

Mr. CRUICKSHANK: Is this your austerity programme?

Mr. ROWE: No, but it certainly is not yours. You belong to one over there, and no one contributed less to its prevention than you did.

I submit that while we all respect the Prime Minister because of the years he has been here—and I am glad to see his return from overseas in good health—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. ROWE: I would not have applauded that long. However, he does have respect. He has respect because of the geniality he extends to members on both sides of the house, but that does not permit me to disregard his other efforts. I can well recall listening to the Prime Minister in April 1932, when he criticized the government of that day for something it had done, and stated:

Arbitrary authority helps to breed arbitrary authority. The enjoyment of a certain amount of absolute power creates an appetite for more in the way of absolute power, and finally absolutism knows no bounds. That is the point we have now reached, so far as the Prime Minister and his colleagues are concerned.

And then he said:

I submit that the most serious objection to be taken to this resolution is that a violation of the constitutional rights of the members of this house is being sought by the government of the day.

And then he said:

It was worse in the session of 1931 to get from this parliament a blank cheque and legislation which set up a dictatorship between sessions, but it is infinitely worse for the government to have the temerity to come before this house and seek to perpetuate that dictatorship while parliament is in session.

We have had a long list of orders in council under which this government has carried on, despite the fact that the war is several years past. If this motion is carried we will not have the opportunity to do that which it is the duty of parliament to do. We will not be following one of the fundamental traditions of parliament as such, namely, discussing the people's grievances in the House of Commons.

Are there any grievances today? There is the tragic failure of the socialization experiment in agriculture. It is dying in its infancy, and we have no chance of debating it at the present time. Perhaps other members of the cabinet, if they had assumed as much responsibility, could have made as many blunders as the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner). But I am sure all will agree that no one other than the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott)

could have been brilliant enough to excel the Minister of Agriculture with respect to the classical error in the revaluation of our exchange.

These are matters about which the people of Canada are concerned. Why are we called only on Christmas eve to discuss them? The government so demonstrates the futility of this session. The Minister of Finance has just given today a statement of how he proposes to collect excise taxes. May I submit—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I think I have been lenient and generous with the hon. member, but what he has been saying just now is not relevant to the question before the house. I would ask his cooperation in making his remarks relevant to the motion.

Mr. ROWE: Again I bow to your ruling. I do not want to go too far from your ruling, but I hope that I can keep within it and be able to explain to the house why I cannot give consent to this motion. This is the first time in the history of this or of any other British parliament that taxes have been announced over the air and behind the back of parliament itself.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I think hon. members will admit that members on both sides of the house are anxious to discuss the policy of the government for and against. The motion before the house is:

That the debate on the address in reply to the speech of His Excellency the Governor General to both houses of parliament be the first order of business on Monday, December 8th instant.

The hon. gentleman who has the floor is using that motion to make a speech similar to one he would make in the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne.

Mr. REID: Are we going to be allowed to do the same thing?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I ask hon. members to be serious and to confine their discussion to the motion before the house. Hon. members will admit that the session has been called earlier than it generally is called, and everybody is anxious to get down to business. Again I ask hon. members to discuss only the motion which is before the house.

Mr. ROWE: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Question.

Mr. ROWE: I shall endeavour, seriously as you say, and I was more serious than you thought, to adhere to your ruling. There are several things I shall say with respect to the