

Supply—Justice

me, I refuse to jump". We are not asking the minister to jump, but we wish he would act. We want him to act in accordance with his responsibilities as Minister of Justice.

Instead, what do we see? In his reply to the Leader of the Opposition, in his attitude toward the whole of the opposition and toward those who would dare suggest there should be an official inquiry the minister resorts to the most vicious and public threat of intimidation, an attempt to silence criticism by a threat of intimidation bordering on blackmail.

What conduct for a Minister of Justice to say: You be quiet or I will tell about the Monseigneur case. That is what he did. Let me tell him that that approach to blackmail will not work. I regret exceedingly that I have to use those words in connection with one who occupies the post of Minister of Justice, but that is what it was.

I ask the Prime Minister, who regrettably has just left the committee again, to take cognizance of the conduct which was indulged in here and which I personally know was not devised by the Minister of Justice alone.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It was applauded by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Fulton: There were others associated with him in this. I ask the Prime Minister to take cognizance of what has happened. An attempt was made publicly in the House of Commons to still criticism by the threat of intimidation. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, if hon. members opposite feel it appropriate, go ahead. Produce the details if you think there is anything which should be exposed, if there is anything you believe you are in a position to expose, and you will be answered, because there is nothing which from the point of view of any improper conduct on our part we wish to hide. That kind of intimidation simply will not work.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

An hon. Member: You hope.

Mr. Fulton: What does the minister say in this connection? He says: "I have spoken and you must be content with what I have said". He then went on to discuss bankruptcies. Again, the whole attempt was to avoid discussing the facts, to avoid telling us what steps, if any, they have in mind to deal with problems which are real and serious. No one

[Mr. Fulton.]

who has occupied this position in the Department of Justice, as I have done, could for a moment deny that. But instead of endeavouring to attract the support of the committee by taking us into his confidence, the minister indulges in cheap sneers at those who preceded him and a pretence that nothing was done to deal with the difficulties which confronted us then.

While I do not pretend that we solved this problem I would remind the committee that, as is well known, we recognized it and we instituted the studies of which the present minister is now the beneficiary. We did the preparatory work and we introduced those studies. We did not complete them and we did not complete all the action which the problem requires to be taken. But his government has now been in office for three years. It is our complaint not that hon. gentlemen opposite have created this problem but that after three years they have done nothing to solve it.

Mr. Cardin: That is not true.

Mr. Fulton: The minister says "That is not true". Apparently he is trying to do something. Well, let him take us into his confidence and get on with the job instead of pretending that he has all the merit and that his predecessor should be condemned.

We must take a serious view of the attitude of the minister and of his attempt to stifle criticism both in the field of bankruptcy and with respect to the Spencer case. He says we are making a personal attack on him, that our criticism amounts to nothing more than a vicious smear. This is exactly what was said at the start of the matters which led to the Dorion inquiry. I know this to be the case, though I was not here in the house at the time. An effort was made to say it was nothing but an effort to discredit the government. So what must we think about the threat which the minister is now prepared to hold over our heads in an effort to stifle criticism?

This matter is too serious to be left on the bitter personal basis to which the Minister of Justice attempted to reduce it. What is involved here is certainly not criticism of the minister alone, though he insists on regarding it as such, either for not prosecuting Mr. Spencer or for not accepting a danger to our security measures with respect to counter-espionage activities in Canada.

Our criticism is based on the inherent stubbornness of the government in refusing