

*Supply—Privy Council*

myself, why there is all this fuss about this new measure, the roster of attendance for ministers. I have listened particularly to the observations of the opposition house leader. I listened to him very carefully as I have done in the past because he is an hon. gentleman for whom I have a good deal of respect. It struck me that he asked for the cooperation of the government. He suggested there might be ways and means by which to find a reasonable arrangement. I believe that is exactly what the Prime Minister asked in proposing this measure to the house. He asked for the co-operation of the opposition during a trial period of a few weeks or a few months, whatever the period is.

I should like to remind my friends on the other side that co-operation should work both ways. I do not believe that the opposition has co-operated in the last two weeks. They have been systematically shooting down absent ministers. They know the reason the Minister of Transport, for instance, is not here. They know because they read the newspapers. They have been shooting at the Minister of Transport more often than he would ordinarily have been shot at. I suggest that the members of the opposition should look both ways. Even if it should be true that the members of the opposition might have been more fully consulted, I should like to remind them of the saying of a United States president that to the victor belong the spoils.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Hees:** You are the master and will do what you wish because you have the votes.

**Mr. Mongrain:** I know it hurts. I know how much it hurts because I have lost a few elections myself.

**Mr. Nowlan:** Would you have been a victor this time as an independent?

**Mr. Mongrain:** Although I do not wish to be repetitious, I should like to remind members of the opposition that to the victor should at least belong some kind of leeway in administering this country because it is its responsibility. It is very easy for the opposition to criticize the government because the opposition does not have the responsibility to administer this country under present circumstances. The government, therefore, must be granted some kind of leeway somewhere. I think this is reasonable.

I have done some research. I have gone through *Hansard* over a period of several

years, especially during the period when a Conservative government was in power. I thought I would find there a demonstration that their ministers in those days gave very precise answers on all occasions and that their attendance was near perfection. Well, I must say my observation is that the ministers in those days most of the time gave vague answers to the questions. Not only did they frequently not answer the questions, they frequently said that they wished to study the question before attempting to answer it. I might add that my research indicates that these ministers also were absent.

I believe that if the opposition had co-operated during the last two weeks we would have experienced a lot less difficulty. Even if I were to adopt the point of view of the members of the opposition that they should have been consulted further, it is a fact that this measure is now in effect. Therefore I believe it is only reasonable that the opposition should co-operate in respect of this measure and, if it does not work properly, we on this side of the house will be the first to find another reasonable arrangement. The opposition during the past two weeks has not co-operated and now is asking for co-operation. I suggest that this should work both ways and not only on one side of the house.

**Mr. Baldwin:** May I ask a question?

**Mr. Mongrain:** If I can answer it I will be very happy to do so.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Is the hon. member saying in effect that we should relax and enjoy it?

**Mr. Mongrain:** I should like my hon. colleague to tell me what it is he would be enjoying. I hope it is not my speech. I understand that it is the duty of an opposition to oppose. I know this. We cannot blame the opposition for criticizing the government. The members of the opposition are paid to do that; that is their duty. We understand that up to a certain point.

• (3:20 p.m.)

We need action and we need co-operation today. I was not the first one to talk about co-operation. The opposition house leader spoke about co-operation. Co-operation must work both ways. If we can count on co-operation from the opposition I am sure things will work out better. If things do not work out better then I would suggest we should make a change or find another reasonable arrangement and solve the problem in this way.