

*Interim Supply*

there is a paragraph about the unbiased nature of C.B.C. news coverage. There is also a paragraph pointing out that the common parlance of today calls the cabinet the government.

As a member of the Liberal party and quite evidently not a member of the government, I should like to emphasize that when the cabinet makes announcements that the government is going to do this, and that the government is going to do that, it nettles Liberal workers from coast to coast, who in many cases want to know whether the Liberal member for their local constituency has agreed to such statement on the part of the government. I am pointing out here as plainly as I can that in the majority of cases the Liberal member does not know anything about these so-called government announcements until he reads them.

● (9:40 p.m.)

In my opinion nothing is the matter with the word "cabinet". It is not like "cabal" which has a derogatory significance and intimates some sort of crookedness. Why can't the ministry use the word that has always been quite straightforward. Why does the government not say: "The cabinet suggests this", "the cabinet is thinking of doing this" "the cabinet is thinking of doing that"? Or, do they not want the public to think that the cabinet has to ask permission from anybody for anything? Do they want to create the impression that they are all-powerful, beholden to no one, and that when they make an announcement it is like the law of the Medes and the Persians, subject to no change, not even by Liberals who might have been elected on the basis of the overthrow of the former government.

I did not mean to take part in the discussion on interim supply tonight but I felt that if I did not rise today and comment about some announcements which have been made in the name of the cabinet, the country as a whole might come to the conclusion that every Liberal in the country had acquiesced in those policy statements which have been issued, since no voice had been raised in protest. The longer the silence the more will be the uproar when in future, some objection is taken to a so-called government announcement.

I could give a few instances of these so-called government announcements, but tonight I shall only speak on two, and I shall refer to the subjects of abortion and this new system of honours and awards for Canada.

[Mr. Cowan.]

I have been a member of the Liberal party all my life and some people resent that I intend to die a Liberal—and I do not mean to die in the near future. I would point out that as a Liberal I have attended every Liberal party convention since 1921. You might say that in 1921 I was a minor; I was 19 years old, but I was a newspaper reporter; and if I was not voting at least I had a seat at the press table. I have attended every Liberal convention nationally, and in Ontario, provincially, from that time. I have attended 90 per cent of the caucus meetings since election, five years ago this June, and I have an idea of the thinking and the discussion going on at these affairs.

You will remember that last October we had a big hoop-la at the Chateau Laurier which was announced as the national Liberal party policy convention. All the time it was policy, policy, policy—all the way last October at the Chateau Laurier. I remember some fine westerners coming from British Columbia—the finest delegation in the entire convention—and they had a resolution on free trade which swept the Liberal convention at the Chateau Laurier. I was there when they carried the vote in committee; I was there when they carried it in the general plenary meeting of the Liberal party. The British Columbian men and women were very happy with the great acceptance of their idea of free trade between Canada and the North American continent.

That was the policy convention of the Liberal party, you may remember. It was advertised that way and reported that way. And you may recall that a few days later a voice came down from on high—and I do not mean from heaven; I mean from the top of parliament hill, which is higher than the Chateau Laurier—and it said: "You know, boys and girls, a policy convention is all right. After all, boys and girls get together, and they meet in halls and banquets. These do's are billed as policy conventions—but we will talk about that later on. Do not take it too seriously." This is how certain people would like to handle policy, even though those at the convention think they are making policy for the Liberal party.

In the *Globe and Mail* for Monday, April 24, 1967, there is a report of a policy convention which was held by the Liberal party for the province of Ontario in the Royal York Hotel, Toronto. In the same edition there is a fine report of the nomination of Joe Potts, past President of the Toronto and Yorks Liberal Association, who will contest St.