

present time. Sir Charles Tupper and Sir Wilfrid Laurier both resigned office as, indeed, did the leader of the opposition (Mr. Meighen). These are the precedents that mark the situation in Canada. I do not, however, question at all the legal right of Mr. King if he so desired to advise His Excellency to meet parliament. And he has done so. But who was to meet parliament? That is the question. Who is it that should have met parliament? Mr. King ought to have met parliament. His advice to the sovereign's representative was that he would meet parliament, because without a head there is no committee of the House of Commons responsible to parliament. I shall go a step further and read from Gladstone, on this point, an opinion which will commend itself to the approval of every hon. member of this House. But let us see first how the present situation stands. Mr. King's death would dissolve his administration, as indeed the administration of Mr. Perceval was dissolved when he was assassinated on coming into the lobby of the House of Commons. And a government is dissolved also upon its resignation. But more still does the failure of a prime minister to find a place in either house of parliament, when he meets the people's representatives, dissolve his administration. And why? Simply because the essence of parliamentary government is responsibility both to the crown and to the people; and the only medium of communication between the houses of parliament and the sovereign is the Prime Minister. That principle is established by the very authorities to whom my learned and hon. friend referred. The Prime Minister and the Prime Minister alone is the medium of communication between the sovereign and this House and yonder House. The fact is so clearly understood that I do not think it need be discussed. Although it is the right of every minister, if he so desires, to see the representative of the sovereign and to discuss with him his personal attitude towards any policy, he must in so doing assume the responsibility of being possibly sometimes unconsciously disloyal to his colleagues. In such a situation he can speak only for himself. But the constitutional responsibility devolves upon the first minister of being the sole medium of communication between this parliament of Canada and the representative of the sovereign; upon no one else does that responsibility rest. It is true that we have a great deal of "acting" in this House: we have acting ministers of trade and commerce, acting ministers of immigration and acting ministers of railways. There are all sorts of acting ministers. But there can be no acting prime minister within the constitution

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in this House. If Mr. King had found a place in the Senate on the day parliament met, then indeed the requirements of the constitution would have been met, for undoubtedly it was necessary that he should have a seat in one of the houses. But he found no place in this House, nor did he obtain a seat in the Senate. And why is it essential that as Prime Minister he should be here? Mr. Gladstone makes that point so clear that it need only be stated to be immediately perceived. The Prime Minister should sit here as head of the cabinet or the committee or council of parliament to be answerable to the House for the acts of his government. He is answerable to parliament; the responsibility is his. He it was who appointed the ministers of the crown, approved by the Governor General; he it was who asked these gentlemen to join him in the administration of the government, and he should therefore be here to answer for the conduct of the government which he led. The individual ministers, it is true, are here to speak for themselves, but the Prime Minister should be in his place in parliament to answer for the collective action of his government, to defend the policies of his administration, and to bear the responsibility of his office. The Prime Minister should be here to be questioned in order that the representatives of the people in the House of Commons or the members of the Senate might be able to obtain from him when necessary some explanation of the conduct of his government touching public matters. That is why the law, not the written law but the law of parliamentary practice and procedure of over half a century, has always contemplated the presence of the Prime Minister in one or other of the houses of parliament.

An important case which ought to be cited was entirely overlooked by my hon. friend, the case of Gladstone in 1874. I shall cite it for the information of the House; for the great name of Gladstone, when it comes to any question of the assertion of the rights of parliament, is still supreme. The name of Gladstone has long been associated purely with the Liberal party, but in relation to the development of our parliamentary institutions that name is the common heritage of every man, Liberal or Conservative. Let me quote from the Memorials Personal and Political of Roundell, first Earl of Selborne, who was Lord Chancellor under Gladstone. His character and position were such that any observations made by him are entitled to the greatest possible consideration. He was perhaps Gladstone's closest friend, and so strong were his convictions that he refused