Angered Minister Gets Applause of Both Sides in Denying Disloyalty

JOINED BY HANSON

(Staff Writer, The Globe and Mail.)

Ottawa, Feb. 21. — White with anger, Defense Minister J. L. Ralston rose in the House of Commons today to answer charges of disloyalty to his leader and to defend dollar-a-year men in his department from a series of amazing slurs heaped on them by J. F. Pouliot, a front-bench Government supporter.

"I do not think it is necessary to beat my breast and proclaim my loyalty to my leader," Mr. Ralston declared. "I think I have endeavored to show that by my actions."

A sustained roar of applause both from Government and Opposition benches was the emphatic answer the House gave to the Minister. As the House applauded, the rotund member from Temiscouata who had precipitated the scene sat and scowled.

Mr. Pouliot was taken sharply to task a year ago by Mr. Ralston for indulging in a partisan outburst during the debate on the war appropriation bill then. Today's performance was longer, more bitter, more partisan. It ran the full forty-minute limit and included Toryism and all its works, the Globe and Mail and other advocates of National Government, the financial interests which supported the Sirois recommendations, and high officers in the Department of Defense as the targets for vitriolic attack.

Mr. Pouliot presented a war of words against the Ministry, and when he was interrupted by the Speaker he said he was entitled to a fair hearing and that he would speak on the record in the House and that he would give the whole Cabinet distributing his "gifts" and collecting "bribes and then singled out Mr. Ralston and Munitions Minister C. D. Howe for attack.

Mr. Pouliot referred to our soldiers fighting now on the soil of England.

"I believe they should be here to protect our families in Canada, in sufficient numbers and properly equipped to give us all a feeling of security," he said. He didn't attempt to explain what he meant by this observation.

"Nor did he explain what he meant by this observation: "The air is thick and unbreathable, Mr. Chairman. I have never witnessed such backsliding intrigue as there is now in high quarters. I am disgusted with the ways in which the intrigue is being carried on in the name of patriotism, when we know that behind it is a group of scoundrels, of buccaneers, of racketeers, of pirates, who are trying to get hold of Canada's wealth for their own purpose."

In defending Victor Sifton, Master-General of the Ordnance; Allen Magee, his executive assistant; Brigadier R. J. Orde, the judge advocate-general and others from the specific attacks of Mr. Pouliot, the Minister of Defense had the hearty co-operation of Conservative Leader Hanson.

The Opposition Leader deplored such a speech as that made by the Quebec member in wartime.

MUST CEASE, SAYS HANSON

Mr. Hanson said: "This sort of thing must cease in the Parliament of Canada or we will be in dispute.

He congratulated the Minister on his defense of officials, but said he had been wondering if it would not have been better to treat Mr. Pouliot's remarks with "dignified silence."

The Opposition Leader offered to co-operate with all the authority his own office carried in any efforts the Government might adopt to maintain the dignity of Parliament.

Speaking of the National Defense Minister, Mr. Pouliot said he was fond of Mr. Ralston "until he went to St. James Street."

"He (Mr. Ralston) is a very likable man, full of amenity," said Mr. Ralston. "I am a brilliant lawyer, although he has no appeal to the masses. As I say, he is a most likable man, but I was here a long time before he was."

He referred to Mr. Ralston having been engaged as counsel for a grain inquiry commission some years ago at $200 a day while he (Pouliot) was fighting the battles of the Liberal Party.

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At Mr. Hanson's suggestion, Mr. Ralston also expressed full confidence in Brigadier Orde, Judge Advocate-General, who, he said, was carrying out his duties "as a Canadian should."

Regarding his own fee of $200 a day as counsel for the Royal Grain Inquiry Commission some years ago Mr. Ralston said at the time he had refused to private life and asked only the fee, which was $200, "to buy me a little legal gentlemen on such commissions."

He could not take less in fairness to his law firm. The money was paid to his firm and in due course he received his share. The firm had to get the fee in order to buy "at least partially reimbursed for the loss of my services."

He said he considered the fee proper, having regard to the usual payments to professional men.