

Supply—Justice

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, the Mercier report. I spoke of the Mercier report.

Mr. Cardin: Wait a minute—

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, that is what I spoke of, and the hon. minister twisted it.

Mr. Cardin: The right hon. Leader of the Opposition claimed there was a confidential report dealing with bankruptcy.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is right.

Mr. Cardin: He claimed that we had hidden it and that it was secret. He claimed if we had made it known we might possibly have avoided the crimes committed in Canada at that time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That statement is false.

Mr. Cardin: If it is false let me repeat what the hon. member said on October 6, 1965:

At a press conference, the Progressive Conservative Leader demanded the production of a report on bankruptcies—

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is the Mercier report.

Mr. Cardin: I continue quoting:
—to find out what has been hidden from parliament.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is right.

Mr. Cardin: I continue:

He said if the government had accepted his party's request in the Commons to release a special report on the administration of the Bankruptcy Act, "there would have been less possibility of such horrible crimes being committed."

Does the right hon. gentleman deny that?

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Mercier report.

Mr. Cardin: That is not the Mercier report.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is the Mercier report.

Mr. Cardin: Then why were you asking for that report in November when the Mercier report had been tabled when the hon. member was in the house?

Mr. Diefenbaker: No, no. That is not what Kierans said.

Mr. Cardin: Mr. Chairman, I deny now that there was a report. I deny that the right hon. gentleman was referring to the Mercier report. The Prime Minister denied that there was such a report. Then, however, our hero jumped into the act. The hon. member for Yukon said, "There is such a report."

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Mercier report.

Mr. Cardin: On October 7 in the *Ottawa Journal* this report appeared:

Erik Nielsen, Conservative M.P. for the Yukon, jumped into the affair today by insisting that there is a hidden federal report on bankruptcies. Mr. Nielsen who touched off the Dorion inquiry—

And so on, and so on. But he suggests that there was a report. What happened? He went to see the press. He produced a series of documentary files and said, "This is the report that the right hon. Leader of the Opposition was talking about". It was said that if it had been tabled in the house we would have stopped all these murders which have been committed in Quebec.

Well, there were reports. They were the reports from the trustees to the superintendent of bankruptcy in a particular case. They were routine reports. But members of the right hon. gentleman's party would not stop. They kept hammering away at this until finally I said, "All right. If you want to have those files I will allow the right hon. gentleman to see them." I would have allowed any former minister of justice to see them also. Nobody took me up on that offer. It was claimed that that type of strategy in the house is absolutely unacceptable. Later, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. Nielsen: Will the minister permit a question?

Mr. Cardin: Can you wait for a moment? I have spoken for a long time and I am tired.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The minister runs away from questions.

Mr. Cardin: I will answer them later. You have no right to force me to answer.

Mr. Churchill: You might say you are afraid to answer them.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The little Caesar will not answer.

Mr. Cardin: Let us go on. I continue quoting from the *Globe and Mail* of October 12:

Mr. Diefenbaker made the Quebec bankruptcy frauds an election issue last week by suggesting that the government had a hidden report on which it had failed to act.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is right.

Mr. Cardin: I continue:

When Justice Minister Lucien Cardin offered to let him inspect the documents in the Sefkind case—the only specific case he had mentioned—Mr. Diefenbaker said it was an attempt to seal his lips because his Privy Council oath would prevent him from disclosing what he found out.

He demanded also production of what he described as a report from the Quebec government to Ottawa on the bankruptcy frauds.