

no trouble about their friends behind them forcing it through Parliament, and they could divide it up between them. That would show they had some manhood about them, instead of leaving the boys at the front exposed to death and danger, while they were squabbling over matters here. The hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce told us the other day that voluntary recruiting failed. If it failed, these are the hurdles on which it stumbled. The Minister of Trade and Commerce has never given us any explanation, and he is responsible for these things, just as much as any other minister of the Cabinet. So far, we have heard no word of explanation from him or anybody else. The ex-minister told us yesterday that it was a heresy, a doctrine that could not be sustained in this country, that one minister was responsible for the conduct of another, and that it was busy-body practice on the part of a minister to interfere with another minister. That is not the constitution of this country. That is not the responsibility which is regarded in this country as devolving upon ministers. The ministers are themselves responsible.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Hear, hear.

Mr. McKENZIE: And the one is answerable to the other, and they are all answerable for the conduct of the Government. But yesterday we heard from the ex-minister this pernicious doctrine pronounced, and there was not a murmur of dissent from any gentleman on the Government benches. They accepted that proposition as being all right. I think they were so thoroughly scared of the hon. gentleman who has left the Cabinet that he can say what he likes and kick just as much as he pleases. Nobody will answer him, but they allow his statements to go unchallenged, all of them praying: Lord be merciful to us, because we have all sinned, and come short of thy glory, and if we allow the statements of this gentleman to pass without saying anything to him, it is possible he may leave us alone. That is the only reason I can advance why, when such a pernicious doctrine as that was propounded, that a minister had to be king of his own department and, that he could do just as he pleased, no answer was made to him. If the ex-Minister of Militia could have done as he pleased those four months of expensive and painful waiting would have been saved, and the men would have been sent to the front. But this pernicious system of mutual responsibility of members of the Government stood in his way, and, as far

[Mr. McKenzie.]

as I could see, every man on the Government benches said, amen.

These are matters which, as far as partnership is concerned, I desire to bring to the attention of the hon. gentleman who now leads the House (Sir George Foster). I am sure that hon. gentleman is not without influence in the cabinet. We are now in the midst of the war, and if those things were bad, if those blunders have been made, and if we have paid dearly for them, and are suffering on that account, there is certainly no logical reason why they should be continued.

Even at this fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour we ask the minister who is leading the House to take this matter in hand, to use his influence to prevent graft and to do away with the abuses resulting from political patronage. He told us long ago that these things were pernicious, that they were poisoning the very body politic of our country. Let him now see that everybody is treated fairly; that the cleavage which has taken place among the great masses of the people be done away with; that every man who wishes to join the military forces may realize that whether he is Grit or Tory he has friends in the Cabinet who will stand by him and give him a square deal. If all persons were treated on an equal basis things would be very different from what they are to-day.

You may ask me, Mr. Speaker, what is my authority for saying that partisanship has been rife. My authority is my own knowledge and my own eyes. In the counties of Cape Breton and Victoria we had and still have a battalion known as the 94th Highlanders. Though that battalion has not been asked to go to the front, it has been the means of organizing and training over 600 men who have gone to the front, some of whom have since died, many of whom are bravely serving their country in France and Flanders. That battalion was in charge of its old officers, Colonel McRae, Major Gillies, and Major McLean, first-class military men. A year ago or so, when the ex-Minister of Militia went to the county of Cape Breton he made a tour of those camps, accompanied by a couple of Tory spies. Of course, he was given the secret sign as to who was Grit and who was Tory. He was told that Major Gillies was a Grit, that Major McLean was a Grit; that Colonel McRae was not just as docile as he should be; that he was exercising some little will of his own; that he was not discharging men as he was asked to discharge them and that he would not take on some