

*The Address—Mr. St. Laurent*

about our government, our officials, of any of our public men, what General Eisenhower felt need of saying to the people of his country.

We Canadians have our failures in government and in other things. Yet when the last word of censure is spoken, when the litany of error is called, it still remains true, and the most cynical cannot deny, that corruption in our government is unknown. Within a generation we have fought two world wars, have expended billions, often with desperate haste. To the eternal credit of our public men no man in this country today dares to rise and say, or can say with truth, that a single cent of the billions spent was diverted to a private pocket from its proper channel.

For our democracy, whatever its shortcomings, that is a glory.

Whatever its shortcomings, that is a glory; and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition agrees that we must be very cautious to seek out, to condemn and to eradicate any and every mistake that is exemplified by extravagance or waste. But let us together glory in the fact that, on the whole, our defence effort has been an effort worthy of the Canadian people, and one of which we can be justly proud.

Much of the criticism has been directed against the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton). I was pleased to read in the *Montreal Gazette* of November 17, in an article which was intended to be critical of something the minister had done recently in reply to charges of poor morale in the Canadian forces overseas, statements such as this:

The direction and management of the Department of National Defence are bound to come under criticism. This is by no means to condemn Mr. Claxton's many valuable efforts and services. Canada has few public servants who devote themselves to their duties with greater vigour or constancy. The difficulty lies in a certain tendency on Mr. Claxton's part to uphold the defence department as something beyond censure or reproach.

They go on to say:

No doubt these inclinations on the part of the Minister of National Defence are largely unintentional and even unconscious. He himself is probably unaware either of these inclinations or of their consequences. And they are no less unfortunate because they tend to diminish public appreciation of his unquestioned achievements as a devoted and able administrator.

It may be that my colleague is sometimes oversensitive with respect to the criticism that is levelled against some of the activities of those who are in his department and for whom he has constitutional responsibility to this house. But I think on the whole we are happy that the situation in that department is such that the head of the department would be sensitive about any criticism levelled against it. That does not mean we should not pay attention to the criticism, that we should not do our best to see that what is underneath it disappears and in that way do away with the occasion for criticism.

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

That is why we want the defence expenditures committee set up. Hon. members will have found a notice in my name on today's order paper which will be called in due course. We want it set up. We are all anxious, the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) possibly more so than any of the rest of us, to be sure that there is no waste because the Minister of National Defence, together with his colleague the Minister of Defence Production (Mr. Howe), carries a tremendous responsibility with respect to the proper channelling of one-tenth of the total production of the Canadian nation in the course of a year. That is a tremendous responsibility and one with respect to which I am sure the Minister of National Defence wishes to see continued such tributes as I find in this critical article in the *Montreal Gazette* of November 17 last.

So far as defence production is concerned, I do not think I need to say very much. I was one of those who attended the launching of two ships and the handing over of three guns at Sorel to the United States and Canadian forces on the 14th of June last. I was much impressed by what I saw there on that occasion. I was also much impressed by the comments I heard from the United States procurement and naval officers who were present, who saw what was being done and how it was being done in that particular munitions plant. Quite frankly, we all would be happier if it was not necessary for mutual aid to be extended to our associates in the NATO organization, but since it has to be extended I think there is some occasion for us to be proud that it is here in our Canadian shops that the NATO organization wishes to have the F-86 fighter planes produced for the principal fighting element of that organization now being built up in Europe.

In numerous other fields there are frequent striking examples of the importance being attached by our allies in NATO to the part this young nation is able to play in building up this joint strength. The hon. gentleman said there was a reference in the speech from the throne to a lessening somewhat of the dangers of war on a world-wide scale. He added that several newspapers had made comments about that statement in the speech from the throne which he felt it might be wise to correct. His speech implied, and I agree with him, that we should not be complacent about the present situation, but I do not think there is anything in the language used which would induce anyone to be complacent. Here is what was said:

You resume your labours on behalf of the Canadian people at a time of continuing international tension. Nevertheless, because of the steadfast