

Official Languages

Canadian people to forget and forgive. Where was this policy regarding civil servants during those dark days? The minister, himself, I think had a considerably reduced majority. After all, there was no possibility of defeating him. That is what the augurs said about these other members, the two in Ottawa. Did they get any votes from the civil servants because of the damnable treatment that was handed them? Look at the record; look at the majorities here in the city of Ottawa; look at the majority in the neighbouring seat, Lanark. What happened? Men and women, whatever their Liberal past might have been, were determined that the Trudeau government must go.

● (1610)

What did the Prime Minister say at one time in 1972 while enunciating his basic principle? He said that you don't determine your timing, it is events that determine it for you. Was it the election result, where constituency after constituency across Canada was lost, which suddenly brought about that tremendous influence that produced the resolution in question? Sir, ever since the election the Prime Minister has exemplified Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. He could not understand what happened—"after all I am right". That was the attitude. Then this little coterie, or triumvirate, started in to recite that the reason for this resolution is the fact that the people did not understand. It was the harshness under the Language Act and the way it was administered that lost these seats.

Sir, this is brought before the House as a political dodge, a deliberate hoax. What are we to stand up and be counted on? Perhaps the Minister of Finance will tell me when in Canadian history, or in British parliamentary history either, a government ever asked the House of Commons to pass a resolution which is so totally ineffective concerning a statute that is a law of the country. There is not another example. After all, Machiavelli has become a must study in the circles of the upper echelons of the civil service.

Sir, the Prime Minister is asking us to give him absolution for the sins he has committed against the civil servants of this country. He is asking for that. The change has been tremendous. How do we account for it? Well, one time he explained—and I will use his exact words—"I always do the reverse of what others do". Some of you gentlemen who sit in opposition here were designated in 1968 as bums. Parliament was trampled on by that system of having ministers here one at a time, like cuckoos appearing in a cuckoo-clock. But suddenly reform came to him after the election. This reform was all across the board. Am I overstating it when I remember what Mr. Francis said after his majority of 7,300 votes in 1968 turned into a minority of 3,700? Who did he blame?

An hon. Member: The cuckoo.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Spontaneity is the essence of truthfulness. He blamed the government. What about the member for Grenville-Carleton, Mr. Gordon Blair? He had won by 2,468 votes and went down by 10,800 votes. Who did he blame? Well, he blamed him even before the election. Then, if you really want the gospel get in touch with Mr. Murray McBride. What he said about the people of his constituency ensured that he ought to have another place other than the pulpit or parliament. Now, he is in the Post

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

Office Department. That may account for some of the slowness in the mail. He got himself a position after condemning the government and also castigating his constituents. Virtue has its own reward. Even the present Minister of Finance began to express his doubts in July, 1970 about the language bill. He, Mr. Francis and Mr. Blair suddenly came to the conclusion that there was something that ought to be improved in the bilingualism program. One or other of them stated that it hurt many civil servants, but the Prime Minister stood firm and the election took place.

What a change; what a transfiguration! The monarchy damned, not only by him but by two or three other ministers—ridiculed. The Solicitor General introduced a motion in this House whereby the oath of allegiance to the Crown would be done away with for those who took Canadian citizenship. That was only a few months ago. Sir, watch them when Her Majesty comes. The Prime Minister will virtually be able to strut sitting down.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: What about the flag? We had two flags, according to Pickersgill. He also has a big pension now. When a motion was moved in the House that the Union Jack, as the second flag for the Commonwealth, should be placed alongside the Speaker's Throne who prevented it? The no's came from ministers of the Crown opposite.

Some hon. Members: No.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1620)

Mr. Diefenbaker: We are now asked to trust this government.

As to the Commonwealth, I can just see the Prime Minister in the month of August when the various members of the Commonwealth gather here. He will embrace the institution. In Singapore two years ago, when he was condemning Britain for her attitude in shipping arms under an agreement to South Africa, he said that Canada may find itself in the position of having to withdraw from the Commonwealth, as if he had any right to do such a thing. On wheat meat does Caesar feed? You would think that he could take the country out of the Commonwealth. But wait until August. "Already I have seen signs that the Commonwealth is a fairly good institution" he said. His words in New Delhi in January of 1971 were:

If enough nations withdraw from the Commonwealth over the South African arms issue a chain reaction will start that might force others to quit,—including Canada.

He comes to parliament with this innocuous piece of legislation. I guess you can describe it as nothing else but a piece of legislation. He says he trusts parliament. What happened when the Conservative members in 1968 joined in a Hallelujah chorus about the change of rules? We fought him on rule 16, and he withdrew it at the last moment, and then the day after he said that the Tories walked into a trap, and ever since then this parliament has been innocuous. "We are the masters of this chamber"—you remember the words?