

voice in its own destiny, which gave it the right to bargain and the right to strike even as opposed to arbitration if it felt this necessary after it met the requirements. This is the party which gave public servants a decent income, which gave them a decent pension, and we have no apologies to make to the public service. They know it, and the opposition knows it.

I am not blaming the hon. gentleman for preparing the ground for the Ottawa by-election. I would be doing it too. I will be there at that by-election, as he will, and we will end up good friends, as we are now.

● (2020)

I want to say in conclusion that the Liberal party has nothing to apologize for, both in its relationship with the public service and in its record as a government in the last couple of years.

[Translation]

**Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, first I would like to repeat the comments of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Mackasey). I had the privilege to act as the co-chairman of the committee considering labour relations in the public service and as such I have noted the efforts made by the members of every party within that committee to protect the rights of civil servants in Ottawa and elsewhere in Canada who are responsible under the legislation governing labour relations in the civil service.

[English]

I would simply like to repeat that in effect when dealing with the public service at the federal level we established, in terms of labour relations for the public servants in Canada at the federal level, a system which has not been equalled in any of the public services anywhere else in the western world. Those advantages that befall public servants in terms of labour relations at the federal level in Canada are the envy of public services throughout the world. We provided them with the right to strike, and indeed we have protected them with benefits that will continue to be provided to them.

Also we are providing for the public servants in Canada the continuation of the principle which has been espoused in parliamentary democracy, that is the principle of anonymity, the principle that public servants are responsible to the House of Commons through their minister. That principle has not been changed and it is honoured every day in the House. No one will deny that in the question period, the period which is the most interesting and followed most closely by the public, every minister in the government answers for his department in terms of policy and in terms of administration. That principle has been recognized and no one denies it.

I was really disappointed with the hon. member for Grenville-Carleton (Mr. Baker). When he introduced his motion I thought he would address himself to the question of ministerial responsibility which, in my view, has received a great deal of attention as the result of the statement made by the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer). But no, he was too interested in making some possible gain, in trying, in his particular style, to draw

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attention to his presence in the House by making a speech that is strictly political and partisan in nature.

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

**Mr. Blais:** I had hoped that he would deal with the interesting and essential problem of parliamentary democracy in our adversary system. However, he did not deal with it. I left ten minutes before the end of his speech because I was disappointed that he had not dealt with the basic issue. On my return I inquired to see whether he had deigned to deal with the issue, but I found that he had not. He spent all his time dealing with the Orion case and with the Minister of Supply and Services, without specifying why he believed the conduct of the minister to have been in contravention of the recognized principle of ministerial responsibility.

On the other hand, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) did bring his attention, even though only glancingly, to the question of ministerial responsibility, primarily in requesting the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Mackasey) to deal with that issue. That was the contribution of the hon. member. I cannot understand it because members of the opposition have a wealth of material upon which to draw in order to deal with the doctrine of ministerial responsibility for this government has been immersed in that particular doctrine. As I understand it, there are two aspects to the doctrine, if I may be so bold as to deal with the issue at hand.

**An hon. Member:** Yes, dredging and Sky Shops.

**Mr. Blais:** The first one is the doctrine of collective ministerial responsibility, namely, the responsibility of the cabinet which is the collective responsibility of the whole front bench on the government side. That particular principle has been honoured increasingly since the coming of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in 1968.

**An hon. Member:** The coming of the Prime Minister?

**Mr. Blais:** In support of my contention I draw the attention of hon. members opposite—individually perhaps they might not be able to comprehend it but perhaps collectively they might be able to bring some intelligence to bear on an article written by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp).

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

**Mr. Blais:** It is entitled "Decision-making".

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. The parliamentary secretary has the floor. I suggest that we should listen and we might learn something.

**Mr. Blais:** It is entitled "Decision-making in the Federal Cabinet". The President of the Privy Council has been a minister and a public servant. That has been stated by members of the opposition and members on this side on a number of occasions. He entered the public service when Mackenzie King was still prime minister. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre will remember that epoch. It was in 1942 that the President of the Privy Council entered