

Interim Supply

If the Prime Minister were here he would be saying that I am dragging this matter into the gutter. Well, I want to say to him this; that there will be more of us sitting on the curb, dragging our feet in the gutter if he has his way, because he will be there too.

I protest on three points. One is the economic grasshopper game you are playing; the second is what you are doing to the constitution, and the third is what you are doing to the crown. You are responsible for carving up and disrupting the nation. I should like to hear from the minister. There are two ministers over there.

An hon. Member: Three.

Mr. Woolliams: Three.

An hon. Member: Four.

Mr. Woolliams: All right, there are four. Anyway, I will say this to the minister. I should like him to get up now and answer this question. Are you prepared to have your formula analysed carefully by top constitutional men, top political scientists, so that you know exactly what you are doing in bringing home the constitution?

An hon. Member: I thought you knew.

Mr. Woolliams: Here is a fellow who says "I thought you knew". Let me answer that for a moment. I see the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Justice here, but I am not going to say anything to him. You know what I am thinking. You know what he said, but he never measures up. Be careful. I know exactly what you said to the committee, and you never measured up. I do not want to be interrupted by you because I may say something I shall regret.

I say this to the member behind you, the man who said "I thought you knew". Do you think there is anything wrong with the idea? What are you hiding? I think you will agree with me that the Prime Minister is not a constitutional man. There are very few who understand fully the conditions of the constitution. We have had the judicial committee of the privy council, we have had the Supreme Court of Canada interpret this act ever since confederation. When you compare it with the United States, they had a weak central government and strong state governments. The purpose of our confederation was to have a strong central government and weaker provincial governments. The courts have interpreted the constitution in Canada so as to erode somewhat the central government, but at least we have that interpreta-

[Mr. Woolliams.]

tion; we know where we stand. But if we put into the hands of the provinces the right to change the powers given to the federal government we will destroy this country and create a new parliament; we will create a council almost equal to the council which used to sit around Khrushchev in this respect, that they were all powerful.

I think the provincial premiers have faced up to their responsibilities, but what you will have done is destroy this House of Commons and substitute provincial premiers to run this nation as ten balkan states. That is the charge I make. I say that in changing the constitution what you have done is this; you have given the provinces the right to change the powers given to the central government and delegate them to the provinces. That is the charge, and that is why it should be called "a formula for constitutional chaos".

You might say why did the provinces not raise their voice? Well, if the provinces come down for something and get something plus, through their premiers, are they going to say no? So this thing should be carefully gone into. If the government has any knowledge or understanding of the constitution why are they acting under the guise of bringing home the constitution, to destroy this nation? I say that some time should be spent on this, and it is surely a reasonable request. It should be examined carefully by a committee of this House of Commons, carefully selected, and then we will have the answers. But we will never get those answers from ministers who are hiding the facts and who since they took office have been Canada's assassins and pallbearers at Canada's funeral.

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. gentleman challenged me, and I wanted to ask him a question. I have some doubts, I may say, whether it is in order in committee of supply to discuss a matter which is not before parliament and which has nothing to do with supply. But I suppose, since the hon. gentleman has been allowed to deal with this subject, I shall be allowed to clarify the issue.

Mr. Woolliams: It is something which appertains to the whole nation.

Mr. Pickersgill: Well, it has nothing to do with any of the estimates which are now before the house. This is a project which has not been brought before the house and which the Prime Minister indicated yesterday will not be brought before the house for some considerable time. It ought to be debated when it is before the house and not before,