

claimed that the plans brought forward by the Conservative government were systematically blocked by the high-ranking officials.

If those claims have any truth to them—and, of course, I was not there to check them—they are quite eloquent about the powerlessness of the ministers at that time.

**Hon. Mr. Flynn:** But you were not far away, since you were sitting in the gallery.

**Hon. Mr. Lamontagne:** I did not attend the ministers' meetings.

**Hon. Mr. Flynn:** You could make signals to the now Leader of the Government.

**Hon. Mr. Lamontagne:** Mr. Speaker, I shall nevertheless attempt to conclude—

**Hon. Mr. Flynn:** In acting this way, I am simply attempting to break the monotony of this theory which seems to me very learned but hardly convincing.

**Hon. Mr. Lamontagne:** The honourable Leader of the Opposition could discuss the matter again with Senator O'Leary who stated very categorically two weeks ago in this Chamber what I have just repeated.

**Hon. Mr. Flynn:** That part.

**Hon. Mr. Lamontagne:** If the Leader of the Opposition will allow me, I shall try to continue. During the first 60 days of the Pearson government—indeed I have no intention of speaking only of those long years of the Dieffenbaker era—the influence of major officials was practically nil. This newly-found independence of politicians—several of them were former civil servants—led to mistakes, rather minor in my opinion, but which will not be easily forgotten; the traditional unbalance of the opposing forces was thus rapidly restored.

I am convinced however that we are already going through the first stages of a new period. From 1959 to 1962, with the assistance of advisers who obviously did not belong to the civil service, the Liberal party in the opposition had prepared an elaborate and detailed program. When they assumed power, they carried it out too rapidly and in isolation, an error which will not matter in the long run. The only thing that will matter is the method adopted by the Liberals in preparing their program, based as it was at the time on the method used by the team of Jean Lesage before 1960. I have the impression that the experiment made by the Liberal party in the opposition, before 1963, will henceforth be

repeated by all the main political parties. That is one of the factors which lead me to believe that a new era has already begun in Canada as far as the sources of political influence are concerned.

[English]

Thus, a new period is emerging in our country. I would describe it as the twilight of civil servants. I do not mean by this that the fall of the civil servants will be as dramatic as that of the politicians many years ago or that it will correspond to the rise of ministers to their former position of influence. I mean, however, that the Establishment will play in the future a more limited role than in the past 25 years, and that it will have to share its privileged position as "near ministers" with new sources of political influence.

In the first place, I believe that civil servants will have less and less to do with the development of new policies. Conversely, the intellectual community outside the Civil Service will play an increasing role in the determination of new policy objectives and proposals. The rising number of royal commissions, of task forces, advisory boards and councils, is an obvious sign of the shift which is already taking place; but that is only part of the new story. Let me explain what I mean a little more fully, if briefly.

In the past, political parties could win elections by making vague promises, by relying on their record, or merely by attacking the opponent. When they assumed office they were not committed to any over-all political program and they were free to accept the advice of civil servants even in connection with the formulation of policies. That situation is changing rapidly.

**Hon. Mr. Flynn:** It does not sound like that in Quebec presently.

**Hon. Mr. Lamontagne:** We are in Ottawa now, not with your friends in Quebec.

The public and the press now expect political parties to be identified with a concrete, detailed and co-ordinated set of policy proposals, especially during electoral campaigns. Moreover, this identification with a precise program has become almost inevitable since political parties have decided to hold national policy conventions every two years. Their public image would greatly suffer if such meetings—and I do not include of course leadership conventions in that category—were not devoted to serious thinking and discussion. But such an identification means that when a given party is newly elected or is merely returned to office, it will be committed