

Interim Supply

It is very interesting to see that the Minister of Finance has not been with us today. I do not know what his absence means.

Mr. Drysdale: He has been here more often today than you have.

Mr. Peters: I just did not happen to see him, in that event. Mr. Chairman, I believe the people of Canada are going to pay very close attention to the position in which the Minister of Finance now finds himself in relation to the British parliamentary system.

Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to speak much longer along this line because I believe that basically the fight is between the present government and the official opposition. I suggest both those parties have had their day in court. The opposition have been fortunate to find that some of their colleagues have been able to justify the existence of the Senate itself. This was of interest to me because I have always been of the opinion that the Senate could not be reformed but only abolished. I am interested in what the Prime Minister intends to do. I am very interested in this aspect of the situation because for the first time since I have been a member of the House of Commons the Senate has expressed its opinion and has stood on its own feet. There is no point in discussing what the Senate did or why it did it. However, if we are going to the people we must have a program covering a diversity of things. The Canadian people are going to be unhappy with what has happened within the last day or two. No one likes to see an underdog trampled upon. I think they have been ashamed as a result of the Prime Minister standing up in this house threatening the other place. I am pleased the Senate took the stand it did and I hope it results in an election. It is for this reason that I say this. In my opinion the Prime Minister of this country is not a big enough man to run the whole country. He obviously needs a cabinet—

Mr. Walker: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the hon. member on his own admission has been conjecturing about many things, the successor to the head of the Bank of Canada and one thing and another. Now he is giving his conjecture about the Prime Minister. I take it this is his own vacuous opinion and his opinion only because it would be just as right for me to say that I heard a rumour that the hon. member was going to drop dead but I fear it is somewhat exaggerated.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. McCleave): Order. The matter raised seems to be more in the nature of debate than a point of order.

Mr. Pickersgill: It should not be dignified by the term "debate".

[Mr. Peters.]

Mr. Peters: Mr. Chairman, I can only say that I hope the hon. member is not clairvoyant. If this is a premonition born of his imagination I hope it proves to be incorrect. I can assure the hon. member that I have been scared of this too and I have been paying my insurance regularly so things will not be nearly as bad as they might otherwise be. In my opinion, and I think this opinion will be shared by the majority of Canadians, the Prime Minister is not a big enough man, no matter who he is, to be completely responsible for everything. I suggest that it was the Prime Minister, not the Minister of Finance, who interfered in the situation respecting the Bank of Canada. We have already had proof that there was no difference of opinion between the Minister of Finance and the head of the Bank of Canada. It is only a personal opinion but I presume that the Prime Minister did not like the way he parted his hair or maybe there were other reasons why he did not like him so he had to go. I suggest that the Canadian people are not going to be interested in this kind of development.

The parliamentary secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs rose and made a contribution tonight.

An hon. Member: The poor man's Donald Fleming.

Mr. Peters: He may be considered by some to be the poor man's Donald Fleming but I would suggest he is the rich man's Donald Fleming. Probably he is a lot better off than the Minister of Finance, but that is only conjecture. He got up and pointed out some things but he did not point out that all hon. members of this house and every Canadian citizen who has really thought about the matter have agreed with the Secretary of State for External Affairs and we have been proud of the job he has done. We also know that before the present minister took over the portfolio the Prime Minister handled that department.

We also know that Canada has degenerated so that it is no longer a first or second power in international affairs but a very poor one that is not given much credit at all. It is never certain whether we are for armament or for disarmament. One minister may get up and say that we are in favour of armament. Certainly the Secretary of State for External Affairs whom we have supported has not done so but there are others who are suggesting that we should increase our contribution to NATO and continue under the NATO banner when we know that under NATO there are nuclear arms which all of us have said are not a good thing. It is very difficult to equate these two things because if