

The Address—Mr. Drew

We are the greatest exporting nation per capita in the world. We can become an exporting nation far beyond anything we dream of if we will develop our resources and use the productive capacity that God has given us. To no other nation in the world today is such an opportunity offered; no other nation is faced with such a challenge to give leadership. Surely what has been done in the past can be done now and in the future. Surely some way is open to sensible human minds by which our food products and our excellent industrial production can get to the markets of the world which want what we have to sell and which, by that very demand, will afford employment and bring about expansion in every part of Canada.

So much for the practical problems presented by this situation with which we are confronted. Quite apart from those practical problems, however, the conduct of the government has raised an issue which will determine whether we are in fact a true democracy here in Canada. Government of the people, by the people and for the people was not first used as a definition of democracy by Abraham Lincoln. It was used at least twenty-three hundred years ago to describe the democracy that had emerged in ancient Greece. Even in those earliest democratic city states, however, democracy did not mean government of the people by all the people meeting to discuss their affairs. Democracy meant government of the people in their own best interests by the freely-chosen representatives of the people. Democracy has always been government of the people by the elected representatives of all the people. All the people of Canada are represented by the members of this house. The 14 million people of this country find their collective voice amongst the members who sit on both sides of the house. This is the structure of democracy. The mere existence of this chamber, however; the mere fact that members representative of all the people sit here; the mere existence of this magnificent parliament building in Ottawa; the beauty of the decorations and all the dignity that may accompany the tradition associated with this parliament, do not in themselves offer any guarantee that in reality there is government for the people by their own representatives.

The most beautiful house of parliament in the world is that in Budapest. Representatives from every part of Hungary meet in that lovely building by the Danube. But there is no democracy, and there is no freedom.

Neither is any freedom found because of the fact that men and women from all over Russia gather within the stern and majestic walls of the Kremlin. Those who have seen

the semi-oriental beauty of that building know that if dignity and impressiveness were any assurance of the real machinery of democracy, it would be found in the Kremlin itself. That is not the test. The test of democracy is, first of all, whether the people know the essential facts when they choose their representatives; and then, in turn, whether their representatives who meet in parliament are fully informed as to every important fact upon which decisions are made by their executive committee, the government.

Today I am discussing the information available to the present members of this house. Our last session ended only two months ago. Were we fully informed in regard to all the information in the government's possession about trade and the threat of unemployment, lower returns to our producers, and decreasing production? Were we informed, as we should have been, about the way in which the government dealt with combines, which can restrain the trade of this country and reduce the price advantage that comes from free competition? Were we fully informed as to what the government was going to do about communist activities in this country, which have assumed such importance? Were we fully informed as to what the government knew about communist activities within the national film board, to say nothing about several other boards which are of equal interest to the members of this house, and will be throughout the session? These are questions which are of quite as much importance to those who belong to the party from which the government is formed as they are to the members of the opposition.

I hope that no one will say that the majority of government supporters is so great that it is a waste of time to raise these questions here today. The size of that majority, in itself, imposes upon those who belong to the government party the highest obligation to observe those principles of responsible government which rest upon the supremacy of parliament. In fact it is to those who belong to the parties from which the government is formed that we must look for action in keeping with their own belief as to the responsibility of parliament, if this situation is to be dealt with as it should be.

It would be like a breath of cool air on an extremely warm day—not a day like today, but on such a day as doubtless we shall have before this session comes to an end—if some hon. gentlemen who are not members of the opposition were to say here some of the things they have already said outside this house.

Mr. Cote (Matapedia-Matane): Name them.