

Morality in Government

Mr. Sauv : The Leader of the Opposition is accusing the R.C.M.P. commissioner—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the co-operation of all hon. members and in particular the co-operation of the Minister of Forestry. He wishes to ask a question. According to our rules he cannot do so at this time. He may have an argument he would like to submit in the course of debate and he may have the occasion to do so later this afternoon or early this evening. But he cannot ask a question at this time and there is no question of privilege or point of order.

An hon. Member: Did that sink in?

Mr. Diefenbaker: At the time of that interruption I was about to return to the statement made by the Prime Minister. He endeavoured to leave the impression that he acted altogether correctly, that it was proper to look at administrative records except, of course, memoranda from cabinet, cabinet meetings and the like.

Sir, what has been done here, according to the testimony of the commissioner of the mounted police, which I paraphrased, is that the Prime Minister is trying to rewrite in parliament the evidence which was given under oath before the commission, realizing that if that evidence stands his government is indicted of one of the most terrible offences of which any government could be indicted—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker:—namely, the assassination of the characters of members opposite for political purposes. Then the right hon. gentleman represents himself as being clothed in the garments of piety. He tells us he wants to see the rights of the individual protected. But by stealth, by snooping, he planned to use the R.C.M.P. with its distinguished record to do the kind of work that he wanted to do to destroy political opponents. Then, when he is faced with it, he smiles. He is pleased at his success. He is delighted. And he tells us about the new politics.

He has by his action in this regard committed a tremendous crime against parliamentary government. He has destroyed that something which brings us together in heated argument, but with respect. He brought this out because he wanted to find something which would destroy. For 15 months it incubated. There it was on his desk. If it was not there he may have put it somewhere else. I know I wish he had put it some place else.

[Mr. Sauv .]

But he had it there. Hon. members know the kind of thing: You be careful; I have something here; if you do not do what I want you to do, out comes Munsinger.

Mr. Pickersgill: Is the right hon. gentleman admitting he had something to hide?

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is the last thing in the world the Minister of Transport should say. He and his friends are trying to hide the truth from the Canadian people as to the despicable tactics they used in this connection. Let that be clear. I did not want to say that.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: Carried away.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is fine. One could go back over the years and take up the records of our respective ancestors and all that kind of thing. We do not do that. Files disclose things but we do not want to hurt our political opponents in that way. I say to the Prime Minister that from the time he took office he examined every line and word in my life—everything—with one purpose in mind. I do not want to go into personalities as to what happened. But you will remember, sir, that in 1962 they held a meeting and decided that the one person to be destroyed was Diefenbaker. They spread a story across this country that I was suffering from an incurable disease. It came from the front bench and I say to the Prime Minister: I know where it came from.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am supposed to accept that and not resent it. Well, they got their answer. They thought they could win an election with that kind of thing. Now, having tried for several years to bring an end to the leadership of the Conservative party, for the benefit of Canada—and I admire their freedom from partisanship in this desire—they resort to these tactics and use the police.

I am surprised—and I intend to say that I am surprised that the commissioner of the mounted police did not say, “No” to the Prime Minister. But it is not for me to judge. The Prime Minister asks, and when the Prime Minister asks the Biblical words are always true—“He shall receive”.

He asked for this and he got it. He says: There is security of state involved. Where was the security during the 15 months he kept it under cover, only to be produced if needed?