

are only just being made in some parts of the orient. To come forward with an amendment which says that the government:—

(a) failed to demobilize our armed forces on a fair basis and, in particular, have failed to prevent serious disadvantage to overseas service personnel;

(b) failed to provide a speedy and effective plan of reconversion from war to peace, and failed in particular to join in partnership with labour and industry in devising a workable scheme to provide jobs, with fair wages, for discharged service personnel and war workers;

(c) failed to take adequate and timely action to meet the ever-mounting housing crisis . . .

I say that to come forward with that amendment within a few hours after the cessation of war does not commend itself, in my judgment, as being in the nature of disinterested or constructive criticism.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): We did not think it would.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: It is rather in the nature of impetuous partisan criticism. I suggest it was hardly a good way for my hon. friend to begin, in his first address to the House of Commons.

I trust, when the amendment comes before the house for decision, hon. members will see that it gets just what it should get by way of support. I expect the friends of my hon. friend will join with him in supporting it. I should hope, however, that other hon. members will realize that, in a moment of transition from war to peace, no government on earth can begin to hope to satisfy everyone. We are prepared to be shown wherein mistakes have been made; but I would ask that, when hon. members criticize, they deal fairly with facts, at least for this particular session.

The problems now facing our country are in some respects going to be even more difficult of solution than were the great problems connected with the winning of the war. During war time a wealth of patriotism, for which we cannot be too thankful, exhibited itself. But now that the war is over, and the world is labouring in a great sea of unrest, following the storm through which it has passed, it is to be expected that many questions will be very difficult of solution. May I say that those who lend their voices to unnecessary and unjustified agitations may help to create situations which will be much more difficult to meet than they may have reason to expect. I speak with some knowledge of the problems remaining to be solved, realizing that we are only at the beginning of their solution. For that reason I would hope that hon. members will keep in mind the world situation as it is to-day.

Since V-E day, 120,500 armed services personnel have already been brought back

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

from overseas. I should have expected my hon. friend to mention a fact of that kind, to have commented upon it, to have wished the government well in its continued efforts. Had he done that, I believe the view the country would have taken of his first utterance would have been that at last we have in the leader of the opposition one who means what he says when he declares he intends to be constructively helpful to the administration. But, after his criticism of to-day, I doubt very much if that will be the view entertained.

In one respect I am going to follow an example set by my hon. friend to-day. His speech was brief, and I intend to make mine briefer still. I do that because I believe I have said in a word all that in answer to criticism it is necessary to say to-day, when I stated that the people themselves had very recently pronounced upon the government's action. And may I add that the electorate made its pronouncement after having at an earlier stage of the war also returned this administration to power. So far as I know there has not been anywhere else an administration which has contested two general elections during a war and with a period of five years intervening has on both occasions been returned to power by the people. I prefer to let the people's verdict speak for itself rather than in any way attempt to enlarge upon it. My hon. friend has referred to taxation. Because he has been at the head of a government himself, I feel I ought to say something which he knows only too well. It is that taxation is dealt with not in the speech from the throne but in the budget. In order that my hon. friend and his party might not fall into the particular trap into which they have fallen to-day a clause was inserted in the speech from the throne which draws attention to that fact.

I was surprised at the opinion which my hon. friend seemed to entertain of the intelligence of the members of this House of Commons when he began to tell them of the differences in amounts of expenditures and taxation between the last year preceding the war and the present time, between the last year of peace and what took place after six years of war. I could hardly believe that my hon. friend was speaking seriously, or that he had remembered that he had come into this House of Commons after leaving the provincial field where perhaps others would not be as critical of him, especially when he was at the head of a coalition government. But to-day he is speaking to members of many parties and from all parts of Canada. When he says that before the war so many millions were paid out and that,

last year, so many billions were paid out; that present outlays are ten times the pre-war figure, I think I should say to him that he might well be thankful outlays are not a hundred times the pre-war figure. Instead of the administration having been extravagant, as he has implied, having regard to the magnitude of Canada's contribution I claim it has been exceedingly careful in its expenditures over the war period.

What about other countries? What will my hon. friend have to say with regard to the expenditures of other nations? What about the expenditures of the United States? What about the expenditures of the United Kingdom and of other nations involved in war? There have been vast expenditures everywhere. But I ask my hon. friend: what has been the result of these expenditures? What has been the effect of what this government has done with the public money of this country? It has been to make Canada's contribution to the war a contribution which has made Canada great in the eyes of the entire world. I say that the price which has been paid is a small price when one realizes that to-day we are enjoying liberty and freedom. I think we can honestly say that if the contribution which Canada has made—I am speaking of the people of Canada, the armed forces of Canada, not of the government—had not been made, if the sacrifices and services had not been given, it is exceedingly doubtful if to-day we would be rejoicing in the magnitude of the victory which the allied nations have won both in Europe and in Asia.

I shall leave to a more appropriate time any discussion of the dominion-provincial conference. That was another subject my hon. friend mentioned. I am happy to say that I believe a very promising start was made this year at the dominion-provincial conference. I do not think too much can be done on the part of provincial legislatures and by the dominion government to see that the excellent beginning which has been made is followed up in the spirit which was shown at that time in the endeavour to get together and to cooperate in solving these very difficult dominion-provincial questions.

My hon. friend said he noticed that the government policy which was announced with respect to trade made no reference to exports. That was surely an oversight on his part. I would direct the attention of my hon. friend to what is set forth on the very first page of the proposals of the government of Canada. There he will find it stated:

Opportunities for useful work and markets for agriculture and other primary industries are dependent upon remunerative outlets for

the goods and services that are produced. At the height of the war effort almost one-half of the Canadian people obtained their incomes from the expenditures of the federal government. As war time government disbursements decline, opportunities and remunerative outlets must be found in the expansion of expenditures directly made by all the individuals and enterprises of the country for civilian needs and civilian purposes. The increased expenditures that replace war time outlays will have their source in the sales made into the export market, in a rising level of consumption, in private investment for the expansion of productive facilities, and in public investment for improving the productiveness of our natural resources and the construction of useful public works.

And a little further down:

First of all, the government will continue to press actively for wide collaboration among countries for the reduction and removal of world trade barriers. Even if this purpose is accomplished it will not meet all the problems with which we shall be confronted. In the immediate future and for some time after final victory in the Pacific indispensable customers, particularly the United Kingdom and countries on the continent of Europe, will not be able to make full cash payment for goods they will wish to buy from us. In order to alleviate the sufferings of liberated peoples, to help in the rehabilitation of devastated economies, and to establish the flow of peace time trade upon which we are dependent, Canada should be prepared in cooperation with other countries to grant further assistance and loans. Also, Canadian participation in the international monetary agreements are likely to involve extensions of credit. These are national responsibilities which the federal government must necessarily assume. By doing so we shall fulfil our international obligations and at the same time ensure adequate and continued opportunities for employment at home. It is essential that the federal treasury be in a position to carry these burdens.

If I wished to I could give other quotations from the same source. I might also touch upon other matters to which my hon. friend has referred, but I intend to keep the promise I have made to be brief. I shall therefore bring my remarks to an immediate close expressing the hope that hon. members of the house will profit by the example of brevity set by the leader of the opposition and myself and hasten the conclusion of the debate that we may get down to the business of the session just as soon as possible.

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether I should be following the example of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) this afternoon. I do not wish to speak at any great length, but their speeches have been so commendably short that I doubt very much whether I shall be able to equal the record they have established.