

*Unemployment Continuance Act*

been intimate with Mr. Mackenzie and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, I have known personally, and have had intimate relations with every Prime Minister of Canada since the British North America Act was passed. I stated one day, I believe, that although but a child at the time I could remember the procession during the celebration of the first Dominion day in Canada. I sat many years ago in the press gallery when Sir John Macdonald led the government and Mr. Blake and his colleagues led the opposition. I do not think that in the whole history of government in Canada there has been a Prime Minister who has consulted more closely, readily and assiduously with his colleagues than has the present Prime Minister since he assumed office.

I have sat in this house night after night since the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa) denounced the colleagues of the Prime Minister and I have heard one hon. member after another almost spit forth the most opprobrious epithets with respect to the members of the cabinet; I have had experience for some fifty years on the boards of companies and corporations, I have mingled with other men in my professional and business career and I say without a shadow of hesitation that I believe the Prime Minister has consulted with his colleagues in the government and with his party in the house more closely than any Prime Minister who has preceded him. That consultation has not been for the purpose of imposing his views upon his colleagues, because I do not believe that even the right hon. the leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) when he was Prime Minister of this country was more considerate of the opinions of his colleagues or was more open to reasonable argument and discussion.

What is the basis of constitutional government in this country? It is that the government shall be responsible to parliament and that parliament shall be responsible to the people. In no act of this government has it assumed any responsibility whatever except to carry out by way of administration the authority which parliament has vested in the government.

If my right hon. friend seeks a comparison between his régime and the régime of the present government, let him direct his attention to this fact. Since I have been in parliament I have protested time and time again against the powers taken by his government whereby they were enabled by order in council to make rules and regulations, to end the franchises of every dominion trust company

[Mr. Cahan.]

in this country, to prevent any insurance company from carrying on its ordinary business at will, and against the hundred other ways in which his government usurped what he now calls the legislative functions of parliament. If he will come with me to the office of the privy council—the records are as open to him as they are to me—for every order in council which this government has passed which partakes of the nature of legislation, I will show him one hundred similar orders which his own government passed legislating upon the most important and intimate matters of our political, social and commercial life.

The right hon. gentleman now assumes a position which will not be his to occupy for a long time. He once occupied the position of Prime Minister of this dominion, and among those who watched his career on many occasions none were more sympathetic than I. I saw the stress and strain under which he at times administered the affairs of this country without a majority in the house to support him in measures in which his own policies were involved in direct controversy. The right hon. gentleman has forgotten entirely that he is no longer the Prime Minister of this country. He has forgotten entirely that this country has repudiated him, his policies and his party and that he no longer exercises authority in this house. It appears to me that during the last three weeks the right hon. gentleman has been attempting, by the exercise of force, to dominate this parliament in which he represents a minority only. The force which he has used is just as physical and brutal as that which has been used to usurp constitutional government at any stage of British history, only he is confined to the use of his own physical force, to his power of speech and his ability to sustain that speech throughout many hours of debate. He returns to the same debate three or four times and repeats and reiterates the same arguments until the house can no longer refrain from exhibiting its—what shall I say?

An hon. MEMBER: Disgust.

Mr. CAHAN: —its disgust. Perhaps that may not be considered parliamentary.

The right hon. gentleman speaks about parliament, the constitutional practice in parliament, the supreme control of parliament and the control by a majority of parliament, and then about the supreme control of the House of Commons, assuming that that supreme control is vested solely in himself and the gentlemen who sit about him. The control of parliament has passed from the right hon. gentleman.