

for the purpose of going into detail in connection with this matter. This afternoon we have seen parliament at its best in the speech delivered by the former Minister of Justice.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: In careful, measured tones the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) placed the facts before this house and the country. It is not for me, after almost 26 years in this chamber, to apologize for any action taken during the period I was Prime Minister or at any other time.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I love this institution and every thing it stands for. In the course of debate we often say things that in the light of subsequent events we might not have said. Those are the spontaneous ejaculations of strong men having strong opinions and I have never objected to that at any time. I, however, have had the experience that was had by Arthur Meighen and R. B. Bennett, who made it possible for the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) to be what he is today, and George Drew—

• (3:50 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Oh, the Prime Minister was one of those who stood about the Bennett throne and received appointments. I have had their experience in campaigns of malice and destruction. Does, the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) say to me that when a Prime Minister finds any shortcomings amongst his ministers which are not offences against the state, he should turn the file over to the Department of Justice? This is not the way parliament works. We have had the answer today. The file has not been made available to the hon. member for Kamloops. Why did the Prime Minister not deliver it to a Privy Councillor, a Privy Councillor who had the responsibility for the Department of Justice and who says security was not violated?

However, these facts have been bandied about. The President of the Privy Council (Mr. Favreau) says that he knew about this a year and a half ago. If there was any offence against security, why was not something done? The other day, when the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin) was speaking, he received from the President of the Privy Council a suggestion about the Munsinger case. I saw him turn and heard him say, tell him about that. Oh, yes, I did.

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Mr. Favreau: That is not true.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I saw him and I heard him. On several occasions this sword of Damocles was held over my head. Then, I should like to contrast the attitude of the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton), the former Minister of Justice with the attitude of the President of the Privy Council. You cannot build parliament that way. There has been a continuous course of attempting to expose and discredit me in a personal capacity, and when I say that I speak with the authority of the Prime Minister. I recall a speech he made on my birthday in 1962. After all, one does not forget these anniversaries as one gets older.

On that occasion, he said: We do not need to spend much time in the coming campaign in exposing and discrediting Mr. Diefenbaker and his government; that has been done. They have attempted to discredit, undermine and destroy. Finally, as a last resort, the President of the Privy Council came to the conclusion that they did not want this Spencer case dealt with because they knew that heads would roll, according to Mr. Spencer's statement as reported in the press. They thought there was only one way to do it, and that was to hold over my head the threat that I would be destroyed by something they had.

I was not here last week. I announced that I would be away on Thursday following the passage of the estimates. Thursday and Friday were going to be devoted to such non-controversial subjects as the setting up of committees. I let everybody know I was going. Finally, when I arrived at a point on the north end of Vancouver Island from which there was no possibility of getting back—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: They laugh. Last evening we heard one of the proponents of Liberalism, Mr. Fraser, say that I could have returned. He always turns up on the C.B.C. for the purpose of explaining, in a nice way, the government's position whenever the government is in difficulties. He did so again last night. As soon as I received this word, I did everything to get back. I was told I could not get back to Ottawa before Friday afternoon, and I thought that was too late. The parliamentary proceedings were under way. I did not know parliamentary life, and I did not know this sort of thing could continue for two days. It never had before.