

*Alleged Lack of Government Leadership*

Coming back to the editorial in the *Globe and Mail* I read a little further down:

Canada's second need—

That is second to a clear statement on what is the defence policy of the government—

—equally urgent, if not more so—is for a budget that will give some definition to economic policy for at least the next three to five years. Within that time reports from the royal commission on banking and finance and the royal commission on taxation should be available as a basis for more far reaching reforms and long term planning.

These are Canada's needs, and that they be satisfied is essential to the health, possibly the survival of the nation.

Then in conclusion this editorial states:

The government should make an honest statement on defence policy, from which we could move into reasonable negotiations with the United States. The government should press onward with all haste to a budget that will make it possible for us to begin restoring our economic health. To such honesty a loyal opposition might be expected to respond with co-operation.

We ask the Prime Minister to forget politics and an election, and give us leadership.

This is where we stand in the House of Commons at the present time.

Dealing with the confusion and indecision—the rationalizing indecision which I believe it is—it is not good enough that we try to explain something by reason of something that happened in the past. This is a crisis government. We go from crisis to crisis. What we ought to be doing is anticipating what the problem will be ahead and then, before we reach that problem, make a decision as to whether we will go through it, around it or over it, or decide how it is going to be solved.

The former minister of national defence says he favours nuclear arms for Canada's defensive forces both in NATO and NORAD. Does he mean by this that the Prime Minister is against nuclear arms for these Canadian forces? One would assume so, otherwise he would not have quit; but then I would ask the Prime Minister, does the minister of national defence make these commitments, which we are just now finding out, all by himself, or does he make them in agreement with his Prime Minister?

Let us face the facts in this situation. If the government did not know these commitments were being made, then the minister of national defence was away out of order. But he could not have made them without the government knowing them and being in agreement with these decisions. Therefore it is not wrong to assume today, although we have yet to be told by the government, that we are committed to the acquisition of nuclear arms for Canada. It is this kind of bumbling and indecisiveness that produces the confusion that has overtaken the nation.

I think I have a fairly good idea what the people of Canada, at the grassroots level, are talking about and I am convinced that all of the confusion, uneasiness and unrest that has been developing in regard to this particular problem is not just the result of a press that is supposed to be prejudiced against the government, or opposition parties that are trying to undermine the very foundations of confidence of our Canadian people in government.

Our people want to know, and have a right to know, what the policies of the government are. Actually we have a pretty good assumption what these defence policies are because any reasonable persons would not be installing carriers for nuclear warheads if they did not agree, intend and plan to put nuclear warheads on top of them.

This comes to the crux of the difficulty facing us at the present time. The Prime Minister has said there is no confusion; yet we have been told by the government of a foreign power that our defence policies are not clear, and by the very words used in that statement they prove to us we have not been informed of what is actually going on. That is why I say to the government this afternoon that it has failed in its responsibilities to the country and to this house, a house of minorities, which is a peculiar situation. It is a situation with which we are not familiar in Canada, but one which we are perhaps going to have to live with for quite a long time.

We all become confused if we follow what we are told is government policy. The other day a friend of mine said there is not any confusion about the government's policy. He said that if you turn back to a certain page of *Hansard* and find the statement on the Nassau meeting, if you turn over then to the speech of the Prime Minister and put them together, with the speech of the minister of national defence, you will find out what the policy is. Another man said "That is not my responsibility. That is the responsibility of the government or the Prime Minister or the minister concerned, to put it in terms so that we all can understand it." That is why I believe the people of Canada want action at this time, positive action, action based upon clearcut policies with which we do not necessarily have to agree, but at least we should know about. We have appealed—and I think we have been very reasonable in our appeal—to the government to tell us what are their policies. When they tell us they have a program of positive legislation, we want them to lay it out in orderly fashion so that we can get on with it. It is not good enough to bring in a certain piece of legislation which in principle may be right and with which in principle all parties will agree, and for us then