

question without making further observation, it not being necessary.

• (1600)

What is wrong with the nation? One hears all kinds of explanations. Sir, this government could not win a by-election today even if it tried its hardest.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: It has made two or three attempts recently to win by-elections, and the results have been a disaster which made Waterloo look like an amateur performance. In the constituency of Ottawa-Carleton, the previous large Liberal majority was reversed and electors in that constituency elected with a large majority a remarkable lady to represent them in this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: The electors of St. John's West sent to this House an outstanding parliamentarian with a reputation for standing up for that in which he believes. Sir, he was not overwhelmed by Smallwood or Pickersgill.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I challenge the Prime Minister to announce immediately the holding of by-elections in constituencies made vacant in recent days. Give the people the opportunity to express their views with their votes.

As one goes across this country speaking to average Canadians, what does one hear them say? They ask, where are we going? What is going to happen? What is the future of Canada to be? What has the Prime Minister done to our parliamentary system? What does he plan, if he ever brings about what he calls the patriation of the constitution? Sir, the Prime Minister gave the game away last March when he spoke to the Liberal federation in the city of Quebec. He said that when we bring back the constitution from a foreign country, England, we will then be in a position to decide whether we want a monarchy. Then he said, and I have his exact words before me, we will then have a president, and the first president will be the present Governor General of Canada. He said that he will be the one to choose that first president.

There is the plan; it is as clear as it can be. That is what he has set out to do. You can follow the Machiavellian sinuities of his course. He is going on national television tomorrow and will be heard on radio; he hopes to wrap himself in the garments of political purity. Sir, I recall his using the same facilities in 1970 when he talked about the terrible danger facing Canada because of the kidnapping of a member of the Quebec government and a British consular agent. I said at the time that the government's action was unnecessary; the criminal law was enough. Now he has frankly admitted that there was no such danger as he placed in such pious and lachrymose terms before the people of Canada.

Restraint of Government Expenditures

Sir, when you try to influence the Canadian people by conjuring up smokescreens, I say they will not be fooled. The present government, and you may as well face this fact, falsifies facts when it reveals any suggestions which show how wasteful it is. The latest revelations of waste are contained in the recent report of the Auditor General. This institution has been so degraded from the position it occupied between 1968 and 1972 that people no longer believe in this government. It is clear that the only ones believing in this government sit opposite us. They know that if an election were called now, they would not be back. There is no question about it. What is the reason?

An hon. Member: Put your hatchet down.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I wish the hon. member would stand up and identify himself, if he wishes to intervene. Sir, it is music to my ears when the little folk interrupt. I now come to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan).

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mange le boeuf.

Mr. Paproski: He is super-bull.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Some in this country say the government does not know where it is going. The sensibilities of others have been shocked by this spendthrift government. Still others say that the government does not know where it is going and would not know where it is after it got there—but not the Minister of Agriculture. He made one of the most remarkable speeches ever made by a minister. I have never known such bovine wisdom. I thought it was said in fun, but it was not; it was all serious. He explained it. He said that eating beef makes people bully. The people of Canada may not be eating beef, and I know what they feel about this government. The minister said that Canadians are divided; they are discouraged and downcast about their country. He said that the increasing consumption of certain foods, particularly blood meats such as beef, makes people ferocious and will lead to dissension within the country.

We are not eating much beef now. Would there be more dissension if we ate more beef? Then the minister gave an example of how deleterious is the effect of beef eating. He said, "You know, those South American countries are at war with one another because they eat too much beef." That is the only part of his statement to which he does not wish to refer. I am sure the South American countries will be asking whether the Minister of Agriculture spoke for Canada or for himself.

• (1610)

Mr. Whelan: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) says I made that statement in the course of a speech. That is not the case. It was made around a table, among a group of press people. I want to make it clear, too, that I never used the words "bloody meat" at all in the discussion. It was an off-the-cuff, jovial type of discussion which took place. But I will repeat again, for the benefit of the right hon. gentleman and anyone else who wants to listen, "You are what you eat."