

Inquiries of the Ministry

members of the commonwealth. Within the framework of the commonwealth and in the greater family of nations, the example we offer of a half continent of people living and working together in a spirit of mutual respect and goodwill does not pass unnoticed.

By resolving our problems in this manner and by diligently striving to bridge cultural and regional differences, we have succeeded where not a few societies in the past have failed. This experience has equipped Canadians to play an important and responsible rôle in healing the divisions among people everywhere.

Like all the institutions of men, parliamentary government is not without its imperfections. But it stands unchallenged as the most successful method of democracy. We share this great legacy with others, and this is as it should be, for the ideals and concepts which we cherish are not confined by national boundaries.

It has been said of democracy that it is "based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people." As the instrument of democracy parliament puts a corresponding faith in its individual members. This is a heavy responsibility which obliges you to put duty before personal ambition. Your compensation is the opportunity you have of service to your country and to the cause of freedom everywhere.

In marking, today, the hundredth anniversary of the opening of the first session of parliament, we are not only saluting a moment in history. We are recognizing, as well, the enduring significance of a whole way of life. It is in the nature of parliament that it mirrors the soul of a nation. It is no exaggeration to say that as parliament goes, so goes a people; as parliament projects the principles of the nation and the aspirations of its citizens, so are those principles preserved and those aspirations realized.

NATIONAL DEFENCE**WINNIPEG—THEFT OF ARMS FROM
MINTO ARMOURIES**

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Defence. Will the minister inform the house concerning the reported theft from the Minto armouries at Winnipeg of seven complete machine guns and a quantity of ammunition and tell the house whether or not the report is accurate and what steps are being taken to ensure that arms and ammunition are kept safely by the members of the defence forces?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have no basic objection to the question asked by the hon. member but it seems to me that it has already been asked in the same terms last week by a few hon. members including the hon. member for Winnipeg South. However, if there is a new element in the question I have no objection to it.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, the new element is that the Minister of National Defence is present in the house and he was not the other day.

Hon. Léo Cadieux (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as I understood the question put by the hon. member, he asked me whether the report was correct. I wish to say to him that it is not quite accurate. The machine guns were stolen, as he said, and so were the blocks, but no ammunition was stolen. In so far as the accuracy of the report is concerned, I wish to say first of all that all this happened on the night of October 30. As was stated in the report, a casual reference to a possible invasion of the city by eastern criminals was made to the security officer. On hearing it he immediately doubled the patrols.

Mr. Pugh: Did he do that after the horse was gone?

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): No, before. Many of the circumstances of the theft appear to be peculiar. First of all, in order to have access to the particular area of the Minto armoury the thieves had to scale a high fence, saw off the bars on the windows and cut the chains which held the machine guns to the walls. This had to be done also in another place where the magazines were stored.

So far as security is concerned, let me say that in this case the normal security measures were taken which are usually taken in any armoury in Canada, and it is of course unfortunate that this particular theft took place. I might also say to my hon. friend that banks expect robberies to take place and they prepare for them; yet they do occur.

Mr. Churchill: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I think what took place is slightly more important than the taking of money from a bank. Will the minister inform the house, not today necessarily but some time very soon, whether additional steps toward insuring greater security are being taken by the armed forces because, as he will recall, this incident is a repetition of thefts that occurred three years ago at which time the house was assured that adequate precautionary steps were being taken?

Mr. Cadieux (Terrebonne): We are investigating the possibility of taking additional security measures. That is all I can say at the moment.