

Business of the House

Mr. Diefenbaker: In 1956 I saw the ministers ridicule the opposition. I saw the members supporting the government treat us derisively and contemptuously as they are doing today. Ridicule was heaped on the opposition for daring to say the government had not permitted discussion. Today we are dealing with a matter involving personal income, capital gains, taxing of corporations and shareholders, taxing of mining and petroleum industries, business and property income, international income and taxation of farmers. The government does not know where it is going. Otherwise, you would not have produced all these amendments. You do not want discussion. You have a majority in Parliament and you can trample on Parliament.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I say to the Prime Minister, you can trample on Parliament, but today you only have 40 per cent of the people of Canada who believe in you.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Let me tell you this, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Prime Minister points. He usually thumbs.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I apologize to the right hon. member. Perhaps I should not interrupt him, but I am wondering whether he has been addressing his opposition more than the Chair. He has been using the pronoun "you". I do not know whether that is strictly rhetorical. Perhaps he might address the Chair rather than members on the opposite side of the House.

Mr. Diefenbaker: This House can be turned into an institution of fuddy-duddies. As far as I am concerned, it is not going to be.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I say to the Prime Minister that this is proper debating because I necessarily say it through Your Honour to him. I do not direct it to him. There are only ten minutes available.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Is it because of the fear of argument that they hoot across the way? I remember the immortal words of the Prime Minister in 1968. He said, "We are your masters". Oh, yes.

An hon. Member: That was in 1963.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The hon. member is so far behind that he does not realize we were defeated in the House in 1963.

An hon. Member: November, 1962.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Constitutionally, we resigned. However, when the Pearson government was defeated in 1968 it stayed on.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bell: Just like Joey.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Prime Minister has treated this institution with the most supreme contempt that I have ever seen shown to the Parliament of Canada in all my life.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Those who sit behind the Prime Minister applaud. They hear their master's voice.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: The degree of the decibels indicates that I have gotten under their hides, if I may use that expression. This is a serious occasion for Parliament. It is being treated as the pawn of the Prime Minister. Over and over again he has left the House when criticized. Only a few days ago he walked out of a press debate in Halifax. He said, "Let's go home." The Prime Minister's place is to take part in the major debates in Parliament. In the entire period he has been in office he has not spoken more than two or three times.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Five.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Prime Minister is correcting me. He says "five". I think there is a little multiplication there.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: How is Parliament being treated? This is a bill that very few people can understand. There are sections that are completely incomprehensible. They might as well be in Sanskrit. Nobody can understand them. The government cannot. Instead of having a minister pilot the bill, the government has a parliamentary secretary doing so.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Diefenbaker: I hope Your Honour is watching the time. This type of interruption reduces one's opportunity to speak. That is the reason it is done. It is an irresponsible course. The parliamentary secretary has no responsibility. He cannot speak for the government. If he could, the hon. member for York East (Mr. Otto) would have been speaking for the government the other day when he spoke of the dastardly mess the economy of Canada is in because of this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (3:20 p.m.)

Mr. Diefenbaker: Parliamentary secretaries, however able they may be, cannot pilot bills before Parliament. That is a rule that has been upheld all through the years. It is something which has been swept aside by this government. The Prime Minister once before had a moment of forgetfulness. He forgot his age. That was selective forgetfulness, but the other day he had so many parliamentary secretaries that he forgot he only had authority for 27 and appointed 28. With great pride he brought them before the