

chairman of a committee operates properly, catches the eye of the Prime Minister and makes sure that the will of the government is done in that committee, he has a chance of being elevated to the ministry. The effect of all this is that the Prime Minister is, in a very real sense, in a position to exercise control over all but two members of the Liberal party. He can either ignore them on the grounds that two people do not matter, or he can hold out the prospect that they may become ministers without portfolio.

• (3:20 p.m.)

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Or they could go to the Senate.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): The Senate is a bonus. I did exclude that, but in order to get into the Senate you first have to get into the cabinet and prove your incompetence at that level. Usually it is not a direct step from the Commons into the Senate.

Mr. Rynard: How about judgeships?

Mr. Howard (Skeena): My friend says, what about judges. I think I have made my point in speaking just of those who happen to be in Parliament and the positions that are available within the parliamentary structure.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): There is nobody left.

Mr. Howard (Skeena): No, there is no one left; no one with an independent mind or an independent thought. The only independent thought from which we might have benefited might have come from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Perrault), but I see he is leaving.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, the purpose and intent of this bill is not government reorganization, but government organization of the dictatorship concept. There is no idea here that Parliament shall have any degree of supremacy or authority in this nation. There is no concept within the government structure or within the bill itself of Parliament having any influence, authority or control over what the government does. Through a process of consolidation, governmental power is to be retained within the hands of the Prime Minister. The bill will give him whatever additional authority he needs to keep his own boys in line or to pay them off for having remained in line, and this runs absolutely contrary to our concept of democracy. It is true that we go to the polls on election day, a day when we have true democracy. Individual citizens have the right, without anyone peering over their shoulder, to vote in the way they see fit. But this is also where democracy ends under the present parliamentary structure and under the Prime Minister that we have today.

As I have said, there is one feature of the bill that might have some value, the creation of a department of the environment. Even though this appears to be window dressing, there would be a great tendency to vote for the bill in view of this concept alone because it is headed in

Government Organization Act, 1970

the right direction. However, the other parts of the bill make the total package completely unacceptable.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I am going to deal first with the general concept of pollution, then with what is taking place under this bill by the government joining the subject of pollution with a variety of other proposals that are unacceptable. It is an obvious endeavour to bring about a vote on the whole bill so that those who vote against the bill will be misinterpreted as voting against action against pollution. As far as I am concerned, Sir, I am not going to be deluded in any way in this regard. This bill is political effrontery. It is designed to deceive the people of Canada and to place members of this House of Commons in a position which, if there were any regard for the House, the government would never have undertaken to do.

I am going to make reference later to some of the hon. gentlemen opposite who now sit in a state of deep concern. I was not here this afternoon during the incident that happened. I am never around when controversial matters are raised, and therefore I missed the scene.

Mr. Francis: Then, you don't know what happened.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. member would have received honourable mention even without his interruption. As I say, I missed what took place this afternoon and I wondered what had happened when I returned and saw the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) dancing a political jig in trying to raise some support from the House Leader for the frightful position in which he now finds himself. He ended up, of all places, in a seat with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). Let me tell him that, having regard to some of his performances recently, I very much doubt that it will be for very long that he will hold the position of chief whip. Certainly, no one has been placed in a more embarrassing position than he was this afternoon. And I say that with deep concern for him and his welfare, Mr. Speaker.

Last night he had an interview with the press, wherein he stated that he would not be associated with any stand that I took on the Francophone situation. In effect, he said that it did not take place.

Mr. Francis: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Ottawa West on a question of privilege.

Mr. Francis: Mr. Speaker, since the right hon. member referred to me, I think he should do me the courtesy of making his reference precise. I very carefully dissociated myself from a general attack on Francophones, which is what I understood the hon. member himself was doing. I made it very clear it was that from which I was dissociating myself.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. member was reported in the press as saying that he did not associate himself with me, and as a result of his interpolation I am reminded of a remark made in the House of Commons by Winston