

Mr. Hellyer: It is the government that decides what business has priority.

Mr. Hees: There is the book; look at it.

An hon. Member: Divorce bills.

Mr. Hellyer: The second point I should like to make clear is that the government can introduce a budget in the house any time it wants to do so and I hope it will do so before dissolution. It is not necessary to have completed the estimates for the previous year, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) has tried to mislead the people of the country into believing.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Hellyer: There will be no excuse for not having introduced a budget if there are things in that proposed budget which would be beneficial to the growth and development of this country.

Mr. Hamilton: The greatest growth rate in the world last year.

Mr. Hellyer: So far as the business of the house is concerned, if the government had brought in the supply motions in the fall months and had had the house consider estimates, then the time could have been spent in dealing with estimates instead of being spent on interim supply. The minister would now have no complaint whatsoever if he had been master of his own job and had introduced business into this house in a logical way, the way it should have been. If that had been done the government would now be well on with the estimates, would possibly have them passed and would not find itself hoist on its own petard.

An hon. Member: Who wrote your speech?

Another hon. Member: Twenty seven days on interim supply.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Speaker, this is in many respects an historic day. A minister of the crown has resigned due to the bungling and indecision of the government of which he was a member until today.

Mr. McPhillips: Why did Ralston resign?

Mr. Hellyer: The hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Harkness) is an honourable man. I have no doubt that he exerted all the patience and perseverance he possibly could, but then he was tested to the breaking point and put into an intolerable position by his leader, the Prime Minister of this country. Finally, in desperation and knowing that the government is incapable of decision on the most important issues facing the country at this time, he took the time honoured and

Alleged Lack of Government Leadership
honourable course and tendered his resignation. It is really not surprising if one looks back over the history of the bungling in respect of his own department. We were surprised that after the meeting of the NATO council of ministers in December the then minister of national defence made no report to this house. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Green) made his report and gave us part of the truth so we would have part of the picture—

Mr. Green: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Hellyer: —but the then minister of national defence did not report.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul): Order.

Mr. Green: Mr. Speaker, I am sure the hon. member does not want to be unfair. He must know that the former minister of national defence went on tour to visit the troops in the Gaza strip.

Mr. Chevrier: That is not a point of order at all.

Mr. Hellyer: That is exactly the next point I was going to make. Since his tour of the bases in Europe he has given us no report on what he found when he was there. I, personally, thought that this was a very strange affair, and particularly last week when we had a defence debate and there was the best possible opportunity for him to report on Canada's commitments to NATO and the way we are fulfilling them at the present time. The minister and the government defaulted in not reporting to the house on the whole situation as they found it in Paris in December. Well, Mr. Speaker, I should like very briefly to help fill the gap by doing some of the reporting. I am sorry that it is left to the opposition to do what the government should have done, to report on the state of Canada's commitments to NATO and how they are, in fact, at the moment not being carried out.

An hon. Member: What about the Place Pigalle?

Mr. Hellyer: While one parliamentary press reporter was sleeping cozily in his feather bed, some of us spent our time actively engaged in finding out all we possibly could about the military situation. As hon. members know, we had the privilege of visiting our brigade headquarters at Soest, and also one of the wings of our air division. The air officer commanding came to discuss with us the problems of the air division, and we had a very frank and interesting discussion. Following that, we went on to Paris and spent a week there. We were interviewed by the