

Interim Supply

rescue the parliamentary system which is being degraded and diminished in its power and glory”.

An hon. Member: What about Ontario?

Mr. Macdonnell: The principle of recognition of the rights of the minority is one which has been forgotten. It was forgotten in 1956 when closure was applied and it was forgotten last weekend when the Minister of Finance said that the issue before the people in the coming election is not that “of one party or another but really one of a competent and capable form of government.”

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Macdonnell: Yes, let the hon. gentlemen applaud. What they are applauding is the one-party state and the attempt to create a situation wherein the Liberal party says, “We are nothing so low or degraded as a party; we are the government; we are permanent.”

Mr. Lesage: Do you want us to give over by default?

Mr. Macdonnell: This is what I think is the issue and I believe the people of Canada across the length and breadth of this land will remind themselves of the long and painful road we have come to establish parliamentary rights; and if they will reflect on what has happened in 22 years of power growing more and more arbitrary and more and more self satisfied I shall have no doubt as to the result.

Mr. Harris: Mr. Chairman, this is the third time since the budget debate began that some hon. gentleman has spoken of the expenditures of money in the manner in which the hon. member for Greenwood has now spoken. He has taken the opportunity to chide me for not answering his comments on the budget debate and has repeated some part of them in his opening remarks tonight.

Let me deal with it briefly by saying that I agree with everything he quoted from Mr. Donald Gordon and Mr. Gordon Ball. I believe that both these gentlemen did their best to restrict expenditures in their own particular fields and to draw to the attention of the public the necessity of doing so in order to fight the inflationary pressures that I myself have referred to on many occasions.

Mr. Macdonnell: You preached.

Mr. Harris: My hon. friend says that I preached but I did not practice what I preached. I can recall at least three occasions during the course of this session on which I pointed out to him that the expenditures of this government on construction matters—and that is the real crux of inflation in

[Mr. Macdonnell.]

Canada at the present time—are lower this year than last year and this was done deliberately for that reason; but with that ability of my hon. friend’s to overlook the essentials of a problem he has never mentioned it in any speech he has made since.

Mr. Macdonnell: The British government has reduced over-all expenditures.

Mr. Harris: The British government has reduced its over-all expenditures largely because of an expected saving of about £200 million by reason of the cut in defence expenditures. My hon. friend would be the first to rise and complain about a cut in Canadian expenditures for defence under present conditions.

Mr. Macdonnell: I do not admit that.

Mr. Harris: Now \$200 million is a great deal of money.

Mr. Macdonnell: That is not self-evident.

Mr. Harris: It may not be self-evident but I will let it ride until my hon. friend denies it, because every time we have had a discussion on defence by my hon. friends opposite, there has been no one who has spoken any more than he has in a general sense about saving money in this or that particular. However, every time my colleague the Minister of National Defence presents his estimates we have a good many complaints that we are not doing enough in this respect.

Mr. Macdonnell: But one of the things that we wanted to do is to try to inform ourselves. I am well aware that the subject of national defence is a very very difficult one but we do want to try to understand the problems involved, to see whether any savings could be made there, as the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich suggested there could.

Mr. Harris: Yes, the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich proposed a different form of contribution to the NATO forces than that which we have been making. I know that the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich, as well as other hon. members, over a period of the last eight or nine years have spent a great deal more time in investigating the affairs of national defence than has been true of any opposition in any commonwealth country.

Mr. Macdonnell: With limitations.

Mr. Harris: But in all that time they have not been able to come up with a better idea than the government policy nor have they been able to come up with any suggestion for saving very much money.