

Mr. POULIOT:—I will go on with modern history.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Not for too long, I hope.

Mr. POULIOT: I suggested also that the Prime Minister should drop the portfolio of external affairs, and I gave the reason why. He was dissatisfied with his trip to Europe. Whether it was in the spring or fall of 1946, I do not remember exactly; I know it was in 1946. He said that when he was in Europe he could not think of anything other than European affairs. That was a statement which surprised me greatly, because when I returned to Canada from England some years ago and saw over the hill the spire of St. Paul de la Croix in my constituency, I was moved to tears because I was coming back home. But impressions may be different. I understand that one may be taken up by the atmosphere of Europe, especially in certain circumstances, to the point of forgetting Canada. But I was greatly surprised.

There was something else, however. Now I remember that the Prime Minister landed in Canada on the day of the prorogation of the session in 1946; it was around August 30 or September 1. But my speech was made on August 28, 1946. I remember what was said by the Prime Minister on this occasion; and I remember the reports in the press. I told him that he should have resigned before his trip, because if he had not gone to Paris, and if someone else had gone in his stead, everyone would have said how unfortunate it was that Mr. King was not there, and that if he had been there he would have settled the question. That is an observation which I was not alone in making. It was made by all those whom I met around that time.

What happened? I represent a constituency of lower Quebec, but when I speak like this I speak respectfully and sincerely. I am sure the Prime Minister realized that such were my feelings, because as soon as he landed on Canadian soil he hastened to transfer the heavy burden of external affairs to the present minister, following the suggestion I made. It was not advice; it is not for me to give advice to my chief, but on my advice that he should drop that portfolio, he did so. He was relieved of a great burden, which was assumed by the present Secretary of State for External Affairs.

But, sir, there are other things. The Prime Minister is still the first minister, is still the president of the privy council, is still the big boss. I remember when I was first elected when I felt secure within the party because the party was doing nothing that was not sub-

[Mr. Knowles.]

mitted to and approved by the caucus. No policy was enunciated until it had been approved by the party rank and file. This gave a feeling of confidence. Then, as I have said before in the house, I had the comfort I feel when I go to sleep on the train. I rely upon the crew of the train. I do not think of the crew, but I go to bed and to sleep. Then I was trusting the party entirely, because it was consulting members of parliament who were responsible for the policy of the party.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: What has this to do with the item?

Mr. POULIOT: Those were the olden times. Perhaps the ministers were not all as bright as those we have now, but they were all stalwarts who had the old parliamentary tradition; men like George P. Graham, Ned Macdonald and others who were around the Prime Minister. Then the Prime Minister did nothing without consulting them, and always he was consulting the party. I knew then the decision of the party was the decision of the majority.

Since then, because of a change in government in 1930 and due to war conditions, things have been different. For eighteen years I have been miserable, and I do not want to be miserable for another eighteen years. I do not want my son to be miserable when he reaches his majority; and I do not want future generations to be miserable. I want responsible government.

Mr. BENTLEY: You do not care about this generation?

Mr. POULIOT: Well, our days are past.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. We have before the committee at the moment an item which has to do with the salaries of staff and other pay list items, amounting to \$93,972.

Mr. POULIOT: Yes, sir. I regret very much to have to say this, but I have been waiting for eighteen years to do so. I do not want to be unpleasant, but I have a duty to perform and I intend to perform it. I am speaking of the relations that should exist between the Prime Minister and his supporters in the House of Commons.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order. The salary of the Prime Minister is not included in this item, and I think we should keep to the item which is before the committee.

Mr. POULIOT: Yes, sir, and I shall keep to the item. I have the greatest respect for the Chair, and I am not doing this to satisfy any rancour, because I have none, nor am I doing it to be disrespectful. I do it in the hope that the next prime minister will adopt a different attitude with regard to members of