

indication from him that he is prepared to say the same thing in Ottawa as he said to the local press? Well, we will know at five o'clock today whether he is prepared to stand up and be counted.

That is the issue, Mr. Speaker. Does he put his constituents first or does he do the bidding of his Prime Minister?

An hon. Member: I thought the issue was jobs.

Mr. Beatty: Liberal backbenchers have been put precisely in that position. The Prime Minister has told them, "When I want your opinion, I will give it to you. Do not bother me otherwise." When the Prime Minister was asked in the House whether he was concerned about the breach of cabinet solidarity when two members of his cabinet wrote an open letter calling upon the government to disavow the policies of the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister said, as quoted in *Hansard* on February 9 at page 14800:

Madam Speaker, there is a very simple test of cabinet solidarity, and it is the one which Laurier applied. The right hon. member should look at the circumstances described by Laurier in the case he cites. It is that, when a minister disagrees with the cabinet, he resigns from that cabinet.

There was then an interjection, and the Prime Minister continued:

Or she resigns if she disagrees with the position of the budget or of the government on any particular matter; or if he or she is a member of the caucus, he or she does what members in the caucus of the Leader of the Opposition did. He or she resigns from the caucus and gets out.

That is what cabinet solidarity means. In every other circumstance, the ministers and the caucus are holding together, and they are sticking with the government. This does not mean, as I said—

At this point there was an interjection. He continued:

It is really very interesting to see the amount of time we will spend in this question period answering questions by the opposition seeking out a division in this caucus. If there is a division, why don't the members sit as independents?

Why indeed, Mr. Speaker? That is the choice being given to the members of the Liberal caucus by the Prime Minister. In other words, toe the line or get out. They either blindly accept the position taken by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance or they are told to get out. That is the choice which the Liberal caucus will have to make today when they vote on this motion at five o'clock.

Will they put their constituents first or will they swallow their integrity and pride, shirk their responsibility to their constituents and vote complicitly on policies which are inflicting very serious damage on their constituents?

The onus is on Liberal Members of Parliament to put their country first. I believe the constituents of those hon. members opposite are saying the same thing.

I was somewhat concerned when I heard both the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) and the minister responsible for housing suggest that my leader was calling upon Liberal Members of Parliament to help him today. That is not the case. We do not need their help, nor do we particularly want it. What is being asked is that those Liberal Members of Parliament support their constituents and the people of Canada. That is the issue which they will have to

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resolve at five o'clock. Will they put their constituents first or are they here to do the bidding of the Prime Minister and blindly follow his instructions?

That is the option which faces the member for Kitchener (Mr. Lang) who spoke last week in an interview which appeared in the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*. He said that he had received over 1,000 letters from his constituents complaining about the effects of the budget on them. How will he vote today? Will he be here to stand up and vote on behalf of his constituents? We will see at five o'clock.

What is the position of other Liberal MPs? What did they hear from their constituents over the Christmas recess?

When Parliament resumed after the Christmas recess, *Maclean's* magazine called a number of members of the Liberal caucus in an attempt to get some response from them. This is what the hon. member for Guelph (Mr. Schroder) is reported to have said:

● (1520)

The budget is another notch in belt-tightening that they just figure is getting too tight," sighs southern Ontario MP Jim Schroder. "And the tenor of many of my letters is, 'Of course this letter won't do any good—'"

We will see today whether those letters have any effect on the hon. member for Guelph.

What did another Liberal member say? This is the way *Maclean's* dealt with it:

"The budget is only the last straw," admits northern Ontario MP Ron Irwin.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Beatty: It goes on to read:

Constituents say, 'Do something'. They feel there's no control. (To get elected today) I'd have to rely on my record and not my party.

That is a quotation from *Maclean's*. How will that hon. member vote today at five o'clock?

What have other members said? Under the headline "Barometer Bob registers rage" a reference in *The Windsor Star* of January 25 to an interview with the hon. member for Essex-Kent (Mr. Daudlin) indicated that the hon. member is very concerned about the effect of the budget upon his constituents. He concluded the interview by strongly implying that it is time for the Prime Minister to resign. *The Windsor Star* said:

Now the 41-year-old MP comes close to conceding Trudeau—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Beatty: It goes on to read:

—is no longer a saleable commodity and hints he would be doing the party a favour by stepping down soon.

"The decision is going to be made by that man, not me. It would be counterproductive to say he's got to go now."

But Daudlin says it's clear that people no longer feel they can expect new ideas and new approaches under Trudeau's leadership.

"There's a public perception out there as to leadership that can only be altered when somebody new takes the helm."