

degrees we may get at least far enough away from purely party considerations to believe that because a ministry has some of its younger supporters brought in as assistants, they are not merely seeking to give them jobs but are helping to prepare men more effectively to play a larger part in the public life of our country. This House of Commons will change considerably after the next general elections; and while many of us who have had to do with this strenuous period of parliamentary activity will be prepared to serve as long as there is a possibility of service and as long as the public wish us to serve, and will be ready to do our part at all times, yet it would be most unfortunate for this country if younger men were not learning to-day from the inside, and from their intimate association with the ministers, something of the manner of meeting problems which will have to be dealt with in this parliament in the years to come. I must say that I am disappointed in my hon. friend, in references he has made time and again which I regard as a belittlement of the position of the ministry and others associated with the ministry. I say to him in all kindness that it does not make for the stability of government, in the broad sense of the word, throughout the country to have a minister of the crown referred to as he referred to one this afternoon, as a man of straw; or to have assistants to ministers of the crown referred to as they were tonight, as men holding jobs.

Mr. GRAYDON: The Prime Minister has outdone himself in misinterpreting—I do not say intentionally—the whole situation with respect to the various matters he has brought up. I am quite at a loss to understand the motive of the right hon. gentleman in attributing to me certain statements or certain thoughts on certain matters which he must know were not in my mind at all. He mentioned the words “straw man,” for instance.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I think the words were “straw boss.”

Mr. GRAYDON: Well, as the Prime Minister ought to know, a straw boss is something less than a superintendent, and for that reason I was referring to the hon. gentleman in question as an understudy of the Prime Minister. I think the right hon. gentleman should have understood the implications of the words “straw boss,” because they are very different from the implications of the words “straw man,” though, of course, if the Prime Minister had the latter idea in his mind I do not want to be the one to make him change it. But I wish to say that I, too, am disappointed with the Prime Minister's

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

attitude to-night. This is not the first time this session that this attitude has been made manifest.

The government owes the opposition a little cooperation, and the opposition is going to ask for that cooperation. As leader of the opposition I have a perfect right to criticize the structure of the government if I so desire. I have done that to-night in the national interest and I shall do it again, just so long as I regard it to be in the national interest to do so. When the Prime Minister speaks of which one of these portfolios he is to do without, which one he should disband and abolish, he knows full well that I made no such implication, that I did not suggest he should abolish or abandon any particular one of the portfolios that we now have. What I had definitely in mind was the fact that there are some portfolios which I think could be combined. There would then be fewer ministers of the crown because of that combining. The Prime Minister must have known that, and in his own way he should not attribute to me the statement that we ought to do away with some of the portfolios that at present exist.

When I ask for economies and the better organization of the cabinet surely I should not be treated by the Prime Minister in the way he has treated me to-night. I want to have fair play the same as he does, and I do not want to be criticized because of the attitude I take with respect to the government itself. I know there are certain touchy things about the Prime Minister, and this seems to be one of them. I did not intentionally try to touch a sore spot with respect to this matter to-night, but I should like him to understand that so long as I hold the position of leader of the opposition I am going to criticize the structure of this government and the government itself, and this is going to be done in each and every case as it has been done to-day, not for political considerations as the Prime Minister has dragged in in his statement to-night, but in the national interest. If he were sitting on this side and there were another government over there I believe he would be the first one to say it was in the national interest that similar criticism should be offered.

There is a disposition on the part of the Prime Minister and the government—I do not say it is intentional because if I did so I would be attributing motives to the government—to bully the opposition once in a while. I know the Prime Minister would not want to have that motive imputed to him, but nevertheless that is the fact. We may have only thirty-nine members in His