

*Refitting of HMCS "Bonaventure"*

clear in his intervention in the debate this afternoon. This is the ultimate responsibility for the acts of those who served under him. Having acquired knowledge of this matter, the minister failed to act appropriately and failed to institute inquiries into the procedures being followed. I think he is perfectly aware of what I am talking about. The tradition of ministers accepting responsibility for the acts of their subordinates is clear. I could refer Your Honour, for example, to the debates which brought about the establishment, in large measure, of the civil service as we understand it.

I will not allude to what happened in 1909 and the debates that led up to the formation of the modern civil service because I am sure that in his reading the minister has come across them. I am sure he is aware of the traditions and practices of the British House. What is important here is that having been made aware of the situation, the minister failed to do anything about it. Since then the government has failed to correct the situation. The minister in no way this afternoon addressed himself to his omission. He in no way lent the traditional protection to those who served under him. He owes them that protection. In no way did he do anything to protect or reassure senior civil service officials that they would not be casually "docked" if someone bothered to look at their records.

An examination of this particular case reveals some pretty glaring misadventures. I have no sympathy for those who act wrongly while in the service of others. When such people are in positions of high trust, the offence is all the more glaring. As I say, I have no sympathy for such people, although I have sympathy for those who in certain circumstances might be charged with wrongful acts but are completely innocent.

Whether the minister wants to accept responsibility is neither here nor there. The minister has failed to give people who must work in the service day after day an opportunity to defend themselves against the direct or implied charges that have arisen from the report of the Standing Committee. The committee urged the government to take immediate action. It has been suggested that an inquiry is now in process. It may or may not be in process. The minister did not answer that question this afternoon, but left it hanging. Not only did he leave it hanging; he saw fit to treat in a callous and casual way another minister by implying that the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Cadieux) is the minis-

[Mr. Forrestall.]

ter who knows most about this matter. If that is so, perhaps the former Minister of National Defence ought to share the responsibility for what has happened.

At any rate, the President of the Treasury Board casually said this afternoon, "I did not have anything to do with this, really. The present minister will have to answer." I do not see either of those ministers or their representatives here this evening. Perhaps they are here and we shall obtain some answers. This motion is not directed against the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Richardson) or the Minister of National Defence.

The President of the Treasury Board cannot avoid his direct responsibilities in this matter, as he tried to do this afternoon. He cannot say that he was not responsible for acting in connection with something that happened a few years ago. He did nothing. Indeed, he chose to leave the matter to a committee of this House which after a fairly thorough investigation found it necessary to be highly critical of procedures followed by public servants who were instrumental in awarding contracts under which tax moneys of the Canadian people were spent. I therefore wish to move an amendment to the motion, seconded by the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North (Mr. Coates). I should like to address myself to argument in support of this amendment. First may I read the motion and then discuss it. I move—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. Before the hon. member proposes to amend the motion I must bring to the attention of the House that the hon. member is the seconder of the motion and obviously cannot amend his own motion unless he has the unanimous agreement of the House, which apparently is not forthcoming.

**Mr. Drury:** No, it is not.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member cannot amend his own motion. The hon. member will have to request one of his colleagues to move it, if the amendment is to be moved later this evening in the course of debate.

• (8:20 p.m.)

**Mr. Forrestall:** I accept that ruling, Mr. Speaker. I say that with deference to Your Honour. I do not know which rule of the House states that I cannot move an amendment to a motion which I have seconded. Undoubtedly there is such a rule. I have no hesitation in accepting Your Honour's ruling.