

He said the prisoners were originally sent to Cuba in exchange for Mr. Cross, but that did not protect them in other countries. An hour or two later, the Prime Minister said it would not be this government's plan to take steps for extradition. That must have been an awful setback for the Minister of Justice.

Parliament is a great place, Mr. Speaker. I never get over my admiration for the place or my interest in it because of incongruities such as I have mentioned that happen with great regularity on that side of the House.

Mr. Lang: Remember 1962.

An hon. Member: Otto, you just sit quiet.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Oh, I am glad to have Otto's participation. I have two or three more here, but I did not want to use them because he was so jovial with me today. As I have said on other occasions, when you come to parliament on your first day, or indeed during your first six months, you wonder how you ever got here. After that you wonder how the other 263 members were elected. In this place there is strong argument, but nonetheless there is respect and regard for the integrity of those who sit opposite. Above all, I am interested in seeing the quality of the members who come to this House after every election.

● (1430)

I am not being perfunctory when I say that the mover and seconder of the address in reply performed their duty admirably, difficult as it must have been, when measured by reason, to say the things that they said. I admire those who can speak in both languages with the facility displayed by so many. I recall that the former member for Prince Albert, also the then prime minister of Canada, had a wonderful hold in the province of Quebec. He made only two speeches in French in his years in office. Once he said "oui" and the second time "oui, oui". That had a tremendous effect. When I listen to those who are able to speak in both languages, I have a deep sense of regret for never having been able to do it. I understand what is said. When I try to reply, the quality of my French is such that nobody, from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland, who does not speak French understands. That is trilingualism, as practised in Prince Albert.

Speaking seriously about the Prime Minister's speech—I wish he were here; I know how busy he always is when I speak—he said parliament must be the heart of the nation. I did not read *Hansard* this morning, so I must depend on memory. Mr. Speaker, who was it who drove a dagger into the heart of parliament when the rule changes were forced through by closure two or three years ago in this House? Those rule changes turned this House into a puppet, to be pushed around by the Prime Minister and those associated with him.

When the so-called reform of the rules of parliament began under Mr. Pearson and was continued under the present Prime Minister, I stood against most of the changes and was virtually alone. Many of my colleagues fell for the argument that parliament must be made more efficient. That is always the Machiavellian argument used when parliament is about to be emasculated. I can tell the House this about the proposed rule changes: as far as I am

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concerned they will not pass unless they are based upon the principle that we in the opposition have rights, as well as the government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am glad to see the Minister of Justice applauding.

Mr. Lang: That is what the Prime Minister said.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I think we all know how the minister voted last time. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) always approves of strengthening parliament.

When the Prime Minister spoke, he did so in solemn tones saturated with sacrament. He spoke feelingly of his high regard for members of parliament. But, Mr. Speaker, I have a good memory. What manner of changed thinking has come over the Prime Minister who on July 26, 1969, said that members were nobodies! Well, the nobodies of 1969 became the subject of his appreciation in 1974. Then he spoke of some of his fellow members in the Liberal Party. Once he said, "I think we will get rid of some of them; they are bums." Some of them who were here in those days are still here.

An hon. Member: Some of them just came back.

Mr. Diefenbaker: One hon. member said that they have just returned. They have returned while yet the light holds forth and burns. It is interesting to note the attitude taken in the last few weeks by some great American papers toward the parliamentary system. They pay the system great tribute. I will not quote because my time is limited. They said, in so many words, that so long as the representatives of the Crown live true to their oaths of office, there cannot be a Watergate in Canada. That was a tremendous tribute to our parliamentary system. The Americans, in attempting to get away from the British parliamentary system, made the president an all powerful king who might believe, as some of his predecessors did, that he is above the law.

In successive amendments to the rules of this House we have lost control of a basic right which is fundamental to parliament—the right to the fullest examination of expenditures. Today there is no such right. Despite all the gyrations—we witnessed this afternoon, one cannot get around the situation that there are estimates unpassed from the previous parliament. The first thing we must do is this: we must return to this House, as a committee of the whole, the right to examine ministers on their shortcomings and on their achievements.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I know the attitude of ministers. I have seen it from both sides. When ministers came to me and said, "My estimates are coming up before the House," I said, "You had better be right." There is none of that today. There is virtually no control over the profligate wastefulness in the spending of money. That wastefulness has characterized, in the last six or seven years, the government of this country. Expenditures of ministers, wasteful beyond words, have been unchallengeable in the House. You cannot move a motion against an individual