

Mr. CLEAVER: I hope my hon. friend pounds his desk in the same way in about five minutes when I have concluded. He says that the action of the minister was an affront to parliament.

Mr. FLEMING: Hear, hear.

Mr. CLEAVER: My contention is that if an emergency really existed, instead of being an affront to parliament it would have been dereliction of duty on the part of the minister if he had not met the emergency.

An hon. MEMBER: By calling parliament.

Mr. CLEAVER: I concede at once that if there was no emergency, then a minister of the crown could be criticized for making a declaration as to fiscal policy in any place other than on the floor of the house.

Mr. FLEMING: Why?

Mr. CLEAVER: If the house was not then sitting. Was there an emergency or not? Let us discuss that. I have not yet heard one member of the opposition argue that there was not an emergency. I have heard them make many arguments as to who was responsible for the emergency, but I have not yet heard one member of the opposition aver that there was not an emergency. Our reserves of United States dollars dropped from \$1,500 million to a little more than \$500 million.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): In a year.

Mr. CLEAVER: I suggest that there was an emergency. From the point of view of the constitutional issue—

Mr. HACKETT: Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. CLEAVER: Yes.

Mr. HACKETT: Does the hon. gentleman consider the fact that Canada's fund of United States dollars dropped from one and a half billion to half a billion constituted an emergency which warranted the suspension of the constitution?

Mr. CLEAVER: I will answer that question. My answer to that is this. When the United States dollar reserves position dropped from \$1,500 million to a little over \$500 million it certainly was an emergency which justified whatever measures were necessary to correct it.

Some hon. MEMBERS: No.

Mr. KNOWLES: That is where you are wrong.

Mr. ABBOTT: No unconstitutional measures were taken.

Mr. CLEAVER: I am not arguing it would justify anything unconstitutional. So far as I am concerned I cherish the constitution and my answer to that point would be no.

May I continue with the argument I am making? My point is this, that just as soon as my hon. friends admit that there was an emergency, then I say at the same time they are driven to admit that the minister was justified in making his announcement and meeting the emergency.

Some hon. MEMBERS: No.

Mr. FLEMING: What is the reference on that?

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Will the hon. member permit a question? He has been most kind in answering questions. I ask my hon. friend whether he will accept this dictionary definition of "an emergency," "A sudden juncture demanding immediate action." Can something that happens over a year be said to be a sudden juncture?

Mr. CLEAVER: I have thought over that point, and I intended to present to the house as clearly as I could a reasoned argument on that point. I will reach it in a moment or two, and after I have concluded it I think perhaps the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario may agree that there is something in my argument in that regard.

Mr. ROWE: You must have a new dictionary over there.

Mr. CLEAVER: As to the question then of its being an affront to parliament, I repeat that the government and the minister would have been derelict in their duty if they had not taken the necessary steps immediately to meet the emergency; and I suggest, in any event, that the reason why the emergency arose does not strike at the essence of the issue. The issue is just one plain thing, was there an emergency? And if there was an emergency, then the minister was perfectly justified in making the statement he did.

Mr. FLEMING: What is the authority for that?

Mr. ABBOTT: Take your turn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order.

Mr. CLEAVER: Coming to the question of delay—

Mr. FLEMING: Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. CLEAVER: I believe that is the point which the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario raised, the delay which occurred in steps being taken to meet this problem. As I