

The Address—Mr. Drew

by new legislation. Having regard to the course which the government had decided to follow, undoubtedly a short special session had become necessary.

No such situation arose this year. The speech from the throne delivered to this house at the beginning of the regular session this year adequately covered all possible legislation which will come before us, and provided the opportunity to deal with every subject we shall now be called upon to discuss. Not even the flimsy excuse that a new budget was necessary to provide the method of contribution and the complementary government financial arrangements necessary for the introduction of universal old age pensions can possibly be put forward in view of the fact that we are now informed that there is to be no budget. No matter what strong and obvious arguments there are against a second session of this kind, there might at least be some slight appearance of justification if the introduction of a second budget had provided the opportunity to review those unnecessary and inflationary taxes which were forced through this house last spring, and also to correct the serious miscalculation by which this government had already overtaxed the people of Canada by \$500 million during the first five months of the new fiscal year.

There is another and very serious aspect to such a situation which it seems to me should be very much before the members of this house at this time. Parliament has been called together in a new session with every indication that it is to run its full course within the current year; yet, by the device of not introducing a budget, the government will have denied to the members the opportunity to discuss the different departments of government with the opportunity to obtain information which is afforded when each department is called on the motion to go into supply. A government which has already gone so far in denying to the members their long established rights and duties as the elected representatives of the people asks us on this occasion to approve a speech from the throne without any subsequent opportunity to deal with the business of parliament in the manner which has long been the established procedure in this house.

I can only express the hope that the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) will give us some assurance this afternoon that if the government is not prepared to reconsider its decision to introduce no budget during this session, with the resulting opportunity to discuss the affairs of each department, opportunities for such discussion will be provided by making

way for motions introduced by the opposition to produce that result. That is the practice which has long been found satisfactory at Westminster, where motions by the opposition are afforded a fixed date for consideration where those deal with major matters of public concern.

Obviously if this house is to fulfil its first duty at this time it will discuss, in much more minute detail than ever before, the present state of our defence forces and the actual position in which we find ourselves after the immense expenditures which have already been made on national defence. After an expenditure of more than \$3 billion since our rearmament program began, we have surprisingly little in the way of first-line forces in being, ready to go into action. So far as our only possible enemy is concerned, it is not the glowing statements of the Department of National Defence that are going to matter; it is how many units of every branch of the service are ready to take the field.

Having regard to the repeated statements that we are now entering the most critical period of tension, and the evidence we read and hear supports that statement all too firmly, the state of our defence forces should be the first concern of every member of this house. Those Canadian forces which have gone into action on land, at sea or in the air have carried forward in the very highest measure those great traditions of military service. On the distant battlefields of Korea, imperishable pages in the history of valour and sacrifice have been written by the men of regiments which carry famous names—names made famous in earlier engagements when their fathers and their brothers took part in the battle for freedom. Canadian naval units have taken a very distinguished part in the operations in the western Pacific. The Royal Canadian Air Force has performed the tasks assigned to it with efficiency and great credit to those engaged.

This does not mean that we have yet undertaken our share of the tasks undertaken by the United Nations. If we were to go on spending as much as we have already spent for what has actually been accomplished, then in the unhappy event that we were called upon for large-scale operation we would bankrupt ourselves overnight. If this is going to be a long-term program, then in terms of simple arithmetic we must calculate what forces would be required in the event of that major disaster, and then ascertain what it would cost, in relation to the moneys we have been spending to produce the result, or lack of it, which we have already seen.