

only two ministers being in the House? The minister responsible beat a retreat. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) read an essay to the House.

Mr. Basford: It at least said something.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Minister of State for Urban Affairs (Mr. Basford) is in a particularly vulnerable position. I do not want to bring him into this. There will be no oil poured out if I start on him. Can you imagine these two ministers speaking in the House and then leaving? They do not want to listen to argument. They have every reason to feel that way as this place has become a sepulchre of freedom. Almost every vestige of freedom that existed in the House when this government came into power has been destroyed by the rules which have been brought into effect.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: There is nothing that we can bring before the House of immediate importance unless we secure unanimity, and unanimity is never given. I do not intend to deal particularly with the oil situation; it has been dealt with at great length. Having seen this House in the last few weeks, I can say it is unbelievable to those who saw Parliament in the days of King and St. Laurent.

• (1520)

Mr. Basford: And Diefenbaker.

Mr. Diefenbaker: It is unbelievable that a House of Commons should be reduced to innocuousness because a government, having secured rule changes, a portion by agreement and a major portion by closure, has been able completely to emasculate this institution. The two ministers laugh. They laugh as freedom is destroyed. They ridicule the idea because, after all, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) once said, "We are your masters". That attitude toward Parliament is apparent at all times and it has been intensified recently.

I had hoped an election would not have been long delayed so that as a result of this government being defeated, Parliament might have freedom restored to it. But I am not hopeful now. I must admit that I made a serious mistake in predicting that the election would be in the late part of June. Something happened. Something occurred to hon. gentlemen over there. I would not be surprised if the Minister of State for Urban Affairs from British Columbia had been in conversation with his hon. friend from Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Blair) and had learned how dangerous it would be to go to the country.

Mr. Basford: We would sweep it.

Mr. Nielsen: Sweep what?

Mr. Dinsdale: Sweep too much under the rug.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I have had admiration for the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton ever since the days at Saskatchewan University when he was president of our party at that university.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Oil Pollution

Mr. Diefenbaker: I do not say that disdainfully at all. When I read recently what he found as a result of a poll, I can only conclude there were good reasons for the postponement of the election. If they take a few more polls, I do not think I would be venturing into the field of prophecy were I to say that it appears clear now that there will be no election until 1973. There are great difficulties ahead for the government. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce is simply wallowing in difficulties. And while he wallows, Canada's trade is being lost.

Mr. Pepin: I will meet you on Monday.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Export trade is being lost as a result of the failure of the Department of Finance to take action.

Mr. Pepin: Wait until Monday.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Oh, I have heard similar statistics. The minister is very happy about what is happening. Now we understand why the administration of the United States is so firm. They realize that whatever stands they take, the minister will approve regardless of the effect upon our trade.

Mr. Pepin: Fifteen per cent up!

Mr. Diefenbaker: This is one reason we are afraid to speak out to the United States.

An hon. Member: It is better than you did in 1962.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am not talking about backbenchers. I should like to know who that hon. member is. Many of the backbenchers over there feel very much as I do, but they dare not say so, Mr. Speaker. One hundred and ten posts of the 150 available to backbenchers have been filled. There are 40 dangling plums, and the reward for silence is a prospective plum.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Basford: Is that how you ran your government?

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. gentleman from British Columbia makes some of his finest contributions from a seated position. Once he gets up, he reads. I do not want to say anything more about him because he is not in my field of operation today. Although he is from British Columbia, he has not been able to get his government to do one single thing to protect the waters of British Columbia and the Pacific coast from oil pollution and the potential danger to that province.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: The only one who did anything was the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Anderson).

Mr. Pepin: Istanbul!

Mr. Diefenbaker: His reward was to be shipped out. They would not listen to him. He was not as successful as the hon. member for Fraser Valley East. When he made a motion on this subject, the government turned it down. He found he could do nothing, so he went out to British Columbia to tell the people there that he could not do