

*Committee on Defence Expenditure*

this government can find nothing better than laughter with which to greet the discussion of a subject as serious as that now before us.

**An hon. Member:** We were laughing at you.

**Mr. Rowe:** He laughs best who laughs last.

**Mr. Fournier (Maisonneuve-Rosemont):** Humbug.

**Mr. Drew:** I can just imagine the righteous indignation with which the Prime Minister would have demanded a retraction if that remark which has just been made had been made on this side of the house.

**Mr. Fournier (Maisonneuve-Rosemont):** Hold your horses.

**Mr. Drew:** One of the typical remarks made by a supporter of the government is "hold your horses".

**Mr. Rowe:** I wouldn't mention them again.

**Mr. Drew:** It is the job of this government to hold the horses, and they have made a very poor effort—they have made an extremely poor effort; and these horses are nothing more than an indication of the general incompetence for which apparently the government is not prepared to accept the responsibility which it should.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**An hon. Member:** Are those DeWitt Foster's horses?

**Mr. Drew:** I am speaking about the use of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to conduct an inquiry. We already have had the term "theft" applied to this piece of paper. Now, what was actually taken? The government apparently does know now how it was taken, from whom and by whom. In that, it certainly has the advantage over most of the members of this house at this time.

What was taken? The working sheets, put in printed form, of what the man appointed by the government to make this inquiry proposed to present as his report. Was this an army operation order? Was this any secret government document relating to atomic secrets? Was this anything relating to the development of new weapons or anything of that kind? No.

**An hon. Member:** It was a new weapon for the Tory party.

**Mr. Drew:** It was the draft of findings in regard to matters which have been under discussion for over a year—as has been pointed out over and over again by the government in discussing this subject.

I have no knowledge of how that document became public, as has already been indicated.

The government now has. I would imagine that the man appointed to conduct the inquiry would have some very serious objection to a document of that kind getting out of the printing shop; but what has actually happened as a result of that? All that has been lost is any pretence that this government permits reports to come before it without advance consideration. What has been disclosed by that chain of events, whether excusable or otherwise, is that this government tried to have substantial changes made in the Currie report and did not succeed.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Rowe:** It got out too soon.

**Mr. Drew:** What has been demonstrated beyond all question is that Mr. Currie was asked to reconsider the report, that he did, and that the report we now have before us in its final form is a report which was subject to that double checking and bears that double responsibility.

These words that are before us are words which this highly regarded accountant, this distinguished soldier, this man who at great personal sacrifice had acted as deputy minister of national defence during the war as a public servant, checked and refused to have changed.

When the government expresses such synthetic indignation over the removal of this paper from the print shop, I think it would be appropriate that we receive information from the same source about what the government is doing in regard to another report that got loose recently. Has the government instructed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to conduct an inquiry as to who got a copy, in advance, of the report of the commission inquiring into the prospects of the South Saskatchewan power and irrigation development? Certainly one report was just as confidential as the other—but there is a difference, remember. There is a difference. The report on the South Saskatchewan development was a report to the government, and if it got out here in Ottawa it got out from the government and not from a printing office in Montreal or in Regina or in Saskatoon. Perhaps the government in this case feels that as long as it is theft from the government it is a kind of selective theft to which there is no objection. But let us make no mistake about it: if one was reprehensible, the other was. If the removal of one paper was open to criticism and justified an inquiry by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, so did the other.

Now, do not let anyone suggest that there was no criticism of the leak of information in that other report. Perhaps, as a matter