

The Budget—Mr. J. M. Macdonnell

that I am going to go on speaking for hours. Hon. members will recall that there was a certain, shall we say, difference of opinion; anyway there was a different way of describing certain events; I hardly know how to find the correct words. At any rate, this is the way the Minister of Agriculture summed it up. I told you a moment ago how enthusiastically he spoke about himself and the other two members of the big three, and he then went on to speak of himself and the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I suppose we can still call the minister the Minister of Trade and Commerce, although I suppose we shall also be dealing with him mainly under his new ministerial title.

Referring to himself and the Minister of Trade and Commerce, the Minister of Agriculture said, as reported on page 1448 of *Hansard* of March 20:

One of the reasons why we—

The Minister of Trade and Commerce and himself.

—are satisfied to be where we are is that we both know that we can afford to make statements, knowing that we might be incorrect—

I want to read that again, because that to me is one of the most interesting things I have ever heard in this house or ever hope to hear:

One of the reasons why we are satisfied to be where we are is that we both know that we can afford to make statements, knowing that we might be incorrect because we have a leader who does not make many mistakes.

I am sure we all join in the feeling of enthusiasm that we have a Prime Minister who never makes mistakes; nevertheless it is a strange doctrine announced by the Minister of Agriculture. As I say, it almost seemed as if it were spreading to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Defence. I am not suggesting that the Minister of Finance—what shall I say—considers that he enjoys this blessed irresponsibility of being able to make statements knowing that they might be incorrect, but I suppose at times all of us might like to have a dispensation of that kind if we could be sure that it was valid and coming from a responsible quarter.

I have been speaking briefly of the effect that high prices are having on the lives of individuals; but the havoc of high prices is not confined to individuals. High prices, as the Minister of National Defence told the American Arbitration Association, are throwing out of gear the defence program, the important objective for which we are making sacrifices and expect to make so many more. What irony if in the pursuit of peace we organize so badly by letting prices get out

[Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood).]

of control that we fail in the objective! Nevertheless the Minister of National Defence has warning words which we had all better consider, and I suggest even the Minister of Defence Production might pay some attention to these words too. The Minister of National Defence spoke to the American Arbitration Association on March 30. I think the minister visited that association not so much in his quality as Minister of National Defence but in his quality as a former adviser of the Chamber of Commerce. I think it was for his work in civil life rather than in the government; nevertheless there he was before the American Arbitration Association. He spoke at length about our defence problem, and after all, that is what he is interested in and knows most about. He said some things which we might very well have thought he might have said to us first before he took the American Arbitration Association into his confidence. Here is what he said:

The armed forces and industry combined must make a frontal attack on the cost of defence equipment. This has become so costly that neither we nor our allies can get what we need—

Note this, Mr. Speaker.

—without going on an all-out war economy.

These are pretty strong words. Here we have again, and not for the first time, two voices in the cabinet. The Minister of Finance has been telling us that we can make do as we are on what we will call a half-and-half basis, or a three-quarter-one-quarter basis, but the Minister of National Defence says: No; neither we nor our allies can get what we need without going on an all-out war economy. I suggest that as these ministers sit side by side they had better get together and find out what is happening. Incidentally they could tell parliament too.

I must say there are some figures I have read which seem to justify very fully what the Minister of National Defence said. For instance, the *Toronto Telegram* of April 12 has a dispatch which says that a frigate cost \$1,700,000 in the last war, and that a sub-chaser, which I understand does somewhat the same work, now costs \$8 million. Certainly that gives one furiously to think.

There are two other things the Minister of National Defence said in the same speech that I think are worthy of the attention of the house. No doubt one of these days the Minister of National Defence himself will come along and tell us something about these things, but I am giving hon. members a little advance information. The minister said further:

Unless you actually see it, it is hard to imagine how defence costs have soared.