

Withholding of Grain Payments

Mr. Nielsen: I am criticizing the man who I think is responsible for the denigration of this Parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nielsen: He is quite another person on television and he knows precisely how to act in order to convey a superb television image. That is all it is, an image—cool, charming, articulate, wise—but it is still only an image. As one writer put it, television “may unmask one liar and transmit another as the very heart and soul of integrity. The results may have nothing to do with the real qualities of the man, only with his apparent qualities.” This is his idea of accountability, to use television to charm people in their homes. But account to Parliament? He tolerates that as a necessary nuisance.

What of the rest, his cabinet ministers and his braying donkeys? No one in that cabinet dare speak out. Real freedom of expression does not exist. The ex-minister of communications knows whereof I speak. In an article in *Maclean's* magazine for July 1971, on page 32, the hon. member is reported to have said this:

You were always listened to with great respect, but nothing would ever happen. . . . It was like a procession. You know, when the Pope gets down off the altar at St. Peter's and walks down the aisle the one thing you know is that he's going to get to the other end of the aisle. That's the way these things are. You can argue and argue and in the end the procession goes on its way.

• (5:00 p.m.)

So does the member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) know whereof I speak. These are two men of courage in my view, two men who were not prepared to adhere to the admonishment of the Prime Minister to “behave yourself and do as I think”; two men who dared to think for themselves and who were banished by a man who has taken absolute power unto himself.

Why, we ask, have we reached the point where Parliament enacts a law which is deliberately breached by the government headed by this Prime Minister? The people have a right to feel secure in the belief that such conduct could not possibly occur. Why? Because they say, “Parliament is there to protect us from that sort of thing and members in the House of Commons would not allow such conduct”. As we have experienced, this House of Commons is powerless to do anything unless it be that some opposition members might hope to induce representatives of the media to attempt to arouse public opinion, as was done when the government attempted to muzzle the Auditor General.

An hon. Member: Shame.

Mr. Nielsen: What could be more important a matter upon which to inform Canadians? If the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney) would have the guts to get up on his feet and say things he might get a response from me.

What could be more important a matter to occupy the concern of all members of the House, not only we who sit in the opposition but all members? What could be more important a matter than for this House, acting in unison, to bring to a halt a Prime Minister and a government openly and brazenly violating the law of the land? Yet what action will be taken by the members of the so-called

Liberal party who sit in this House? Will they, by their vote, express their disapproval of a government breaking the law? Will any of them have the courage to say that laws are meant to apply not only to the ordinary citizen but also to Prime Ministers, Cabinet ministers and governments? Or will those members display their usual cowardice and meekly do as they are told by the autocratic leader of their party? Strong words, you say?

Let me tell Liberal members here that even stronger terms were used by their leader in the April, 1963 edition of *Cité Libre* in an article written by him entitled “The Abdication of the Spirit”:

I would have to point out in the strongest terms the autocracy of the Liberal structure and the cowardice of its members. I have never seen in all my examination of politics so degrading a spectacle as that of all these Liberals turning their coats in unison with their chief, when they saw a chance to take power . . . The head of the troupe having shown the way, the rest followed with the elegance of animals heading for the trough.

That is what their leader thinks of them, and that is the contempt he has for those members. So much for the myth of the integrity and independence of the Liberal members sitting in this place. Their own leader has described them far more accurately than could I and, I might say, his is an honest assessment and one that is still valid. They are a posturing, spineless bunch, making hypercritical speeches, while seated, and attempting to make hypocritical speeches at home. Will any one of them have the spine to stand and defend the rule of law when this matter comes to a vote?

So, we have a cabinet composed of ministers afraid to speak their mind for fear they will follow the hon. member for Trinity and the hon. member for Duvernay, and we have Liberal members following their leader like animals to a trough, braying like donkeys as they go. What then is there left to protect the supremacy of Parliament against this one-man despotism. The effectiveness of the opposition has been drastically weakened by a series of rules changes—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand) is rising on a question of privilege.

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a question of privilege. I have listened for the last 15 or 20 minutes to the hon. member for Yukon—

An hon. Member: Twelve minutes.

Mr. Allmand:—perhaps for 12 minutes, slander Liberal members on this side of the House. He has questioned the motives on which we have voted in this House. He has suggested we have voted without using our consciences. I want to ask him to withdraw his remarks immediately. I wish to quote to you, Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne's Fourth Edition at page 98, section 108(3).

An hon. Member: Who is Beauchesne?

An hon. Member: You wouldn't know.

Mr. Allmand: It reads:

Libels on members have also been constantly punished: but to constitute a breach of privilege they must concern the character or conduct of members in that capacity—