresponsible individuals involved, but the vast majority of the Indian race whose contributions to this country have been tremendous and law abiding deserve more than the consideration they have been given to date. I would go further by asking whether the use of the RCMP on Parliament Hill on Monday was a course in keeping with the traditions of the force and the excellent relationship that has prevailed between that force and the Indian peoples?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. It being one o'clock the House will take recess until 2 p.m.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

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AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Pursuant to the order made earlier this day, the House will revert to routine proceedings.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

STANDING COMMITTEES

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council) presented the report of the special committee appointed to prepare and report lists of members to compose the standing committees of the House, as follows:

AGRICULTURE

Messrs.

Andres	Jarvis	Milne
Caron	Lambert	Murta
Condon	(Bellechasse)	Neil
Corriveau	La Salle	Nystrom
Côté	Lessard	Peters
Daudlin	Maine	Smith
Douglas	Marchand	(Saint-Jean)
(Bruce)	(Kamloops-Carjiboo)	Tessier
Goodale	Masniuk	Towers
Hargrave	McCain	Whittaker
Hurlburt	McIsaac	Wise
		Yanakis