

own good judgment, will extend the investigation by Mr. Currie? No one will seriously suggest that.

Let us look for a moment at the reasonableness of this request. As I said a moment ago, it is difficult to determine the amount of money involved in the area dealt with by Mr. Currie. I believe it would probably be well up to the mark if I suggested the amount involved might be \$20 million or \$25 million. If anyone with knowledge wishes to correct me I shall be happy to be corrected. I am just pointing out that if it is \$20 million, then it is one-hundredth, and if it is \$25 million it is one-eightieth of the total of \$2 billion. I am suggesting that it does not make sense, having got a report on this one-hundredth or one-eightieth or one-fiftieth or one-twentieth, for the government now to say that we will not have this investigation extended. I believe there is only one interpretation the people of this country will place upon that. The people of this country will resent it just as much as I resent it.

We listened to an interesting speech by the hon. member for Skeena (Mr. Applewhaite) that indicated a fair attitude with regard to the committee. I want to say this, without at the moment contradicting anything the member for Skeena said but reserving all rights, of course: that it is pure self-deception to suggest that a committee holding occasional meetings can get to the bottom of these matters. Let me read a little extract from what Mr. Currie said just to show you the job he had, and then ask yourselves whether a committee which will meet twice a week, and the members of which have a dozen other things to do, could do anything but scratch the surface, particularly when they lack the benefit of the expert assistance we wish to have.

Let me read what Mr. Currie said about his difficulty and then picture the committee, even assuming all the members of the committee were single-minded and whole-hearted in their desire to find the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Assume that, and then listen to this from Mr. Currie:

It was apparent from the beginning of the investigation that the accounting methods were in a chaotic condition.

Later he says:

It is impractical and perhaps impossible, regardless of the time which might be spent examining records, to try and determine by this means the amount and value of the deficiencies—

This conclusion is based upon the results of a single determined effort to ascertain by accounting methods the extent of the shortage existing in the case of a single item of stores. Cement was chosen as a test case, largely because the number of suppliers of that commodity were few in number and easy to find. Six weeks were spent in the effort—

Committee on Defence Expenditure

The over-all shortage appeared to be some 18,000 bags, much of which may have gone into unauthorized projects of one kind or another. It was impossible to ascertain exactly what had happened.

We have an area, Mr. Speaker, say twenty or fifty or a hundred times as large as the area Mr. Currie worked in, and it is seriously suggested we are going to be able to really do an effective job on, let us say, \$1,900 million when Mr. Currie took weeks and months in a smaller area.

I have long ceased to hope that anything I or anyone else in the opposition can say will make a dent in the government mind. Even in the few years I have been in this house I think the situation has changed. I think each year that goes by that tolerant, and sometimes not so tolerant, feeling regarding the opposition grows—"Oh, after all we are just a lot of boys doing our best". The idea that we could ever, by any stretch of the imagination, take the place of the people across the way seems to them beyond the realm of practical thought.

We are used to that attitude, Mr. Speaker. I suppose we have to take it as we find it. I am sure that when one cannot question the independence of government members one certainly cannot question their sanity, but there is an old adage which one could quote which runs this way:

Whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad.

I suppose that arrogance, in a way, is a form of madness—one of the lesser forms—but I never think it is any less dangerous because it is exhibited by people whom, in our day to day relations, we like. In fact I think it is much more dangerous when it is exhibited by people of this nature than it is when exhibited by people whom we dislike; because if they were people who were utterly impossible in every way, not just in this way and a few others, as I say, they would be much easier to deal with.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that I have now spoken as long as I should. One of the great difficulties of this business we are in is, of course, that most of the articulate people in this country, most of the people you hear much from and about, are inclined to be yes-men. Over the years I have been terribly depressed to find out how often that is true. You know what I mean, Mr. Speaker. Everybody knows what I mean. I refer to the number of people whom you meet who say, "Yes, yes; that is true. Yes, they have been there too long; I hope you turn them out, but of course I do business with the government. You must not quote anything I say."

Happily, however, there are in this country a great many people who are not widely known. What they say does not come to the ears of the government. They do not make