

The Address—Mr. Cossitt

trend began shortly after this government took office in 1968 with that great contribution by the Prime Minister when he travelled all the way to London to accomplish the daring feat of sliding down a bannister.

Then came that blue day in October, 1972, which so terrified the Prime Minister that he grabbed the nearest Union Jack and rushed off to London again. In a show of hypocrisy unequalled in the history of Canada he became overnight a confirmed and ardent monarchist. We have watched an unparalleled display of political expediency since then, as he has slyly displayed himself at every opportunity with outward expressions of loyalty and devotion to the royal family. Such rapid adjustments to fit any situation are hardly surprising to those who have examined the situation in any depth.

It is a very clear fact that we have a government that long ago threw out the window what few principles it had left in favour of doing anything to retain power. That is basically why so many of us left the Liberal party, and that is also why so many who still remain in the Liberal party, despite what they may say or may have to say in public, do not rest easy in their minds. Why should those on the other side of this House rest easy? After all, was it not their present leader who wrote these very words about them in April, 1963: "What idiots they all are". Can they rest easy when they remember that their present leader once referred to them as "the spineless Liberal herd", that he once wrote that the Liberal Party "has never been anything more than a syndicate of the private interests" and that he called the late Prime Minister Pearson such things as "Pope Pearson", "The unfrocked priest of peace"? Can they rest easy when they recall that their present leader urged Canadians to vote NDP while shortly thereafter he was engaged in a manoeuvre that took over the Liberal Party and placed him on Sussex Drive?

● (1550)

And above all, can Canadians as a whole rest easy with a government that can suddenly change its direction as quickly as a chameleon changes colour, a government headed by a Prime Minister who has made very clear that he seeks to master the art of jumping on a horse and rushing off in absolutely every direction at the same time if such will help him stay in office. But despite the government's many window dressing twists and turns since that near disaster of October 1972, it has really not succeeded in hiding its underlying motivation. Despite the fact that the government dressed itself in sackcloth and ashes and the Prime Minister has played his Uriah Heap repentance act to the full, nevertheless the spots of the leopard have in no way really changed.

This is a government impatient with the democratic process, a government with little respect for Parliament. It is an autocratic government so influenced by the technocrats and the eggheads both in it and around it in key positions that it is totally incapable of caring for the problems of individual Canadians. Lost in the heartless mentality of the computer, it does not worry very much about the man who is unemployed. It is not very deeply concerned about inadequate pensions being received by the elderly. It shows no feeling for those on low incomes who can scarcely carry on in the face of the staggering rises in the cost of living. And if ever there was a single

incident that clearly showed me how little this government really cares about individual people, it was the case of Ronald Patrick Lippert, a Canadian who was allowed to stay forgotten in a Cuban jail for ten years and to whom the Prime Minister consistently refused to give assistance despite hundreds of requests from all parts of Canada, in particular requests from Mr. Lippert's 80-year old mother who was not well and who longed for a chance to see her son once again. In all the time that I was connected with the Lippert case, I could never understand the incredible and incomprehensible callousness displayed by the government, and particularly by the Prime Minister, toward this man. Persons with any sense of humanity could never have behaved as those in the government did, who were associated with the Lippert case.

The impatience of this government with the democratic process has been amply demonstrated by its attitude toward opposition questions, especially questions placed on the order paper of the House of Commons. In the last few months there has been an obvious effort on the part of the government to discourage such questions. Apparently any questioning is a part of the democratic process that this government wishes did not exist. We have all seen the reaction that occurs when an opposition member draws attention to questions unanswered for a long period of time. We are immediately greeted with loud boasts from the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Reid) about the fantastic percentage of the total questions that have been answered by the government. These boasts, however, have recently been followed by the sinister suggestion that answering opposition questions is too costly with the very obvious threat that those of us placing questions on the order paper had better watch out or we would be branded as squandering the taxpayers money.

I realize this particular government is composed of experts on the subject of squandering taxpayer's money but it has now become quite clear that it has developed into an expert on something else as well, namely the latest methods of stifling legitimate democratic opposition. A few weeks ago the Canadian Press news service carried a report attributed in part to the hon. member for Kenora-Rainy River (Mr. Reid) stating that the average cost of answering an order paper question is \$3,000 to \$5,000. The report then went on to say that one question even cost \$75,000 to answer, an obvious attempt by this government to smear by innuendo all members of the opposition who ask questions. This is probably the most questionable government Canada has ever had, so no wonder it tries to stop any penetrating examination by members of the opposition. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the cost figures put out by the government through the lips of the member for Kenora-Rainy River, alias "Dr. No", are nothing more than absolute hogwash. The \$9 million total cost figure for the last session is the best baloney sliced in this country in a long time.

Sometime ago I placed questions on the order paper requesting details about those big, fat political pork barrel expenditures of public funds in the form of government advertising contracts, millions and millions of dollars being shamefully shovelled out by this government to its friends in the advertising agency business without the calling of public tenders or the obtaining of competitive