

*The Address—Mr. St. Laurent*

We know that the cost to us of maintaining one man on European soil, as part of the integrated army, is much more than the cost to the Europeans themselves of maintaining and equipping one man there. And we know that, in the production of equipment, we can get for every dollar expended as much as can be got from any dollar expended anywhere in the world, and perhaps more. We believe, as General Eisenhower is reported to have submitted in his report to congress today, that the big need of western Europe at this time is for arms rather than for troops.

For weeks we have been discussing the plans that would be put before you for your approval at this session of parliament, and we have been endeavouring to obtain the best possible information as to the most effective way in which our contribution can be made. So far there has been brought to my attention nothing that would indicate that the institution of national selective service at this time would be beneficial. On the contrary, the information we have obtained is that it would hamper what is being done at this moment. Now, that does not mean that the situation cannot change, and it does not mean that if and when it does change there will not be changes in the manner in which our resources will be contributed to this pool of international strength. But those changes will not be recommended by this government on any sentimental grounds because of any appeals on a racial or religious basis, but on their actual effective value to the joint strength of the combined forces of the North Atlantic alliance.

The leader of the opposition has said that he did not think the people of Canada would begrudge the expenditure of dollars provided that they believed they were being wisely expended; and with that I agree. And I fully agree with the hon. gentleman that no burden should be placed upon the Canadian people that is not represented by wise and efficient expenditures of the money that is produced from the burden itself. But I cannot bring myself to agree with the hon. gentleman that it would be wise at this time to set up a defence committee and to bring before it those who are engaged in the preparing and implementing of military plans that have to be carried out. I imagine the hon. member's views are still the same as those he expressed in the house on September 7 of last year, at which time he said, as reported at page 388 of *Hansard*:

These highly trained officers, with long military experience in the different branches of the service, are men for whose opinions we have high regard, as we have for the officers under them. But has the Minister of National Defence followed the advice of the chiefs of staff? Has he? There is

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reason to believe he has not done so entirely, because I find, for instance, a press report in the *Ottawa Journal*—

And so on. And then, a little further on:

We should like to hear from the chiefs of staff whether they were pointing out that we did not have adequate forces for the defence of Canada, that we needed more money for that purpose, and that we needed to step up our training. Unless we hear their statements to the contrary, I think that is a logical conclusion from these reports.

Well, I do not think that is the way in which constitutional government is carried out under traditional British practice. The government takes the responsibility, under that practice, of formulating policy and of exposing it to parliament. If parliament is not satisfied, then it is the privilege of parliament to dismiss that government and to get a different one. But it is not the privilege of parliament to get the chiefs of staff or any of the others who, at times, are described as bureaucrats by hon. members across the way, to disclose the advice to which the government is entitled in formulating policy.

There can be no objection to obtaining from the responsible ministers full information as to what they plan to do, what they are doing and how they are doing it, full information as to how every cent of every dollar appropriated for national defence is being expended. But we are not prepared to accept the urging of the leader of the opposition and to set up a committee before which the chiefs of staff or the other military advisers of the minister can be brought so as to ascertain from them whether all or only part of the recommendations made by them have been incorporated in the policy the minister takes the responsibility of submitting for the approval or disapproval of parliament.

The leader of the opposition has dealt with inflation. He is concerned—and so are we—for all those who have savings of one kind or another, whether from pensions or from income upon bonds they purchased either during the course of the last war or following it. However, in opening his speech the hon. member was very insistent in his statement that in our international policies we had to allow our great neighbour to the south to take the lead. That may be questionable. We hope—and up to the present time our hopes have been realized—that the ultimate decisions of our powerful neighbours to the south in international affairs will all be such that we shall be able to accept them on their merits, and not merely because they are their policies.

We have to examine those policies on their merits. We have to look at them from the