

*The Address—Mr. Dupuis*

Well, he did not take long to keep his promise. He was barely in power before he changed the Liberal surpluses into Conservative deficits with the result that he has succeeded, for his part, to leave us with the largest deficits since confederation.

That, Mr. Speaker, is a far cry from the promises the Conservatives made right and left in Canada during the last election campaign.

The Conservative administration of the last five years has been a costly proposition, and it is true to say that this Conservative administration has cost more to Canada than the last world war.

The Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Diefenbaker) also stated across the country that as long as he would be Prime Minister, no one would suffer from unemployment.

Well, Mr. Speaker, during the last four years, we have experienced the most alarming situation since the dark days of R. B. Bennett.

At the beginning of the session, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) delivered a very fine speech during this debate on the address in reply. He expressed regret and rightly so, over the fact that Canada is losing prestige among the nations of the world. And when we say these things, Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition reads in the house extracts from newspapers which prove that Canada's loss of prestige is regretted throughout the world, our hon. friends opposite start to cry: "What a shame to discredit one's own country like that."

When we tell the Prime Minister that unemployment is continuing, when we tell him that the economic situation is bad, he answers that we are belittling our country.

This reminds me, Mr. Speaker, of somebody else just as famous as the present Prime Minister. I refer to the Hon. R. B. Bennett. He too, in 1935, when it was said in the house that there was unemployment in Canada, that Canada was suffering from a depression and economic insecurity had this to reply—if you listen carefully you will get the impression of hearing the present Prime Minister:

Why depreciate this country's position among the nations of the world? Why try to make us believe that it suffers more than it really does, when people abroad who observe our conditions without prejudice find that we are progressing and, seeing what we are doing, say when speaking of Canada: "That country occupies the most enviable position in the universe today."

[Mr. Dupuis.]

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister today has the same reactions as Mr. R. B. Bennett yesterday, because he finds himself in the same position, and has to face the same conditions. Moreover, as in the case of the former Conservative prime minister, his only excuse is to say: "Our opponents want to smear this country's good name."

Mr. Speaker, is it the fault of the opposition if this government has been in a muddle all along the line for the last four years? Thus when I look across the aisle, I am reminded of the way the Prime Minister has been in the habit of shuffling those front benches in the last four years. Do you want a few instances, Mr. Speaker? Here are a few: at the opening of the 1958 session, the Secretary of State was appointed as minister of citizenship and immigration. The deputy speaker was appointed as secretary of state, and later on was called to the Senate—for reasons of ill health; it was the first time the Senate was being transformed into a nursing home. A little while later, that same person went for treatment to Jean Talon hospital. After a while, the minister of transport was appointed as Minister of Trade and Commerce, the former minister of trade and commerce moved to veterans' affairs, and his predecessor went for a stay in the Senate.

The then minister of agriculture, an egg, hog and poultry specialist, suddenly became Minister of National Defence. His predecessor had to abandon his portfolio on account of the criticism levelled at him, and he was appointed as lieutenant governor of British Columbia.

The minister of northern affairs lost his bearings and fell into agriculture.

Another deputy speaker was appointed as Associate Minister of National Defence, and since then he has become a specialist on communist affairs.

The minister of mines and technical surveys has become lieutenant governor of the province of Quebec.

The present Minister of Transport has occupied so many different benches and held so many portfolios that one is wondering where he is going to next. He started as solicitor general, then was appointed as secretary of state, and he is now Minister of Transport.

The leader of the New Brunswick Conservative party was in a sorry plight. He was called in and given a seat in the house, and he is now lost in the woods.

The situation remains the same and the burlesque show goes on.