

*The Address—Mr. Diefenbaker*

I should like to point out in this connection that in this committee some action should be taken to assure that the course followed in the last session will no longer be followed. I refer to the way in which a rule of parliament has been used, evidently and designedly so, to prevent the answering of questions that may be embarrassing to the government, or the giving of information to which the house is entitled but which the government feels ought not to be given. Instead of allowing a vote, the procedure of sending motions for papers for debate has been adopted as a plan, a subterfuge if you will, to prevent questions being answered, so that in the process of time they expire.

I have here the list for last session. There were 13 notices of motion for the production of papers outstanding at the end of the session. These were all matters about which parliament had the full right to information but on which the government did not want to give information. The Minister of Transport, who always demonstrates that regard for parliament which he has, regularly rose and suggested, while he was house leader, that the motion should be transferred, and I point out that to do this is to circumvent parliament's rights. It means that the government is using a rule, not for the purposes for which the rule was established but for other purposes.

I have said that 13 such notices of motion died on the order paper. I am not going to read them, but they are of interest. Those 13 notices of motion dealt with important matters, and they were transferred for debate and did not come before the house. On December 5, 1963, the hour allotted for the consideration of notices of motions for the production of papers was consumed by Liberal members speaking against the motion of the hon. member for Pontiac-Temiscamingue (Mr. Martineau), whose motion called for the production of correspondence with the United States government regarding the trusteeship over maritime unions on the great lakes. That was the last occasion in the last session when notices of motions were called, leaving untouched the number to which I have referred.

The hon. member who seconded the address in reply to the speech from the throne indicated that one of his objectives was to make parliament effective. I suggest that a good place to start is to whisper into the ears of the front bench the fact that parliament should not be treated as contemptuously as it was in those 13 matters in connection with which the house was entitled to information.

I want to extend my congratulations, Mr. Speaker, to the new ministers. I am not going to do it individually. I particularly extend my congratulations to those who have

taken a portfolio for the first time and become members of the privy council. However, there are one or two of the appointments to which the words of John Wilkes, a great leader of freedom 200 years ago, might apply:

There has been nothing like this since Caligula made his horse a proconsul.

History is a great teacher. I also note that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gordon), while he is still in the cabinet, has had a great deal of control taken away from him. The government has set up, or it intends to set up, a president of the treasury board, which office is to be filled by a very distinguished member of the house who came in at the same time I did. He will exercise many of the functions ordinarily pertaining to the Minister of Finance. In other words the government has taken away from the Minister of Finance the control of expenditures. That indicates to me a loss of confidence in him, much of which is general across the country, and which I realized before it was shared by the Prime Minister as well. Last session the government brought in a budget. By the time the session had ended the budget was about gone, but the minister remained. About all that remains now for the Minister of Finance is that he will be able to continue in his course of drying up the sources of American investment in Canada by the nonsensical nostrums which he brought before this house and had passed by parliament.

I am not going to cover a variety of subjects today, Mr. Speaker; my colleagues will do that as they speak on the several matters of which they have particular knowledge. There have been all kinds of descriptions of this speech from the throne, but I think one of the best quotations which could be applied with regard to it are words used by Lincoln—and he has been dead 100 years—when he said:

As thin as the homeopathic soup that was made by boiling the shadow of a pigeon that had been starved to death.

I must say that those words show that vision, that greatness in statemanship, which make them so applicable today.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what about the speech from the throne? I am not going into the repeat portions, which are mainly warmed up left-overs from the last parliament. And reheating, Mr. Speaker, does not improve the ingredients. "Dialogue" has become one of the favourite words of the Prime Minister. Well, this speech from the throne is a dialogue in disillusionment to the Canadian people. It gives no indication and shows no intention of the government's desire to repair the disastrous errors of the last session; the blunder of its anti-American investment measures, or