

Interim Supply

we are without a leader. Right now the Prime Minister lets the Minister of National Defence push him around. The minister is bigger than the Prime Minister.

Mr. Hellyer: Nonsense.

Mr. Coates: Is it nonsense?

Mr. Hellyer: You heard the Prime Minister's statement yesterday. He is a strong man.

Mr. Coates: He is afraid of you, my friend. That is the trouble.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Coates: He has pulled the rug out from under quite a few cabinet ministers, but he is afraid of you. He thinks you will resign if he pulls the rug out from under you. That is what the Prime Minister is afraid of.

An hon. Member: Are you a mind reader?

Mr. Coates: I think the Prime Minister is right. I think this man will resign if he pulls the rug from under him. He is not the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. He is not the Minister of National Health and Welfare. He is not the Minister of Justice. He is a stubborn, arrogant man who thinks he is right; who thinks he has a divine right to give Canada a defence policy that nobody else will know anything about until it is implemented. We in the official opposition say he has no divine right to give this country a defence policy unless we first know about it, say something about it, and indicate in a constructive way what is good or not good about it.

We are going to stay here day and night if necessary, until we get our reasonable request.

Mr. Hellyer: It was conceived years ago, and now we are waiting for it to see the light of day.

Mr. Starr: Conceived where, in an incubator?

● (3:40 p.m.)

For all we knew during the last election campaign, which was only a year ago, none of these things were to happen. The minister was not talking about this ill-conceived plan of his during that election campaign. He was not talking about removing the word "royal" from everything he could get his hands on. Why was this so? Because they were losing votes right and left as it was, and he did not want to startle the Canadian people any further by talking about the defence policy which he and

his deputy assistant had managed to obtain in their deliberations, wherever they may have taken place.

We do not even know for how long this minister has been going forward along the path he has chosen or how far he has already taken us, because we cannot get information of this kind from him. All we are told by the minister is that he has a plan, the kind of plan everybody in Canada wants. When we urge him to tell us something about it, he says: "After you have given approval in principle, I will."

Mr. Hellyer: No, as soon as we start to deal with the bill.

Mr. Coates: Bring the bill on for debate with this minister? We would face closure before we had been talking two days, because he is a man who takes the same attitude in this house as the late C. D. Howe. He does not care for parliament. He cares for what he wants, and he intends to get what he wants even if he is running his own leader off the face of the map, and that is where we will run him if we have a general election.

One of the things I find hard to explain is how the Secretary of State for External Affairs could agree to leave Canada at this time, taking into account his position as one who may be the successor to a man who might as well leave because he does not really provide any leadership any more, anyway.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Coates: There is nothing shameful about that. Everyone in Canada knows that for three years he has been the worst Prime Minister this country has ever had as far as leadership is concerned. There has been one difficulty after another. And here we are in yet another difficulty. Why? Because the Prime Minister gives us no direction, because he allows parliament to be directed on courses which it should not have taken, because he ignores the priorities he pledged to the Canadian people.

This is the kind of Prime Minister we have. This is the reason we are in a mess right now. And if hon. members think we are in a mess now, think of what is coming up next Tuesday and Wednesday.

Mr. Hellyer: You will be making your speech at the Chateau Laurier.

Mr. Coates: The minister will sit there solidly in his determination to get his way no matter whether we have a general election or