

Bank of Canada Report

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River says it is a somersault from 1956 and 1957. This is one further example of the way in which this government's actions are inconsistent with its professed idealism about human rights and the rights of parliament. If the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) believes in the rights of parliament as he says, if he really believes in the philosophy behind the bill of rights, why does he sit there next to the Minister of Finance and not give to parliament its responsibility which the Minister of Finance says belongs to it alone? In defence of my last observation the Prime Minister has a synthetic good humour displayed all over his face. The Prime Minister's conduct and that of the Minister of Finance in this and in so many other matters establish beyond doubt that there has never been a more arrogant and ineffective government than the government that now faces us.

But, Mr. Speaker, on April 27 the Deputy Speaker construed the words of the Minister of Finance as not implying that there was no advantage to parliament or to the public interest in that course. He interpreted the words of the Minister of Finance as every member of the house did and certainly as I did when he said, as found on page 4043 of *Hansard*:

Unless I am mistaken, the Minister of Finance has already indicated he does not consider this suggestion to be in the public interest.

Imagine the Minister of Finance using words which Mr. Deputy Speaker interpreted as saying that the Minister of Finance is of the view that it is not in the public interest to have the annual report of the Bank of Canada referred to the banking and commerce committee for careful scrutiny. Yet we have a Minister of Finance who, in defence of freedom in this house, paraded himself from the Speaker's chair to the entrance of the house, draped in the symbol of his professed love of liberty and of the rights of a free parliament. In spite of this, he will take no step, as Minister of Finance, to allow a committee of this house to examine the most important report placed on the table of this house since this session began, a report which deals with matters in which the governor of the Bank of Canada takes issue with the position taken by the government.

This, however, does not in any way relieve the government from taking a procedural step which is in accordance with the best parliamentary traditions and is in accordance with the rights of this house, namely to examine this report by the governor of the Bank of Canada, to determine whether or not the positions which he has publicly assumed bear any

[Mr. Benidickson.]

relationship when they are contrasted against the policies of the government.

Mr. Brunsten: Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Yes.

Mr. Brunsten: Is he prepared to accept the report of the governor of the Bank of Canada as the official view of the opposition?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): In answer to the hon. gentleman, I may say that what I want to do is to find out whether this report does offer a solution for the most important single problem in our country, about which the government is doing very little, that is the problem of unemployment. The governor of the Bank of Canada has said that this nation has the capacity to resolve the problem of unemployment. This is fact No. 1. Fact No. 2 is that we have over 700,000 people out of work. The government is not resorting to policies which the governor of the Bank of Canada believes are capable of mitigating this problem. It is because I want to examine the governor of the Bank of Canada, and so do other members of the Liberal party, to ascertain whether or not there are solutions within the context outlined by the governor of the Bank of Canada in this report and certain public speeches, that I want the report referred to a committee. I say that is the right of every hon. member in this house.

There has been some talk about the rights of parliament in connection with this matter. The Minister of Finance was pressed by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) on April 27, Mr. Speaker, when he put this question to him as reported at page 4043 of *Hansard*:

... may I ask the Minister of Finance whether he considers it not to be in the public interest to refer the report of the governor of the Bank of Canada to the banking and commerce committee of this house.

Those were the words of the Leader of the Opposition, "does the minister not consider it in the public interest;" and I will read the reply of the Minister of Finance, this little man who, as I said, carried across his shoulders the symbol of the rights of a free parliament and a free people. This is what he said when speaking to this parliament made up of the elected representatives of the people:

Mr. Speaker, this is the third time this question has been asked in the house this afternoon.

We all remember how he seemed fatigued, how irritated he was when he began this soliloquy.

I repeat the answer I gave to the question when it was asked the first time by the hon. member for Essex East, and I simply add to that answer the observation that I think will be generally