

The Budget—Mr. C. Cameron

against these modern weapons, if indeed there are any such defences. I might interject here that scientific opinion is not very encouraging on this score. I have yet to see any reputable scientist or any reputable authority on aerial warfare suggest that there is any real defence against these weapons. I have yet to hear the suggestion that there is any other defence than that suggested by Mr. Dulles, the suggestion that has so upset the rest of the world. It may be that there are some defences, and it may be that they will cost many times more than we are now spending for defence. The point I want to make is this, that we should be examining the necessity for that type of defence and looking with a critical eye in the direction in which our present vast expenditures are being made.

Speaking for myself, I should not care to be charged with the responsibility of justifying before this chamber the expenditure of nearly \$2 billion in 1953 for defence plans which must have been formulated before there was any widespread knowledge of recent developments. I think the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) or the Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) or any of their colleagues would have a difficult job doing that. Of course we are not given, nor can we expect to be given, the details of the manner in which these funds are being expended today. Everyone recognizes that. But I think there is no one in this house who would suggest that the thought has not passed through his mind, and I am sure passed through the minds of most other Canadians, that a very large part of these funds must inevitably be going down the drain today, and be just about as useful as if we were spending the money on bows and arrows.

I suggest that while we are re-examining the reality of Canada's defence position, our government should be prepared to divert several hundred millions of dollars, possibly 25 per cent of this defence budget, to other purposes. By that means we could play a worth-while and really important part in the task of rehabilitating and developing those areas in the world which are today the danger spots. Every competent observer from Asia tells us that we are in a race with time today, a race with the communists, and that the measure of our success in that race will be the speed with which we can bring their standard of living up to something approaching our own. Not long ago a committee of this cabinet was interviewed by a delegation of workers from the agricultural implement industry who came to ask the government

for some help of some sort. They had no real suggestions to make, but they wanted some relief from their plight as a result of the curtailment of that industry.

I recall that the then acting prime minister, the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe), was unable to give them any more comfort than to suggest that they had better go elsewhere to look for other sorts of jobs. I feel that was rather cold comfort for a man with a wife and family and an established home in that area, particularly since the Minister of Trade and Commerce was unable to offer them any practical suggestions as to where they should look for jobs. How much more effective it would have been for those people and the economy of Canada had the acting prime minister been able to announce that this government was prepared to spend a large amount for agricultural machinery as a contribution to the development of southeast Asia. How much happier those men would have been when they went home, and how much more confident we could be with regard to the future were such a policy being followed today.

I am prepared to run the risk of being jeered at when I suggest that at least \$500 million of the money the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) is going to collect from us this year is going to be completely wasted because it is going to be spent on weapons and means of defence that have been rendered as outdated and obsolete as the weapons that were in use before the first world war. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, I should not be at all surprised when this House of Commons meets next year to find that our budget appropriations for defence have been severely pruned. I, in fact, will be very much surprised if they are not severely pruned. I would urge the government that they should do this in the open, that they should make a declaration to the people of Canada that they are recasting our whole defence program; that they are going to take advantage of the enormous sums we have appropriated to make a really worth-while contribution to world peace, which may indeed be more effective than any arms or any weapons of defence we could devise.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have had a budget which, as I said, is designed to bring comfort to those who are already comfortable; it is designed to place a heavy burden on those who are least able to bear it, and designed, moreover, to toss a great deal of the proceeds down the drain in pursuit of an obsolete and worn-out concept of defence.