

Withholding of Grain Payments

them, but I have come to the conclusion that the very best quote I could get is one from Lewis Carroll. When Alice asked Humpty Dumpty a question he, very irrelevantly but perhaps significantly, replied: "The question is who is master". I think that that is what is the problem, this recurring excess of the executive in this country, the present executive, over the people of this country and the people's representatives in this chamber. The problem is who is to be master, and it is the eternally burning question in a democracy. Who is master? Is it the people and those who represent the people or is it someone who has temporarily the keys to the administration? That is what we must ask ourselves. It was long ago that that great man said: "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty". That question is more pertinent and more portentous today than it ever was, Sir. Lord Bryce wrote in a great classic "Modern Democracies":

Liberty is a good thing, because it develops the character of the individual, and conduces to the welfare of the community. When one man, or a few men, rule over others, some of the subjects are sure to resent control and rebel against it, troubling the general peace. No one is good enough to be trusted with unlimited power. Unless he be a saint—perhaps even if he be a saint—he is sure to abuse it.

● (12:00 midnight)

Although I am as kindly as I can be to a former academic, I am not going to canonize him tonight. We are living in a time when the people's representatives, the House of Commons, in the eyes of the executive are becoming less and less important and irrelevant. Indeed the chief of the executive asks, and indeed he does not ask, he declares—he does not go in much for asking—they are nobodies. So, we have to be eternally watchful, eternally assertive.

Do I hear the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal from Calgary South? If he would de-orchestrate himself and take his turn in the debate it might be amusing if not revealing.

But where is the role of the House of Commons here? Why is the House of Commons important? There is only one answer, as there has always been only one answer down through the history of parliamentary democracy. It is because we represent the people. Before there was responsible government, before there was an administrative procedure for responsible government, there had to be a representative democracy, and we are here because collectively we represent the people of this country. And this why this is a very important evening. Because the regular routine has been set aside, and the people's representatives are here on a matter of great concern to the people. And they are not nobodies. When we forget that representative democracy and the representative aspect of our whole system are the keystone of our democratic system, then we are in great danger of sliding down the path that some would love to push us down. I am glad that there are many vigorous people tonight who have resisted this terrible tendency.

Tonight the minister said certain sharp things. I think he is basically a more polite man than his master, the Prime Minister. He did not call us nobodies, but he said some things that were a bit disturbing. I wrote down his

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

expression "prospective implementation of an act"—something we are going to do in the future.

The Canadian people were told some many months ago about participatory democracy, but tonight we have anticipatory autocracy—"We, the executive, are going to do something. We have said so. Perhaps next year, perhaps next session. We have said we are going to do it, and so the law of the land is unimportant because we have declared that something is going to be different." Seemingly the body that makes that intention law, the Parliament, is not a factor at all, and so you get back to the nobody syndrome. This is the great problem in this country today. This is why it is terribly important that lovers of liberty get across to the people of this country the great danger the country is facing in this kind of arrogant, autocratic attitude towards the dispatch of public business.

Then, I heard the minister later in his speech speaking about taking short cuts to do certain things. How many times has liberty been set aside by the efficient tyrant? "Don't worry about the laws. Get it done, because the processes of democracy and discussion are too slow." So, you cut through them; you tear them down. Then, he revealed himself I think a little more clearly later on when he was discussing the opposition. I heard him use these words, "they kept saying it for three days." How outrageous, how terrible for people representing the Canadian populace to dare to talk for three days on a measure which he and his colleagues have declared is coming into law! Even before a bill becomes law, they are acting as if the law does not exist.

Mr. Lang: It is a different law.

Mr. Macquarrie: You had your chance to defend yourself.

Mr. Lang: Just get your facts right. I don't mind your pomposity but just get your facts straight.

Mr. Macquarrie: Mr. Speaker, if this incompetent minister wishes to ask me questions, he can do so when I have finished. He made a tremendous fiasco of his speech and he is not going to assist me to do the same thing. He is the colleague of some ministers who, because they did not like the word "dominion" called it something else even though they have not mustered up the initiative to have the House of Commons deal with the statute to declare that a certain day is not Dominion Day. In other words, if the law is embarrassing, circumvent it. But we are supposed to be law-makers, not law-breakers. Is it not the ultimate irony that we become law-breakers? We are here because we are law-makers. But the government's motto is "To Hell with the law, it is our will that prevails".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macquarrie: This minister, in a more happy environment, used to write books, as some of us do. He edited one, and I will just read the first sentence: "Justice in Canada is administered in accordance with the law".