

I say with the greatest respect that this is the most important principle which parliament in my lifetime will ever be called upon to debate, the principle of the right to govern. The government has changed the parliamentary system under which we operate in this country to a republican system of government regardless of our constitution, and numerous references have been made by government supporters to constitutional matters. I say that this is as effective a destruction of parliament as if the parliament were dissolved by the Prime Minister never to be recalled. If you destroy our system you destroy parliament as effectively as if you burned down this place, or as if you bolted and barred the door. This is the situation when the government will not accept its constitutional responsibility as laid down by our leader in his opening remarks in this debate.

Now, when we are talking about constitutional matters, they are subject to interpretation. What is the economic situation? Why is this a vital and major matter? Why do the government choose to ignore it? Why do they have to impose a 5 per cent surtax on the people of this country? What was the reason? Was this something they would normally do in the course of events, or was it the result of their economic and financial policies? I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that the government's economic and financial policies led this country into a position where the government had to impose this tax. This is the most spending government we have ever had. They have become not only the greatest spenders but the greatest taxers.

In order to add weight to my argument let us look for a few moments at the report of the Auditor General to the House of Commons which we recently received, dated March 31, 1967. Let us see what has gone on under this government. Let the government point to any department in which expenses have been trimmed. I say it was a major and vital matter upon which this government was defeated, and according to the constitution they should now resign as the government of Canada. Let me list some of the departmental expenditures which have increased. The expenditures of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation went up 18 per cent; Defence Production went up 34 per cent; Dominion Bureau of Statistics went up 71 per cent; Energy and Mines was up only 4.6 per cent; External Affairs went up 51 per cent. I could go on and indicate the percentages by which every department's expenditures have risen.

Motion Respecting House Vote

The expenditures of the department of the Secretary of State went up by 147 per cent.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Woolliams: We find that the expenditures of the Solicitor General's branch have risen 17 per cent. Surely these facts as set out by the Auditor General confirm that this is the most spending government we have had. They give lip service to the principle of trimming costs. This tax bill which was defeated was a part of the economic and financial policies of this government as set out by the Minister of Finance. I do not believe the government can deny that in any way.

What does this all lead us to? The Prime Minister made a speech with regard to the role of the opposition on January 27, 1959, when he addressed a luncheon meeting of the Canadian Club at Ottawa. At that time he quoted with approval the former leader of the opposition, the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker). This is what the hon. member for Prince Albert said, and this is exactly the point I intend to make. I shall try to conclude my argument on this note:

Autocracy, tyranny, dictatorship, are shadows that ever stand in the wings of even the freest of parliaments.

What he is really saying is that autocracy is always evident; tyranny is always evident, and dictatorship is always evident. It is up to the members of parliament to make certain we keep this the freest of parliaments and carry out our constitutional duty.

In the absence of a strong opposition, a cabinet with a commanding position in the house could and would rule without regard to individual and minority rights.

This is exactly what the government has done. The Prime Minister quoted this speech with approval. Surely the government is acting very autocratically. There is no question about this. They are not now carrying out their constitutional duty. They have set themselves up as something of a dictatorship. There is nothing to say they will not do the same thing tomorrow. In fact one of the worst aspects of what they have done, if they ever get away with this suggestion from the Martin-Caouette axis, has been the establishment of a precedent in this house which may be followed in the future and which may lead to tyranny, autocracy and dictatorship, even if this government does not follow these practices in the future.