

*The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker*

Again these were matters entirely within the ambit of the budget. I could go throughout the entire period that we were in government when it was regarded as the appropriate course, in moving amendments to addresses of this kind, to deal with economic matters and the steps to be followed. That is what we have done in this case; and what has been placed before you, sir, as an excuse for voting against that which they say they support, is that the course we are taking is one that ought not to be taken—in other words, that it is an improper thing to do.

What a subterfuge, what an excuse, what a travesty on parliament that, believing the 11 per cent sales tax should be removed, they say, as an excuse for their failure to do what they stood for during the campaign, that we should wait until the budget.

• (8:40 p.m.)

They did not wait in 1957, 1958 and 1959, or thereafter, to move amendments that dealt with economic matters. I think on every occasion, with the exception of two, they moved amendments on matters which, under normal circumstances, would be considered during the budget debate. I find it passing strange that, having wrapped themselves in garments of parliamentary holiness, they want us to believe they are shocked that we would follow the course they followed when we were in government.

It has been of interest to hear several hon. members on the other side of this house expressing themselves in favour of having the 11 per cent sales tax removed. They have voiced objection but they will not vote objection, when it comes to casting a vote. They know what is right to do, but they are unable to do it. They have good leadership in this regard because the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters) is a man who has been associated in the fields of Rothschild and has a thorough knowledge of business and the needs of the economy.

The minister said when speaking on October 28 last as reported in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*:

—that he opposed the federal sales tax of 11 per cent of building materials.

He opposed this tax, he said, for the same reasons he opposed the sales tax imposed by the provincial Conservative government.

He was asked if he agreed with a certain so-called regressive measure and the article states:

This was the first time Mr. Winters had shown anger at the questions—

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

The article states:

I have been asked if I agree with a certain so-called regressive measure.

I take it that was the 11 per cent sales tax on building materials and machinery. This report continues:

"I have stated that I do not agree with regressive measures that anyone proposes," he said, clenching his fists and pointing his finger at the audience.

If he will but translate that clenched fist and pointing finger to casting his vote tonight in favour of that which he regarded as regressive in October, we may well be assured that this iniquitous tax will be removed.

My purpose in rising this evening is to deal with a matter upon which no discussion was to be permitted a few moments ago, when the house leader of the government endeavoured to table a document dealing with correspondence that passed between the government of the province of Quebec and the Prime Minister of Canada. As a result, it became necessary for me to take part in this debate to deal with a situation which, to say the least, requires an explanation by members of the government.

Over and over again in this parliament, and it is only a few days old, members of this government have seen fit to flout parliament by failure to give answers to questions or by making statements outside the house that ought to have been made in the house when parliament was sitting.

It was only yesterday that the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) asked this question as reported at page 280 of *Hansard*:

May I direct a question to the Prime Minister and ask him if he has had any recent exchange of views with Premier Lesage which indicated that Mr. Lesage will soon be publicly rejecting the constitutional amending formula, to which there was a complete absence of any reference in the Throne Speech?

The Prime Minister then replied:

If there is any exchange which I have recently had with Mr. Lesage which can be made public that will be done.

Strangely enough, the wording of the answer would indicate that the Prime Minister at that moment had no knowledge that there had been such an exchange, because he placed it in a subjunctive manner in this way: "If there is any exchange—". We had been endeavouring for several days, and my hon. friends to the left had joined with us, to find out what had passed between the government of Quebec and the government of