

liament to abdicate any of its functions, and certainly we shall not be debarred from offering reasonable and I would hope helpful criticism of the methods of the Government in raising the money where we conceive them to be wrong.

In regard to the spending of the money, my right hon. leader hinted this afternoon that a very large sum has disappeared since last summer and that the Opposition and the country are entitled to all information which can be given with prudence by the Government as to how that money has been spent and how it has been husbanded. We cannot forego our right of reasonable criticism upon any acknowledged facts of the spending of the money; to forego such criticism would be to share the responsibility for the spending of it, and that responsibility we must absolutely decline. We are at one with the Government in the policy of spending; but if there has been waste, if there has been misappropriation, which is vastly worse than waste, we decline all responsibility. In that connection the Government alone are responsible, and at the proper time they will be brought into judgment by the people and the Parliament of Canada for any proved waste or misappropriation. I think that if one is engaged in putting out a burning building, to use a homely illustration, and gets some help to do it, one would not be too critical, if plenty of water were going on the building, if a little escaped to one side; but if some one comes along who is responsible for the putting out of the fire in the building and diverts some of the water that should be putting out the fire into his own garden plot, then that will be a case for criticism, that will be a case which the Government should look into and remedy at the earliest possible moment. However, at this juncture, having stated our position, that we decline the slightest responsibility for any such proceeding, I would personally deprecate anything on the part of the Opposition in the way of partisan strife or the very appearance of partisan strife.

But let me say, and say very strongly, in this connection that the Government have very distinct duties as well as the Opposition. The Government must so conduct their business at this time, whether in or out of Parliament, whether in discussion or in organization, as not to provoke partisan strife or partisan criticism on the part of the

Opposition. It is no use blinking our eyes to certain facts. Parliament has not been in session for six or seven months, and I do not propose to blink my eyes to some happenings to which I think it necessary in the public interest that reference should be made. The most violent form of partisan strife that can possibly be initiated in any country is a general election. I think everybody will agree that partisan discussion is at its best in a general election—or at its worst. Perhaps I ought to correct that: Perhaps it finds a lower level still in the literature that is issued prior to an election. With regard to party literature, I want to claim before this House and the country that we on this side have an absolutely clean sheet. From the moment that war broke out the bureau was closed. So far as I am concerned, I have never seen a document emanate from it since that time, of a party nature or of any other nature. Where is the laugh of my hon. friends now?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh.

Mr. CLARK: Can they produce a leaflet or a document? Not a single one. And I should be wanting in common manliness if I did not assert it. I am going to state something else now that is of a very different nature. When I was coming down on the train to this session of Parliament, there was handed to me a bunch an inch and a quarter thick of literature that had emanated from another bureau. I was surprised beyond measure, for I had seen nothing of it to that moment. It was handed to me with the statement that it had gone out in bunches in the fall of last year. Now, I want to say very plainly that to send such literature out in the fall of the year was simply to provoke party strife, and I trust there will be no need to make another complaint of this kind. I was amazed at the size of the full line of documents, which was entirely out of keeping with what I conceived to be the duty of the hour. A very remarkable thing is that the date of those documents synchronized with the irresponsible cries of certain shallowbrains in Toronto and elsewhere, that we ought to have another general election. I want to tell this House very plainly that, so far as I have been able to observe, at least eighty per cent of the business and common-sense people of this country were disgusted with the whole procedure. I do not know what there was in it. I do not believe for a moment that