

Supply—Justice

Mr. Diefenbaker: If that statement is true, then what about this statement in the press release that was issued:

Approaches made by two members of the Soviet embassy very shortly came to the attention of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

What does "very shortly" mean? It means very shortly before the publication of this release.

Mr. Pickersgill: No, shortly after that happened.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It means that if what the hon. gentleman has said is true, the time has come for a full and complete investigation. I want to go back; I want to cover the period from 1944 onward.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, I want to cover that period. I want to see it fully investigated. The Prime Minister laughs, but I want to see as well that we make available to the commission meeting behind closed doors the revelations that have found their way to Washington and have there been placed in evidence that was taken in that body on security. We are not getting the facts. Today we asked what communications there were, and we received no answer at all. The indication was that so far as Spencer was concerned, he was satisfied. There was no suggestion at any time that Spencer's lawyer had ever written, that there had been any objection.

In the morning press the lawyer says he wrote asking for certain information and that he was retained for the purpose of looking into the question and securing the rights of Mr. Spencer. None of this has been revealed. We have had half truths placed before the House of Commons when, in a matter such as this, the full truth should be revealed. I have only to point out that yesterday the Minister of Justice in the province of Quebec issued as grave an indictment as has ever been made regarding this government's administration of justice. He says it is "pusillanimous". He says he can get no action. He says what is taking place is that this government will not act other than a pusillanimous way.

● (12:10 p.m.)

I ask the government, what are you going to do in this connection? What action are you going to take? Why will you not set up a royal commission now behind closed doors? Is there anything unusual in that? In 1944-45 the government of that day set up a royal commission. I was not in agreement with certain activities of that commission which,

[Mr. Cardin.]

in effect, abolished habeas corpus. However, the commission was set up and it went thoroughly into the investigation. The assumption put forward that these things have happened over the years is of primary importance as a basis upon which to demand that there be such a commission.

I know of no newspaper that supports the stand of the government. In all parts of Canada the press is saying, set up a commission. Let us assure that our security shall be preserved. Let us go into this matter. Why do you not do it? Don't go around telling members of the press gallery: "If we were to tell what we know, we would be devastating". I say to you, let us bring out the facts. Establish a royal commission.

I want to go back to 1944-45 to see whether our security is what it should be. This Spencer case and the circumstances connected with the issuance of that never to be forgotten press release can only lead one to believe that at that time there was something that required a smokescreen, something at that time which had to be used to cover up certain circumstances. This is most unusual. Security does not work that way. It is a very difficult problem, but it does not work when you rush to issue a press release which, on the basis of what we have been told, was not true.

The other day the minister tried to carry us away by saying that Mr. Spencer was dismissed under a law passed during the days of the Conservative administration. Let us just look at it. The section in question had been in effect for years, though it was worded differently. I am going to read the two sets of wording. The sections were rearranged, and there was only a change of wording.

Mr. Pickersgill: I should like to ask the right hon. gentleman a question. Does the right hon. gentleman not take responsibility for the legislation that his government introduced?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, all of it. There is nothing more helpful, Mr. Chairman, than that kind of interruption. We are trying to make the government responsible for some of the things they have been doing and which they have been hiding over the last several weeks. We have been smoking them out. The old section 52 of the Civil Service Act read as follows:

Subject to section 3, nothing herein contained shall impair the power of the governor in council to remove or dismiss any deputy head, officer, clerk or employee, but no such deputy head, officer,