

I think we must all admit, I think even the most partisan, even the most blind, must admit that a gradual but continuing change is coming over our form of government. Responsible government once meant being responsible to the crown. However, gradually a change has come about until responsible government today does not mean responsibility to the crown; it means responsibility to the people, and so the House of Commons, being the chamber in which the representatives of the people sit, is the most important part of the government of Canada or of Great Britain. If it is not, at least it ought to be, and to my mind it will not be so very long before the cabinet is what I once heard the Minister of Finance say in a previous parliament that it was - a committee of the House of Commons.

I think everyone who has sat in this House knows that very many times government supporters are forced - I think that word is not too strong - into supporting measures for which they have no use at all, simply to avoid having their leader, the Prime Minister of the country, go and ask for a dissolution of parliament, and thereby bring upon our heads that which members of parliament dislike most, a general election. I recall, and I am sure you do too, Mr. Speaker, the time when Mr. Andrew McMaster, then member for Brome, introduced a resolution that cabinet ministers should not hold directorships in great companies. I yet recall the sullen faces of the Liberal members when they were forced - I sue that word advisedly - to vote against that resolution which they themselves, very few months before had, almost all, if not all, supported.

Mr. Bourassa: Their masters had educated them.

Miss Macphail: Yes. I remember some of them were so angry that we did not see them in the chamber for some days afterwards. That sort of thing is bad for the character - vest, it is bad for their disposition, as my seatmate says, but it is bad for the character and if they stay in the House of Commons and are continually put in a position where they must vote against their honest convictions, I am afraid they will cease, well one hates to say it - to have honest convictions. The system of government that brings about a condition like that is a very bad system.

It caused the first division of the year and resulted in the Conservatives and Liberals voting together with the United Farmers, Labour and seven Independent Progressives and three or four Liberal Progressives supporting the motion; also one Liberal, a very fine intelligent chap, Hepburn, thirty years of age.