

*Refitting of HMCS "Bonaventure"*

the House to read them. The hon. member also referred to some excerpts from the Glassco Commission report. I shall take time to read only one excerpt from the Glassco Commission report in order to demonstrate the fact that the principle of ministerial responsibility is completely entrenched in our parliamentary system. If we do not continue with a system of parliamentary responsibility, and if ministers try to slough off responsibility to deputy ministers or officials, our system will fall to the ground and we will be left with practically nothing. This is my great objection to the position of the government to this date. I have really heard nothing in this debate in respect of ministers saying, "I will take the responsibility".

**Mr. MacEwan:** They haven't got the guts.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** How can the hon. member say he has heard nothing in this debate, when he accepts that he has been absent for most of it?

**Mr. Harkness:** I did not hear what the minister said.

**Mr. Hees:** He had an attack of wind.

**Mr. Harkness:** I shall return to the Glassco Commission report in respect of the conduct of government in this country, under the heading "Political Accountability of the Executive Branch". I shall quote from page 32.

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** What volume?

**Mr. Harkness:** Volume 1. You do not need to think that I do not know what I am talking about.

**Mr. Hees:** He is beginning to realize that you know very well what you are talking about.

**Mr. Harkness:** The Glassco Commission report states:

Concurrently with the development of the "public" service concept, it has become established that direct accountability to Parliament and to the public is imposed only on ministers.

I repeat, "only on ministers".

Public servants continue to be answerable for their honesty and competence to their ministers, through the ascending scale of their departments, but they bear none of the political consequences of their acts.

They also do not bear any of the financial consequences of their acts. In other words, under our system the ministers are responsi-

ble for all the mistakes made by members of their departments. If they are honest about it, they must come into the House of Commons and accept that responsibility. As a matter of fact, if the situation is bad enough they should resign.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale):** What did you do in 1963?

**Mr. Crouse:** At least he had integrity.

● (9:00 p.m.)

**Mr. Harkness:** I followed my furrow in 1963, and I only wish that a lot of members of the present government had done the same thing subsequently. But they have not.

**Mr. Hees:** Thanks for the straight line.

**Mr. Crouse:** There is no integrity on that side of the House.

**Mr. Harkness:** Undoubtedly the general situation is this, that an attempt has been made, so far as the government is concerned in this case, to shuffle off their responsibility to deputy ministers and to other lesser civil servants, serving officers and people along that line. I do not think that this is going to wash with the Canadian public, nor do I think it has washed with this Parliament. The government has a subservient majority. I have no doubt that if this matter came to a vote—as it happens it is not going to come to a vote because today does not happen to be a voting day—the government side would carry the vote. There is no question about that because, as I say, they have a subservient majority. But if the people constituting the members of this assembly were asked, on a sort of secret ballot, to indicate what they thought in connection with this matter, I have not the slightest doubt what the verdict would be. I do not expect the Liberal members supporting the present government to get up—as they would if they were independent in their views, but they are not—and condemn the government. As I said earlier, it would be too much to expect that to be the case.

**Mr. Woolliams:** They only do that in caucus.

**Mr. McKinley:** Once a month, for three minutes.

**Mr. Harkness:** Nevertheless, the basic issue in this whole matter is ministerial responsibility. I am very much afraid that if the