

Alleged Lack of Government Leadership

radio, television and in the press. When the leader of the United States speaks, we get it in detail over our television. I should like to see more of an interchange in this regard so they would learn something about our country. When I hear some saying that the fact that one dares to speak out will endanger Canada's economy, I wonder what the future of this country would be if those who have such fears and those who are of little faith held office in our country. I believe in co-operation, in the closest co-operation, but not in the absorption of our viewpoint by any other nation. I believe in the maintenance in spirit and in fact of Canada's identity, with the right to determine her own policy without extramural assistance in determining that policy.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): We all agree with that.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I now pass on to the next phase in connection with this amendment, Mr. Speaker. As we listened to the Leader of the Opposition he repeated the same old statements. I was reading some of the speeches he made in 1958. He has a mighty good memory, because he used the same words then, right from the beginning. He speaks of the degree to which parliament has failed to act. He would lead the country to believe that we are responsible for this. Well, Mr. Speaker, I take up the order paper and look over the amount of legislation we have on it. Can we get anything through? I am not speaking of the other parties now.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am speaking of those who openly boasted that they would hold up this house until finally we would not have supply and would have to go to the country. This is legislation necessary for Canada. With regard to the national development act they said that, subject to the proper criticism and examination, it is good legislation. Do they let it go through? They talk and talk; then they end up denying its passage. It has been the same story, Mr. Speaker, all down the line, and I am going to refer to that in some little detail. They say we should organize the business of the house.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I hear one solitary voice, Mr. Speaker. We could organize the business of the house. We have placed the business before the house. Let us look at the legislation on the order paper. How many measures are before the house? The number is 31. There is the measure respecting the national

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

economic development board, which is something that should have gone through; there is the measure with respect to the Freight Rates Reduction Act. We cannot even get that before the house. There are other measures here which are not of the same importance. There is the motion of the Minister of Labour for the second reading of Bill No. C-70, to provide for the safety of persons employed in federal works; there is the measure respecting industrial change and manpower adjustment; the measure to amend the Export and Import Permits Act; the measure to amend the Industrial Development Bank Act; the resolution in connection with Canadian National Railways, and so I could go on. There is measure after measure which waits. There is the measure to set up an Indian claims commission; to amend the National Productivity Council Act by providing for the appointment of additional members, and so on. These are matters that we want to get through. In addition we have several others to come, to which there will be reference before I conclude.

What happens? They come in and spend almost an hour a day on questions. One of the most spectacular contributions to wit, humour and waste of the time of parliament was that made by the Leader of the Opposition the other day when he rose and gave his condolences to the Minister of Trade and Commerce for the burning down of some building in Toronto.

Mr. Pearson: The George H. Hees building.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Leader of the Opposition, holding a responsible position, talks facetiously like that.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): A fire is not a facetious thing.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Wasting the time of parliament; that is what has been going on. How can we organize these things if they hold up everything?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I could go down the whole list and indicate exactly what has happened in this regard. On January 21 I put before the house, not by way of dictation in any way but simply the suggestion, that we get on with the business; that we endeavour to extend the hours of sitting; that we arrive at a plan whereby we will be able to deal with such matters as the bill to amend the provisions of the Railway Act, based on the recommendations of the MacPherson royal commission—

Mr. Pickersgill: It has not yet appeared.