

over one hundred. Under the circumstances of the last House, he could not govern; yet now in order to enable his ministers to enjoy the sweets of office, the salaries, indemnities and the fruits of power while the country struggles with grave problems, he yearns to mark time and do nothing more. Now he faces parliament and asks that he be allowed to get along with his majority of one converted into a minority of forty, and his aggregate majority, visible and invisible in the aggregate converted from one hundred and twenty odd to a maximum of, say ten. Using the language of the Prime Minister, the appeal of this group of advisers of the crown to us is this: "Please enable us, who acknowledge we could not govern with a visible majority and an immense invisible majority—please enable us to struggle on though we have no majority at all, when we are hopelessly in the minority in parliament, and when all the circumstances that hobbled us before are multiplied ten times over." It surely marks the avidity of hon. gentlemen opposite—the few that remain—for the sweets of power, the salaries, the indemnities, the fruits of office, that they could address parliament and ask for anything of the kind. "Oh", they answer, "we have a majority over all." The election was held upon their challenge, held under their auspices. We returned the strongest group in the House, and we ask for the right to present our programme to parliament. We appeal to the fairness of hon. members of whatever party. Who has the best right in this House to present its programme and its policy and to appeal to parliament for support? Not only have we the largest numbers in parliament, but we do not come here with our whole campaign prefaced by statements such as the Prime Minister made at Richmond Hill and Regina. Are we not in an infinitely stronger position than hon. gentlemen opposite? I am unable to comprehend how ministers of the crown could have so little respect for British traditions—I had almost said, could have no respect for themselves as public men—and after the decisive verdict of the people in the last campaign, after the utterances of their own leader in that campaign, should now assume to come to parliament and seriously ask parliament for its support. I ask hon. members of this House to reflect on these things. I have never pretended in the matter of certain policies of Canada vital to our country to be in line with hon. gentlemen to my left of the Progressive party. I have never courted them as allies; I have not fawned at their feet; I have not sought to maintain my position in parliament

[Mr. Meighen.]

by representing to them that my principles were identical with theirs, praising the common purposes that they all had. Similarly I have not reviled them.

Mr. PARENT: You are doing it now.

Mr. MEIGHEN: What does the hon. gentleman say?

Mr. PARENT: You are doing it now.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I am reviling the hon. members of the Progressive party?

Mr. PARENT: Yes.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The hon. gentleman has remembered very little from the elections.

Mr. PARENT: I am only judging the right hon. gentleman by his remarks, that is all.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Well, whatever may be in store for the hon. gentleman, I hope he is never made a judge.

Now, labouring under a severe reverse, labouring under a decisive defeat, these hon. gentlemen come to this parliament and say, "We want to depend upon the Progressive party for support." They are the same hon. gentlemen who, when they wanted to defeat these men in their constituencies, declared that they belonged to a "holier than thou aggregation"; declared that they had been of no use to them in the House; declared that the government had not been maintained in power by them at all; declared that only Liberals were of any value in getting through legislation that the country needed. To them I appeal, and I would even appeal to hon. gentlemen opposite themselves: Do they not see—surely they see; I know some of them do, I know that quite well—that a government which long ago lost the confidence of this country has now earned its contempt? Do they not see that every hour and every day simply mortgages the future of their party before the people of this dominion? Whatever else we may differ upon, surely we believe in those cardinal principles of democracy and British constitutional government which for centuries have prevailed. Surely all of us, no matter what may be our political opinions, want the voice of the people to rule in this Canada,—the voice of the people to be obeyed.

Mr. LAPOINTE: The right hon. member (Mr. Meighen) has issued his challenge and I am rising to take it up. I do it the more willingly owing to the fact that our first act this afternoon, after the delivery of the speech by His Excellency, was to invite the