

*Committee on Defence Expenditure*

was said that he had a fine reputation, that his company was a good one, and that he had had valuable experience in the Department of National Defence. Indeed, I think it was agreed throughout the country that he was an outstanding individual. Certainly he has all those qualifications which would enable him to make a further investigation throughout the whole department, in its various branches. If such an investigation were carried out I am sure other shortcomings and instances of inefficiency in the department would be shown.

On November 26, as reported at page 105 of *Hansard*, a speech was delivered in the house by the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Shaw), in which he set forth what, in his opinion, were many irregularities at the Penhold camp. He asked quite pointedly at that time for an investigation into that whole situation. Since then he has received no answer from any responsible member of the government. It is strange indeed that someone has not made a statement in the house on this matter.

We hear of many other such cases at different points throughout the country. I think the taxpayers of this country, many of whom have difficulty, on ordinary salaries, making provision for their families, in view of the present inflation, should be given an explanation. The taxpayer's dollar is now worth slightly less than 50 cents. Tax deductions make it difficult for him to provide for himself and his family; still he must listen to these reports concerning gross extravagance, waste and inefficiency in this important department of government.

Certainly this condition displeases many people throughout the country. On that point, and directing attention to the degree of dissatisfaction with the government's attitude on this report, let me say that in the mail this morning I received a letter from a friend of mine who, in the past, has been a supporter of this government, and who states:

It might be well to advise the government, for their own security, that in future all commissioners be warned as follows: Commissioners, in order to curry favour, must ask Mr. Howe to write their report.

I presume that has reference to more than the Currie report because, as I listened last night to the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Applewhaite) pointing out the rights of parliament, and the majority the government now has in the house as a result of the election in 1949—

**Mr. Hosking:** Have you not heard that before?

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** I have heard it many times. When I heard it this time I was reminded of the fact that in the general election of 1949 the majority of electors in Canada cast their ballots, not for this government, but against it; and the statistics will prove the truth of what I say, if any hon. member wishes to check it.

**Mr. Hosking:** Are we all here dishonestly?

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** I am not saying it was done dishonestly; I say it happens this way because of the electoral system. If the hon. member has any doubts he may check with the chief electoral officer.

**Mr. Hosking:** Do you say we should not be here?

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** I say that the majority of electors who cast their ballots at the 1949 election did not support this government.

At that time we had the illegal withholding for a period of ten months of the flour milling report of the combines commissioner. This was done with the full authority and knowledge of the Prime Minister, and on behalf of the cabinet, thus making the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) the number one law breaker in this country. The public were not given that information during the election campaign.

**Mr. Hosking:** You would not say that in Manitoba.

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** A lot of things happen in parliament which are not too charitable, may I say to the hon. member for Maple Creek (Mr. Studer).

**Mr. Adamson:** Pay no attention to the Mau Mau back there.

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** I am sure the citizens of Canada will find it difficult to understand why the Prime Minister and his supporters will find it necessary to vote against the request for a proper investigation into all phases of the operations of the Department of National Defence. I think everybody realizes that there is great inefficiency in the administration of that organization. They want a better answer than has yet been given by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) or the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton). I was amazed at the arguments of the Prime Minister with respect to this Currie report. As has been pointed out before, I think he owes an apology to Mr. Currie and what is more important, he owes an apology to the citizens of Canada for this state of affairs.