

Supply—Transport

Mr. Herridge: I am speaking of the Minister's Parliamentary Secretary who has a certain responsibility for the administration of the department.

Mr. Pickersgill: I think the hon. gentleman is quite wrong. There is a statute providing for Parliamentary Secretaries and the Parliamentary Secretary is not paid from the estimates of the Department of Transport. The Parliamentary Secretaries are selected and recommended by the Prime Minister, so it would be impudence on my part to express any views on the Prime Minister's decision.

Mr. Herridge: I thank the minister for his explanation. I knew that already. I am raising the matter because it will give the Parliamentary Secretary an opportunity to reply. He is partly responsible for the administration of the department.

From conversations I have had with some of his colleagues on the Liberal side I judge there is a certain amount of substance in this report. I understand he informed some of them of his indignation, of his explosion in front of the Prime Minister and his later elevation. I just want to say, in fairness to the Parliamentary Secretary, that my first question is whether he was angry that he was not on the first published list of Parliamentary Secretaries? I know he will answer this. I was very surprised to hear this, Mr. Chairman, because I have always known the Parliamentary Secretary as a most meek and mild man. In fact, I have a distinct recollection of him turning the other cheek when faced with unprovoked aggression in the hallowed halls of this house last session.

My second question is, did he inform the Prime Minister that he either got the job as Parliamentary Secretary or the Prime Minister could not count on him in the house, that he would sit as an independent and vote accordingly? In fairness to the Parliamentary Secretary and to the house I think we are entitled to know the facts. There are such a lot of rumours about this matter. The members of the press are waiting eagerly to report the Parliamentary Secretary's reply. We are entitled to information about his appointment to a position which might be called near to greatness. I cannot for a moment visualize the Prime Minister surrendering so easily to such a meek and mild gentleman as the hon. member for Kootenay East. I trust he will take the opportunity to explain to the house exactly what happened.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

I should like to say that in listening to this debate I have noticed that the minister is a very different person from the person he was about this time last year. He has become very subdued, very apologetic and full of explanations.

Mr. Pickersgill: This time last year parliament had not yet met.

Mr. Herridge: I am speaking in approximate terms. Last year I addressed a question to the minister which is found at page 11632 of *Hansard* for February 23, 1965. The question reads as follows:

Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Transport. It is a question in which a good many Canadians are interested. My question is based on some remarks made last evening by the minister when he was referring to the criticisms made by the hon. member for Halifax with respect to the proposed reduction of passenger service on the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In order that members of the house will not be required to rely entirely on the prognostications of that esteemed member of the press gallery, Mr. Victor Mackie—

A delightful fellow.

—would the minister inquire of the President of the C.P.R. what its policy is at present with respect to the reduction of passenger services in Canada and report to the house?

The minister's reply was as follows:

Mr. Speaker, since under the rules of the house ministers are only expected to answer for those bodies which are under their jurisdiction, and since the hon. member is a more eminent member of the house than I, I suggest that he make the inquiry of the C.P.R.

Mr. Pickersgill: I suggest to the hon. gentleman, Mr. Chairman, that we have now had provision made by parliament whereby the hon. gentleman can confront the President of the C.P.R. and ask the question direct.

Mr. Herridge: Quite right, and why did you make that provision. It was made because of the fight put up by members of the opposition parties. I mention this in order to compare the attitude of the minister on his estimates this session with his attitude last session when in his reply he practically indicated that the Canadian Pacific was a private concern, and what could we do about it?

Mr. Monteith: It may be the influence of the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Herridge: Yes, I willingly pay tribute to the attitude taken by the Minister of Agriculture. I wish him every success. I can tell him even now, before his estimates come before this committee, that a good many members of the opposition are going to get