

The Address—Mr. Scott

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie)—National Parks—Prince Edward Island—Establishment of second facility; the hon. member for Shefford (Mr. Rondeau)—Health and Welfare—Action to reduce the cost of hospital, medical and dental costs.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Jacques-L. Trudel for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a word about the paradox of our armed forces experimenting in new and radical organizational concepts. I am not opposed to new ideas, but the wisdom, or the lack of it, in our new military policy appears to have the government squarely over the barrel at the present time. The government has been warned repeatedly from this side of the House to give full consideration to possible and probable future contingencies both domestic and foreign. They were warned repeatedly by members of the official opposition to give due consideration to the morale of whatever armed forces we were left with when the experimenters were finished.

As a member of NATO, as a member of the United Nations and as a free nation that is responsive to forces at work in a world committed to the downfall of freedom, Canada has a minimum requirement for trained and equipped armed forces. Yet we are below our required minimum at the present time. Anyone who doubts this is invited to explain how Canada could meet its present commitments to NATO and the UN when the bulk of Canada-based combat troops are presently performing guard duty in the province of Quebec and in Ottawa. It has been demonstrated beyond any doubt in the present crisis that we have at the present time only sufficient forces to deal with a large-scale domestic crisis. On the other hand, if the troops committed to foreign service were stationed overseas at the present time, we would be powerless to deal with a situation such as the threatened insurrection in Quebec.

[The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel).]

We could adopt the NDP philosophy and follow the advice of people such as Melville Watkins. We could forget about national defence altogether and disband our armed forces. However, I doubt that any straight-thinking Canadian would buy that argument after recent events. It was typical of the present government's leaning toward NDP philosophy when the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) stated in Halifax that the reductions in armed forces strength would continue, in spite of the cogent lessons any responsible person would learn from the present crisis.

The need for adequate, trained forces to assist the civil power could not be demonstrated more clearly than by the events of the last few days. If our armed forces are to function in their second major role, as an arm or tool of foreign policy, it is only common sense to suppose that planning should be on a forward-looking rather than a backward-looking basis. We know now that armed insurrection can occur in Canada. It would be foolish and irresponsible for the present government to stick to yesterday's policies just to prove they are immovable. They are not immovable. The government are just being obstinate. We have fresh information on which to base our military requirements, information that was not available to us a few weeks or a few months ago. We know now that we can experience armed insurrection in this country and that it could get out of hand quickly.

● (8:10 p.m.)

I call upon the government to suspend the present policy of forces reduction for the time being and allow this House to debate the question of Canada's present and future needs in the way of military forces. Wait until the present crisis has passed, then examine the issue coolly in light of the new evidence available.

I will deal for a moment with another aspect of that question and call on the government to move soon on the recommendations of the Woods commission report and the report of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. I call on the government to move quickly to table legislation on these recommendations. The people who will be affected have done their part. They cannot be expected to do more. The onus is now on the government to do its part and ensure that the hardships being borne by our veterans are lessened. All recommendations respecting veterans pensions and allowances have been approved by the government members on the Veterans Affairs Committee, so there is a consensus. There is, therefore, no good reason for the government not moving at an early date to present legislation to this House.

Before I conclude my remarks I should like to touch upon one more serious problem that we as a nation must face up to if we are to survive. We have a situation in our schools and universities wherein we tolerate radical and revolutionary professors. We literally turn our impressionable young people over to these professors and stand by while they are instructed in seditious and inflaming philosophies that are alien to our way of life, our system of government and our code of moral conduct and behaviour.