

which are devoted to praise of the Liberal party and the election of Liberals in the next election. It is not going to be beneficial. The other day he made a joke about Prince Albert, that he would give me assistance by allowing the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) to visit Prince Albert. I offered him the opportunity to come to Prince Albert and speak there and if he did, my majority would be more massive than ever before. Anyway, he went on one of these trips, spending the people's money by the thousands.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to insist that all members address themselves only to the procedural matter that is before this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I have been in this House for some years. I remember very well in 1956 when he had a Speaker with a wonderful record. In a few short days he destroyed it because of the activities of certain ministers of the Crown who endeavoured to lead him along the path that led to the degradation of parliament.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I do not find the right hon. member's last intervention any more tasteful or relevant than the one to which I objected. I have seen to it consistently, as I have just now, that he has an opportunity to participate in a very important discussion, and I am asking him to stay relevant to that discussion.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, with great deference to you, I am asking you to allow a debate in this House to take place as it should automatically on a matter so important to the Parliament of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: What did the Prime Minister say on his little trip? Here is the way it is reported in the Canadian Press, the revised version of today being quite different from what was actually said by the Prime Minister.

Vernon, B.C. (CP)—Prime Minister Trudeau defended Friday his newly-appointed solicitor general's decision not to answer daily House of Commons questions about RCMP activities.

In a brief news conference here, Trudeau said he does not believe Jean-Jacques Blais has made a blanket refusal to inform parliament about investigations.

Sir, what the Prime Minister said today is the antithesis of what he said three days ago in Vernon, B.C. If you accept what he said three days ago, you will be accepting a stand taken by the minister from whom I had expected today an apology to parliament, because all of us sometimes say things during the course of debate that, upon looking them over, we conclude we could have done better.

● (1532)

What is his attitude today? Smiling! Laughing! Ministers are turning around, smiling in his direction. You cannot treat parliament that way, I say to the minister. Parliament is

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entitled to the consideration of the fullest maintenance of parliamentary traditions.

What this government has done, and it has been doing it more and more, is, while multiplying the number of ministers, decreasing the opportunity for answers to be given. The kind of attitude displayed by the minister was apparently in consequence of the viewpoint of government because it was not accepted that he could not have said what he said.

Instead of today endeavouring to defend, instead of facetious casuistry, he should have stood up in the House and said he was wrong. He would have received a tremendous reception. We would be assured that parliament is being maintained.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Instead of that, he engaged in simple arguments for the purpose of throwing dust in the face of parliament.

These debates have their use. The Prime Minister won an election by the just society argument. We have not heard of that lately. Is this example of the throttling of parliament at the essence of a just society? We cannot accept the view taken by the Prime Minister, because it is not true. What the minister did was simply carry out a philosophy that the present Prime Minister has imbued his cabinet with, namely, that they are above parliament.

The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) today quoted a statement made in the British House of Commons by a Liberal leader. When I look at this government and listen to the arguments being advanced today, I think of what Churchill said about an opposition member who wrapped himself in the garments of purity in his endeavour to dissemble what he said. Churchill said, "There, but for the grace of God, goes God". That is the attitude of this government. It cannot be accepted in any way whatsoever.

If you accept that principle, what about setting up a commission on finance? The government has a deficit of approximately \$1 billion a year. When I was Prime Minister, the deficit was \$750 million, because we assisted the aged and equalized opportunity for the provinces.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Order!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Order, says some backbencher.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Setting up a royal commission on finance and then denying parliament the opportunity of asking the government about this deficit would be a grand thing. You could do it in any department. The deficit costs the Canadian people in exchange on the borrowed money approximately \$1 billion a year. They could cover all that by setting up a royal commission and say they are not going to answer any questions because a royal commission has been set up. It is a preposterous argument, one that cannot be accepted by parliament.