

Motion for Adjournment

any time. He has done so today. The aspersions he has cast on his allies in the New Democratic party do not indicate that appreciation of good things of which the minister is usually purported to have a monopoly. He said that the New Democratic party had gone right. Well, as I read what they had done I felt they had adopted Walter Gordon, the President of the Privy Council. They adopted him and it began to look to some of us as though a future alliance was being built up, if not in fact, then indeed in name. This reminds one of the old song, "Walter, Walter, Lead Me To The Altar."

All these things are indications. The Canada Development Corporation has a new name, the Canada resources corporation, but behind in the shadows standeth Walter keeping watch on his own. I had hoped that the alliance of the last several years between the socialists and the neo-socialists might lead to the culmination—

Mr. Starr: They are going to have more meetings.

Mr. Diefenbaker: —of a happy reunion. Today they are just playing with one another.

I was amazed at the argument advanced by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It had all the clarity that he normally exhibits when answering questions on foreign affairs. He said his heart bleeds for the retired civil servants. He referred to their economic distress. He recognizes the need and he feels, with all his heart, that something should be done. But when he is asked to do something he increases the salaries of the highly paid civil servants. He multiplies those increases and forgets those who were retired years ago and who today, he admits, are living in economic distress. This government has been recalcitrant. The same situation prevails in other fields to which I shall not refer.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): May I ask my hon. friend a question, a very kind question? Why did my hon. friend not act in 1962 when I asked him to do so?

Mr. Starr: What have you been doing in the last five years?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Interruptions of that kind result in no detour on my part. I say to the government, you have failed to act. You have deceived parliament and the retired civil servants. Now you say, "Give us a little more time to continue the deception. Next fall we may act; we are going to do something." The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Benson)

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

said, "We hope to do something." Let him give an undertaking now. What are you going to do? Let us have none of these hypothetical promises and nebulous excuses. They say they are working on it. The very countenance of the Minister of National Revenue indicates how deeply he is thinking about this subject. Can he not come up with an opinion? Does he not agree with the committee that was composed of members from all parts of the house? Is it so difficult? Why is there this delay? It is simply that this government is playing with the retired civil servants and intends to continue to do so.

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I should simply like to congratulate the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) upon what may be his last speech in that position in the house. I hope that in our concern, and everyone else's concern for retired people, we will also consider retired leaders of the opposition. With respect to our position—

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is rather high class wit.

Mr. Benson: —with regard to pensions for retired civil servants, I should like to point out that there was an adjustment made in 1958 by the government led by the Leader of the Opposition. I should like to point out also that there was no further adjustment made from then until 1962, by which time he ceased to form the government. I should like to point out further that there was a deficit of hundreds of millions of dollars in the superannuation account when the hon. gentleman left the government. This matter was referred to a committee—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Haven't you got a surplus today?

Mr. Benson: —which indicates the deep concern of this government for retired civil servants. My hon. friend says the matter is a rather simple one. It is stated that the committee has reported, so we should simply come up with a proposition, give it to the house today and that would be the end of it. I should like to assure him that the matter is not as simple as that. This government for the first time in history, when it passed the Canada Pension Plan and the amendment to the old age pension, attached a cost of living index to them. This was new ground in Canada. I should like to point out that to my knowledge none of the labour unions in