

The Address—Mr. Drew

Secrets Act; second, the giving of false information to get a passport, and third, forging of an application for a passport.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

CONTINUATION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed from Thursday, January 27, consideration of the motion of Mr. D. F. Brown for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in rising to address the house in this debate I think my first words should be words of sympathy to the hon. the Speaker of the Senate in the tragic loss of his wife, which has just been announced today. Like many others here, I had the privilege of being received by her as recently as Wednesday, and I do wish personally to convey to Dr. King my very deep sympathy, which I feel sure is shared by every hon. member.

I should like first of all to pay my tribute to the mover and seconder for the addresses which introduced this debate, and to join with them in some of the things that were said in regard to the necessity for advancing the development of this country. I particularly wish to join my own wishes to the hope that was expressed yesterday that every possible step will be taken to expedite the development of the St. Lawrence river in every way that it can be done.

I also want to mention the fact that all of us here have a feeling of satisfaction in the birth not long ago of a future heir to the throne, and the knowledge that the much beloved princess, the daughter of the king and queen of England, is herself so well, and that this young prince gives every evidence of being worthy to take his place in the line of succession to the throne.

In coming to the speech from the throne itself, I must say that since this is the first speech from the throne that I have read since becoming a member of the house, it does seem to me to leave a great deal to the imagination and a great deal to determine by future discussion. One of the things which certainly every hon. member, and every Canadian from one end of Canada to the other, is anxious to know is what the intention of the government really is in regard to the taxation being imposed, far above the actual requirements of this country at the present time.

I notice that in the press reports of the speech from the throne it was suggested that

the indication contained in the speech followed somewhat the same line as the speech of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) before an assembly outside the House of Commons within the past few days, and that it also indicated the possibility of an early election. It was suggested that it indicated a cut in taxation. I think that hon. members will want to know a good deal more of the actual intention of the Minister of Finance before they can come to that conclusion, because the paragraph covering that subject reads as follows:

Prosperous conditions now prevailing are being reflected in the buoyant level of national revenues; a condition to which due consideration is being given by my ministers in the preparation of forthcoming budgetary proposals.

On past occasions buoyant revenues have been given consideration by the ministers, and they have used those buoyant revenues for the purpose of overtaxing the people of Canada to a point where, even with high levels of earnings, any savings are extremely difficult. I hope the consideration now being given by ministers to buoyant revenues will lead them to another conclusion, in spite of the repeated arguments made publicly by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott) that under some theory of cyclical budgeting he should tax the people as heavily as possible while we have buoyant finances. I express the hope that we shall have from him some indication that he has abandoned that strange theory of public financing, and that such consideration will lead to a reduction in taxes, which the people from one end of Canada to the other are demanding—and rightly demanding.

Most of the other points in the speech from the throne will be dealt with in a way which will probably lead to further information. However, there is one paragraph to which I should like to refer before passing to the main theme of my remarks.

Royal commissions have a very useful and very important function, if they are given terms of reference which clearly define their responsibilities, and if they are given a task which can be performed in a way that will lead to some useful results. There is reference in the speech from the throne to a royal commission to deal with transportation, which at the present time is being used mainly for the purpose of diverting public attention from the fact that this government has failed to deal effectively in any way with the problem of freight rates, something which should be dealt with by the government with the information now available instead of setting up a further inquiry into this very subject.

But I should think that the royal commission—which would be a royal commission never to be forgotten, if proceeded with in the