

*Interim Supply*

purpose of passing supply and having brought before it such legislation as the government in its wisdom chooses to present. As to any other matter that comes before parliament, however beneficial the suggestion may be, if it emanates from the opposition it finds itself destroyed by an overwhelming and united vote on the part of members supporting the government, who are prepared to accept any legislation introduced so long as it is recommended by the cabinet.

We have had many recent examples of the bypassing of parliament culminating in the present instance, which I need not repeat is farcical, is parliament masquerading, is simply an echo and a shadow of what parliament should be. But this is merely a step along the road. The parliament now coming to an end has seen the most extraordinary efforts on the part of the cabinet to emasculate this institution. In 1955 the government endeavoured to make permanent in this country the wartime powers under the Defence Production Act. We fought that attempt. We opposed it and we were finally successful, by the mobilization of public opinion, in limiting the period of the operation of those extraordinary powers.

I am not going to relive 1956 and dwell on the degree to which parliament was reduced to a sham by the introduction of closure and the denial of discussion. In every case the same attitude was adopted by the government, upheld by its servile supporters who, realizing that what was being done was a denial of parliament, supported the action taken to the detriment of the preservation of this institution.

In the present session we have had some recent examples of the attitude of ministers. I have often wondered what would happen if men like Laurier, Fielding, Lapointe or the late Mackenzie King were able to return to this house and see the extent to which in the present session parliament has been denied information over and over again.

Then, too, the arrogance of the government was shown in two instances in the refusal of ministers to act. In one case it was the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration who, with the support of the Prime Minister and other ministers, refused to give any humanitarian consideration to the admission into Canada of Hanna. They would have condemned him to a lifetime of going back and forth on the face of the waters. They would have refused him admission, as they did. We asked for some humanitarian action and the answer we received was a contemptuous one. Finally the courts came to the rescue of this man and gave to him that justice which an all-powerful government refused

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

to consider on his behalf. Only a few days ago I asked the minister whether or not Hanna would be permitted to remain in this country. It is not admitted that wrong has been done to this man: the date when he will finally ascertain whether he may remain here is to be conditional on his future conduct and is not to be decided at this time.

Then we had also the government's arrogance in connection with the Hobbema Indian case and the banishment of Indians from that reserve. What was being done made a brutal mockery of democratic freedom. We asked in this house for action. The government refused any action. Finally these wards of the Canadian people, having no votes that could possibly result in this government feeling that some action might be taken because of that fact, sought refuge in the courts; and the courts gave to them those rights and that consideration which never should have been denied them by a bureaucratic administration that places the letter of the law above any other consideration, humanitarian or otherwise.

I am not overstating the position when I say that parliament no longer governs. One of the best editorials on that subject appeared about a year ago in *Maclean's* magazine. I am not going to quote it in detail, although I accept every word of it. It says:

Anyone who has been glancing lately at *Hansard* or at a reasonably good newspaper must have been reminded that parliament has ceased to be the chief official critic of the nation's conduct and its conscience. Much worse, the parliament of Canada has ceased to be, in any real sense, the government of Canada. It still has the power to govern. Nevertheless, it continues to acquiesce blindly in all cabinet actions and pronouncements—voting almost as dependably on its party lines as that final horror of legislative horrors, the supreme soviet of the U.S.S.R.

Those are strong words, but they are the words of a national magazine of high repute pointing out the degree to which parliament has been degraded in recent years because of the overwhelming majority supporting the government. It goes on to say:

But it has also produced more than one example of the Liberal majority's willingness to be pushed around, led around and, when it suits the cabinet's convenience, ridiculously misled by the Liberal cabinet.

Finally it terminates with these words:

These remarks are not those of the habitual supporter or opponent of any particular party. Nevertheless, we are genuinely concerned—and invite others to share our concern—about what is happening in this country to the general process frequently described as good government. For our part, we are still reasonably sure it is good. We are not quite sure it is government in the sense originally intended.

We are again reminded of this fact by the submission, *holus-bolus*, of hundreds of millions of dollars of estimates to be examined