

The Address—Mr. Pearson

documentary evidence to support that statement this afternoon—are in startling and depressing contrast to the vigorous, confident and crusading words which used to pour, if at times a little bit incoherently, from the mouths of its members.

We think now of the ringing declarations of the electoral campaigns, the massive undertakings given so carelessly then to every section of the country and every category of people. We think now of the promises tossed about in those carefree days with such reckless abandon but of which they are now the prisoners. They were promises that ranged all the way from immunity from suffering caused by unemployment to the liberation of the subject peoples of eastern Europe; promises easier to make than to keep, as the hon. member for Restigouche-Madawaska (Mr. Van Horne) reminded them recently in a most interesting broadcast he gave in his constituency. I do not know whether or not that broadcast has resulted in his translation from his former seat in the house to his present one at the far end of the chamber.

An hon. Member: He is now in the front row.

Mr. Pearson: We think also of the violent and unrestrained attacks by hon. members opposite in those days on the previous administration for budgetary surpluses, for anti-inflationary measures, for those fiscal and trade and monetary policies which helped to make Canada's economy in those days the envy of the world.

As you will remember, Mr. Speaker, all that was to be ended. It was ended, but not in the way my hon. friends hoped. Taxes were to go down; services were to stay up. How? It was to be done out of the half billion dollars or so which could be saved by eliminating waste and extravagance. Social security payments, provincial grants, farm prices, wages, employment, Canada's prestige in the world, all these things were to go up, without the value of a dollar going down, or, perish the thought, without any trace of that terrible tight money policy, a legacy from the Liberals.

What have we now, Mr. Speaker? This debate will begin the process of making that matter clear and revealing the truth behind the rosy but fanciful words in so many statements issued by members of the government as they greeted the new year. In truth, things are now very different indeed from the vision of Paradise Regained so joyfully proclaimed by the Tories on April Fool's day less than a year ago. Confusion and contradiction, stumbling and fumbling, are the most noticeable features of the activity of

the present government, as I hope I shall be able to show in a way which will perhaps convince even some hon. members opposite.

Most of the evidence I shall produce bearing on this statement will deal with economic, financial and defence matters. But there is one matter on which I should like to touch first. As hon. members know, we now have before us a draft bill of rights. It deals with the subject of human rights, in the protection and promotion of which I am sure everyone in this house without exception is united, though we may have strong differences of opinion as to how this can best be done. Certainly no Liberal can be anything but a champion of the rights and liberties of the free man against dictates and pressures, from whatever source they may come. That is what Liberalism has meant through all the years and in all countries; it has fought unjust privilege and power, and in no country more vigorously or more effectively than in our own. The whole record of Canadian history is proof of that fact.

This bill has also now been given a first reading in this house and, indeed, a second reading by public opinion in the country. Its provisions have been scrutinized by a great many highly qualified people with no political interest, in a partisan sense, to disturb their objectivity, and in its present form it has been found wanting. Third, Mr. Speaker it is now clear even from the consideration which has already been given to this bill that in its present form it will not do, just as I hope it is clear that any bill passed on this fundamental matter should in all its terms receive the broadest and most non-partisan support possible in this house.

I hope, therefore, that this draft bill, this bill which was given first reading, may be sent to a joint committee of both houses, as was done previously when this matter was under consideration, so that a report with recommendations can be returned to us by that committee.

Mr. Diefenbaker: When was the bill under consideration before? When was a bill under consideration before?

Mr. Pearson: The right hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that this matter has twice in recent years been referred to a joint committee.

Mr. Diefenbaker: This matter.

Mr. Pearson: What I have said is that this bill, which raises the whole question of how this can possibly be done, should be referred to a joint committee so the committee may report and make recommendations which will enable this house and this parliament to take