

Criminal Code

Mr. Diefenbaker: Well, that observation indicates that thought has been given. But what has the government done? Every day the government has been imposing illegal taxation. A reasonable time after this imposition a budget was permitted. Nevertheless the government has been extracting money from the people of Canada illegally, by extortion. The matter has not been brought before parliament and it ought to be within the course of the next few days or the next few weeks. No action has been taken on a vital matter affecting the Canadian people. Oh no. We have rising costs, the highest cost of living in history, high interest rates, high taxation and the highest government expenditures ever, but the government says: we will not pay any attention to those things; we want to legalize homosexuality; that is our ideal.

● (12:20 p.m.)

I am sorry I missed the speech the Minister of Justice delivered yesterday, because it must have been an example to all those listening of obvious hair-splitting. What kind of argument was it? Why is there this unearthly haste to bring in this measure? Why is there this unfathomable haste? This is your solution, is it? Is this your elixir for the people of Canada? Do you say that after these things are done happy days will be here again?

When the government said that these matters were to be discussed in the committee they said that members would be free to do as they pleased. The private member was to have new opportunities. I agree that the backbencher does not have fair opportunities, but he was to have them in this committee. I said that I could see how these committees would operate. The hon. member for York East (Mr. Otto) let the cat out of the bag, but he did not deal with the instructions that were received. It was interesting to hear that Liberal members in committee had received instructions from the government. The only one who denied in the house that there had been any such instruction was the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald). No one would suggest that the hon. member for York East would manufacture a story. Some may say he manufactured it but, if so, I can only say he was most prescient in doing so. Hon. members over there all stick together. They know where they stand. United we stand, divided we fall. Therefore they stand together.

They said the new rules would bring tremendous advantages. They would give committees of parliament new powers. I am citing

[Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys).]

only what took place. The view was expressed that because of the complexity of legislation it was impossible to ensure proper and careful study of bills, clause by clause, in the House of Commons. I said what was being done would weaken parliament and the House of Commons. The government gave assurances that every opportunity would be given to private members to express their views in committee and to have those views translated into recommendations for amendment when committees reported back to the house. What a sham! They said that the United States system—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hesitate to interrupt the right hon. gentleman but our Standing Orders provide that debate shall be strictly limited to the amendment before the house. In view of the right hon. gentleman's statement earlier that he would be absent next week, the house may feel disposed to allow him to go beyond the scope of the particular amendment. Perhaps the house feels so disposed, but I feel that we should deal with the subject matter of the bill.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I never transgress. I thought there was general agreement when I began for me to make my remarks. I have always found the house reasonable. I will conclude the latter part of my remarks very shortly.

The committee sat. What did it bring in? Here we have a report from a committee that was unbiased, non-partisan, non-political. This is the report of a committee, some of whose members had a whip held over them. The effectiveness of our committee system under the new rules must be measured in the light of what took place in this instance.

An hon. Member: Not so.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Liberal members have cited what happens in the United States, but the United States system is different. No member of Congress, no matter what his political faith, has any responsibility to the President of the United States. Many years ago Woodrow Wilson said in this regard that the rules of the United States Congress are framed in such a way as to put all business under committee management. There is one principle that runs through all their committee proceedings, and which is never abrogated and always observed, that the committees shall rule without let or hindrance. In this instance the committee of the house did not meet without let or hindrance. The members supporting the government went there and