

Some of the highest paid people in Canada can be found without going too far from this Chamber. There is no question about that. Something should be done.

I was delighted to hear the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) speak this evening. I had the privilege of visiting Cyprus and Lahr, Germany, in February of this year. I talked to the troops there. I commend the minister on his troops. They are a wonderful bunch. But, without mentioning names or ranks, they were not over enthusiastic about the equipment supplied to them. They want more and better equipment. They certainly deserve it.

There is one other matter, and I will probably be baring my soul in this respect. I used to wonder why the devil Canada spent so much money on an army. It was not very big. I felt that the United States, that great country to the south, would protect us. They would not dare let anyone invade us.

Just two weeks ago I had the privilege of visiting armed forces bases along with NATO members from all over Europe. We visited Shilo, Esquimalt, Halifax and Camp Valcartier. I was most impressed. Although \$2.5 billion is a hell of a lot of money, it certainly is not enough. That is it in a nutshell. We have to pay the piper. I hope parliament will find enough money to equip our great Armed Forces in the way to which they are entitled and should be equipped.

I know that a tremendous 10 per cent of our national budget goes for defense. However, if you match that against some of the NATO countries in Europe, I bet we are not paying too much. We are not too hard done by. I hope many members will look at it in this way. And when I say this, I include members on this side of the House too.

I say to the Minister of National Defence that when he appears before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts he will have a friend. I happen to a member of that committee. I believe it was one of my friends from the holier than thou group to my left—

Mr. Hogan: Thank you.

An hon. Member: Saintly sinners.

Mr. Darling: When I first came to this House I sat at the far end of the Chamber. I expected to see a halo over that particular group of 31 members. Now they do not require as large a halo. Of course, with the new member in that party maybe there will be a halo.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: One way of saving money would be to cut down on some of these mandarin palaces being built in Ottawa and other places to house government agencies. They are growing like a cancer. I visited the offices of a government agency in a town not too far from where I live. The official was not very high up on the totem pole, but when I went into his office, there were rugs like the one in this Chamber. You could put four Centre Block offices of members of parliament into his office. I will not refer to the Confederation Building where I understand some members have tennis courts for offices, at least members opposite. Money could certainly be saved if the

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government would quit extending its tentacles through more buildings.

The Ontario government has finally stated it is putting a ceiling on its civil service list. I hope that will be done here. I am not quite sure of my figures, but I believe there are between 330,000 and 340,000 civil servants here. That is a lot of people to have their noses in the public trough. The ordinary taxpayer has to foot the bill for that. We must do something to try to cut down in this area. We must show that inflation is more than just a word.

Members on this side will do their best to try and do what the people of Canada want, namely, save money and fight inflation. We know that during the election campaign we wrongly told the people there should be controls on prices and so on. Privately, every damned one agreed. The only exception is they said "not me". They wanted everyone else's wages cut but their own.

Something has to be done to try to keep prices down. I hope we will be able to do something in this parliament. The Prime Minister says that one of his top priorities is reconstituting and changing the House of Commons, futtling around with the Senate, and doing this and that. If things could be left as they are and we could get down to brass tacks, we could do something about inflation. Let's forget all about this damned gobbledygook of changing the House of Commons even though there are a lot of things I do not like about it. Your Honour should put a cross on the calendar. This is the first day this session we have not had a Standing Order 43 motion. I know which is the guilty side for the most part, and I am not enthused about that. These crazy 43's waste the time of the House. There are a lot of things that could be done to streamline the House, and I agree with the government on some of them. There is no question about that.

● (2140)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Darling: I agree that 20 minutes for a speech is all that the Prime Minister needs. I do not speak often, but I do sit in my seat and listen to all this wonderful oratory that goes on and on, and darned few members ever stop before they are told to sit down. Having spoken for 30 or 40 minutes, they then ask how long have they got? One learned member of the House of Commons last year, who is not here today, represented an English riding, spoke French about half the time and recited poetry. That was the hon. member for Scarborough-something-or-other. So it is not necessary to be a most highly educated person to get back into the House of Commons. I hope that this parliament will get on with trying to do something that the people of Canada want done, and will not just waste time.

[Translation]

Miss Monique Bégin (Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, allow me first of all to congratulate you on your appointment. I should like you also to convey my best wishes to your colleagues, namely, the Speaker of the House and hon. member for Sudbury (Mr. Jerome), the hon. member for Beauharnois-Salaberry (Mr. Laniel), and my colleague from the Louis-Hébert riding (Mrs. Morin).