

Procedure and Organization

Mr. MacInnis: Of course, the Prime Minister's trip out west may accomplish something. It may make amends for his derogatory remarks about the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Richardson) who accompanied him west. When I refer to them as derogatory remarks, there is no question that they were because the Prime Minister belittled the minister. If the Minister of Supply and Services had the intestinal fortitude to which I referred earlier this evening he would not follow the Prime Minister. The derogatory remarks to which I refer may be found in the *Globe and Mail* of last December. As reported in that newspaper, the Prime Minister said:

Sure I believe that you should have somebody better, but you didn't elect him.

The Prime Minister was referring to the Minister of Supply and Services. He appointed this man to his cabinet, and having done so had the audacity, carelessness and disregard for the minister to refer to him as the Minister without Portfolio, despite the fact he had given him a portfolio several weeks earlier. This demonstrates the careless attitude of the Prime Minister toward his ministers and parliament generally.

• (8:10 p.m.)

In the Prime Minister's absence a sub-amendment, which was ruled out of order, was brought before the house. It was clear, if one read that subamendment, that the government was prepared to make concessions. Perhaps it is a good thing the Prime Minister is absent. Perhaps goodwill will once again prevail in his absence. Perhaps when he returns he can be prevailed upon to abandon the roster system and to allow cabinet ministers to attend during the question period. Often fewer than half our cabinet ministers are present for the question period. The Prime Minister's presence does not make up for their absence, nor is it a case as in 1951 that a certain cabinet minister, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) together constitute the government. They may think so but we do not. I also hope that the government will consider seriously rectifying the serious wrongs Cape Breton miners have suffered as a result of legislation passed by this house. The government itself must rectify these wrongs. It is no use looking to the Minister for Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) in the hope that he will correct what is wrong. If one pays attention to rumours flying about one may hear that he is not nearly so interested

in his portfolio as in the idea that he may succeed Jean Lesage as Liberal leader in Quebec. Some say the minister wants to become premier of Quebec.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but I wish to remind him that we are dealing with the report of the standing committee.

Mr. Gibson: Hear, hear.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The rules of relevancy demand that so far as possible, hon. members restrict their remarks to the subject being considered. I invite the hon. member to do so.

Mr. MacInnis: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be responsible for having the hon. member for Hamilton-Wentworth (Mr. Gibson) break his hands in pounding the desk. He ought to keep quiet. After all he is deviating from his orders to keep quiet. The Liberal backbenchers have been marvellously silent recently, presumably because the government has told them to keep quiet.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacInnis: It is not their fault their Prime Minister called them bums and idiots. Yes, Mr. Speaker; the Prime Minister called them that. And who are they to take exception to what the Prime Minister said about them. It is he who said they are bums and idiots, not we.

Proposed rule 75c should not be included in our rules because it will apply to government backbenchers as well as to members of the opposition. You know, Mr. Speaker, it is not often that I have defended Liberals, but I did so on one occasion when I said that, surely to goodness no one in his right mind would countenance what has been done to the Cape Breton miners. I was defending Liberals then. I say to hon. members opposite that it is about time they kicked over the traces in caucus and stood up like independent men. I shall be listening to their whispers in elevators and coffee shops and I shall be waiting to hear them say, "we said to our house leader in caucus that we are going to stand up and be independent; we are going to rectify what is wrong here." We need hon. members to be independent. Hon. members opposite ought to tell the government house leader that they are not prepared to do the damage to parliament that has been attempted in these last two weeks.