

*Supply—Mr. Nasserden*

ber of Canadians in an inferior position. It is also the lack of a sense of community. It is also the existence of spiritual and psychological poverty, and if we are going to tackle the problem it has got to be done by more than just issuing cheques. You can have psychological and spiritual poverty in the midst of financial affluence.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time you have allowed me. I wanted to make this my last point. Education is everybody's business. H. G. Wells has said civilization is a race between education and catastrophe and I welcome the government's intention to give priority to this basic human need.

**Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosithern):** Mr. Speaker, when we rise to take part in this debate we cannot help but realize that we in the House of Commons are meeting during one of the most critical periods in the history of our country. In this connection one need only think back to the recent events that led to the election campaign, an election that was called by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) because he said he needed a majority to be able to carry on the business of government.

One also thinks of what has happened during the last week or two with regard to the all important matter of national unity, and he realizes that the boasts with regard to the Fulton-Favreau formula, made by the Prime Minister and those surrounding him during the last several months, and even years, now lie in ruins.

Today the government is asking the House of Commons for supply, for the things that are necessary to provide for the day to day work of government. I do not see the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) present tonight. He has hardly been present at all during this debate. True, the Postmaster General (Mr. Côté) has been here during a great part of the debate. He is a new appointee, but judging from the heritage attached by the Liberal party to that portfolio, we know something of that particular situation.

When I look at those empty treasury benches opposite and realize the critical situation in the country, realize that the government is asking us tonight to vote money after wasting so much of the time of the House of Commons, after having a recess that lasted over 6½ months, yet with its members failing to be present for a debate in which the opposition has agreed not to move a motion or an amendment, a debate which the opposition has said would be wide ranging over many

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

matters, I cannot help but think that this is an arrogance, and an unforgivable one on the part of the government.

• (8:30 p.m.)

I remember not so many years ago, when they sat on this side, that they utilized every weapon at their disposal at that time in order to bring down a government which was trying to do something for the good of the people of this country. Let us look at what has transpired during the years that have passed since then. In doing so I am sure we will realize that the living costs in this country have risen as they have never risen before, particularly in the last few months, largely because of actions deliberately taken by hon. gentlemen opposite. We must realize also that the cumulative effects of the increased cost of living is having a devastating effect on those with fixed incomes and pensions. The lack of action proposed by this government in the early part of this session need not be referred to at this time, except to say that it must have forgotten the plight of the thousands of Canadians who need help more than anyone else at this time.

Mr. Speaker, all these things, or lack thereof, belong to a government led by a prime minister who his followers say, is a man who cares. What does this Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) care about if not about these people who find themselves in this position of need? This is the Prime Minister who said he was declaring war on poverty. His followers are the candidates who travelled around from one end of Canada to the other saying they were going to fight for the poor, fight for the needy and fight for people on fixed incomes. They said they were going to fight for the people in this country earning less than \$3,000 a year. That is what they said during the election campaign but where were they when the votes were called in this house and where are they tonight at this time when we in Canada must face these existing problems?

I realize that there are many factors which enter into the present situation, and that one of the most important is the delay in taking action to do something about the devastating effects of the cost of consumer credit in Canada today. I know the government will say that it has set up a joint committee of the House of Commons and the other place to study this problem, but everyone on both sides of this house knows there are measures that could have been taken before now to alleviate existing conditions.