

*The Address—Mr. Drew*

the severity of the credit restrictions imposed. The minister of immigration announces with pride that within the first eight months of this year more immigrants have come to Canada than in any similar period since the war, and yet at the very same time we see a steady and alarming reduction in the construction of new houses. If there is one place above all others where all artificial barriers should be removed, it is in the case of housing. We are desperately short of houses for the people already here, never more desperately short of them than we are right at this hour. They are needed for the people now coming here and for those we are inviting to come. We have the raw materials in Canada. We have the skill. Additional workers are available as a result of the unemployment which the government has created and other workers are coming to this country. Many thousands are being brought here by the government itself. What is necessary therefore is that the government remove the obstructions it has raised, change the mortgage provisions under the National Housing Act, and give the green light to a real and comprehensive building program of new houses throughout the whole of Canada.

The Minister of Finance has a formula for fighting inflation. It sounds good. It gets back to old and earthy principles. Speaking to the annual convention of one of our most important women's organizations in Montreal not long ago he emphasized the importance of saving as one way of fighting inflation. He said that the amount might not seem large in any particular case but that an accumulation of many little savings would produce a very real result.

Is it too much to hope that in this case the Minister of Finance was speaking on behalf of the government and that this does represent a change in the attitude of the government? After all, that is what we have been seeking to impress upon the government in regard to government expenditures for some time. On each occasion that we have urged that a committee of this house or a commission be set up to examine the cost of government and the business organization of government itself, we have been asked to say where the savings would be made. We have pointed out where many savings could be made. We have pointed out—and I point out again—that millions of dollars could be saved simply by the device of closing down on the unnecessary propaganda organizations maintained by the government and letting the government rely on what it actually does instead of what its paid propaganda says that it does.

I doubt if there is a single member of this house, in his contacts around this building and elsewhere throughout Canada, who does not know some place where some saving could be made. Possibly it might be relatively small. That is the very thing the Minister of Finance has pointed out, but with a multitude of government activities, such a multitude of activities as would never be known by the careful housewife, the point which the Minister of Finance so aptly made at Montreal surely does apply with immense force to the government itself.

Even if the individual items of the saving here and the saving there are small in proportion to the billions spent, even with a government that can say, what does a million matter, the accumulation of many savings in many departments of government would undoubtedly reach a very substantial figure. That would be tackling inflation at its very base. Under the unusual procedure adopted for this session it may not be possible to introduce a motion which would once again give the members an opportunity to vote on the question of setting up a committee to inquire into the cost and operation of government. But if the Minister of Finance thought his advice was good when it was directed to those who are called upon day by day to exercise the utmost care in their own spending, then it should be many times as good when directed to an organization which spends such enormous sums of the people's money, and in this case the advice does not have to go to somebody else. It can be accepted by the person who has put it forward.

If the government believes that saving will help to fight inflation, then it must believe that saving of public money by the government itself will be effective in fighting inflation. For that reason I do hope that in the face of such a calamity, to use the Prime Minister's own word for it, the government will be ready to follow a course which would be followed by any business of any substantial size which hoped to keep in operation in this country in these difficult days.

The Minister of Finance has every reason to know that in these particular days those companies which have to adjust themselves to the economic pressures of the moment are examining every single department of their businesses to see whether even the most efficient staffs have permitted duplications and inefficiencies to creep in which waste some unnecessary money, perhaps just the small savings such as he has mentioned.

The government has also placed great emphasis on production as the answer to inflation. In that I am sure the government