

they did; that is the case with the advent of every new Prime Minister in the history of every country. That was the case in the instance recited by my hon. friend of Sir John Abbott and Sir John Thompson. It was also the case when the present Premier for Shelburne and Queen's (Mr. Fielding) resigned the post of Premier of Nova Scotia and was succeeded by Mr. Murray. It was the case when Mr. Hardy became Premier of Ontario. It was the case when Mr. Martin, the present Premier of Saskatchewan took office there. It was the case when Mr. Stewart, the present Premier of Alberta, took office in that Province. It was the case when Mr. Oliver, the present Premier of British Columbia, took office in his Province. In every case all the members of the old government went out when a new government came in.

But, my hon. friend says, I would concede you the right if only in point of character, in point of purpose and in point of aim you agreed with the government whose place you took. Well, I tell my hon. friend that in point of character, in point of purpose, and in point of aim, we are in full accord and harmony with the government we succeeded, in every respect and to the last jot and tittle. In purpose and in policy we are the same. In every respect we are a continuation of that government—in every respect in which Mr. Hardy's government was a continuation of that of Sir Oliver Mowat; in every respect in which Mr. Murray's government was a continuation of that of the hon. Mr. Fielding at that time; in every respect in which Mr. Martin's government is a continuation of the government of Mr. Walter Scott. In all these respects we follow in the direct line of the government whose place we take in office. Did my hon. friend refer to the policy of this government in seeking to show that there was a divergence and departure from the course pursued by the late administration? He never referred to policy at all. The policy is published and is well known; in no particular does it diverge; in no particular is there a departure; this Government is a legitimate successor and continuation of the government which it succeeded.

What, then, does my hon. friend resort to in order to show that we have no right to be in office notwithstanding the fact that we enjoy the confidence of a majority of Parliament and notwithstanding that our term of office is still some two years from its expiration? "Oh," he said, "you

[Mr. Meighen.]

came into office in 1917 on the basis of a union, and you are a union no more." I try to put it in some understandable form. He argued, in substance: You are not, in point of the constitution of your government, in line with, in accord with, or the same as, the Government you succeeded. Well, how do we differ? He reads the names of members of the Government who have gone—members of the Government led by the hon. member for King's N.S. (Sir Robert Borden) and shows that some of them have retired from office; and he wants to know how it is that we assume the virtues of those who have retired. Well, really, I am not able to put that in understandable form at all. It is true that some have retired from office; I suppose six or seven or eight have done so. But of all those who have retired, only one, retired because of any difference in principle or policy from the Government from which he departed—only one who after his retirement failed to support the Government of which he had been a member, and did not continue the support of that Government in this House. Because men retire from office feeling that for reasons of their own they cannot longer give the kind of public service and the great labor required of public office, does that mean that the character of the Government is altered? Does that mean that the Government lacks public confidence? Why, one might just as well argue that if a member of the Government dies it is evidence that public confidence is gone. Never in the history of this country has a government sat in office with so many ex-ministers of the Crown sitting behind it in full accord with its policies and principles. And, forsooth, that is the government my hon. friend refers to in language of unparalleled exaggeration as composed of merely office-seekers and office-holders, eager to draw the salaries of ministers of the Crown, filled with all manner of scriptural vices and extortion and excess. Rather than draw the fruits of office and engage in the responsibility and continued labours that the enjoyment of office entails, there have gone from this Government, one after another, men who are not only in full accord with the policy of the Administration, and with all members of the Administration, but whose belief and expressed belief it was that the duty of the Government was to carry on as before.

My hon. friend tells us that in 1917 when this Government was elected, the issue was