

has had a trial—a beginning. If it takes a march through the centuries to prove that the present system involves difficulties and mistakes, one should not speak so positively about something that has not yet been tried; because if this proposed system were to march through a couple of centuries, patterning itself in its working out, it might prove to be a very good system indeed. I am not sure, therefore, that that argument is conclusive. In fact, had that argument been applied to the British constitution we should never have had one—if, indeed, we have one now. That is, we would not have had it in practice, if those who originated our boasted constitution had required such assurance as that seemingly looked for by the right hon. leader of the Opposition. I say, that if we are going to allow this thing to march through a couple of centuries, it is well nigh time we began.

Both the right hon. leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Halifax agree on this: that the government is not in the position of a hired man; there is no hired manism about it. No; if there is going to be anything like the hired man about it, some of them are going to have nothing to do with government. Now, I am not so sure that that is a strong position. I think you will agree that he who is the servant of all is the greatest of all, and it is surely not too much to say that the people who pay the expenses of government, the people whose business is being managed in this parliament, should have something to do about it. I think the highest position of the government, whether it wants to recognize it or not, is analogous to that of a hired man. And if the hired man is not distinguished enough for the comparison, I would substitute the architect, and say that the government is, in relation to the people or to parliament, what an architect is to a job.

Mr. McMASTER: But the architect tries to boss the job.

Mr. IRVINE: When the architect tries to boss the job; when he tries to make the cost more than the man who is building can pay, or to put in more rooms than the builder wants, then the architect will be fired. He is hired as an architect. It is true that the man who hires him will not presume to deal at all with the technique of architecture.

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax): He gets his commission on the additional rooms.

Mr. IRVINE: But the architect will not be allowed to do what he pleases. If I hire an architect to prepare plans of a dwelling

house for me and he draws plans of a parliament building, am I going to pay him, or am I going to make the expenditure necessary to build a parliament building, simply because my architect was fool enough to draw the plans for it? Would any member of the government pay an architect under circumstances of that kind? Would any government hire him to do their work? I do not think so. That should be the relation of government to parliament. I readily agree that as practice goes, governments are not hired men. They are not architects, neither are they a committee of parliament. But we contend that they should be as hired men, that they should be as architects, that they should be a committee of parliament. If that is not British constitution, we can make it British constitution, because we have the same powers here to make British constitution as they have had over there. We can move from precedent to precedent with the same alacrity and with the same vision that they moved in days of old. So I submit, Mr. Speaker, that if the proposal embodied in this resolution is not part of the British constitution, there is no reason why it should not be made so by practice. If the British constitution is anything at all, it is practice; it is what has worked, and if this works it can become part of the constitution.

Now, I do not wish further to prolong the debate.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. IRVINE: My hon. friends opposite say, "hear, hear"—and for obvious reasons. If I prolonged this debate for another half hour, as I could very easily do, I should have to review some more of the statements that my hon. friends have made, and if I did so I am not sure that it would be a great addition to the discussions of British constitutional practice.

I submit that the reasons that we have put forward on behalf of the resolution have not been successfully refuted by any hon. member who has spoken on the question. Neither the right hon. leader of the Opposition nor the right hon. Prime Minister has given us sufficient reason—nor has anybody else—for relieving parliament of part of that responsibility which rightly belongs to it. Parliament should take all the responsibility; the executive council should become the hired servant of this parliament as representatives of the people. That, I believe, is the soul and spirit of this resolution.

Mr. PUTNAM: Will the hon. member permit me a question?