

at one time leader of his party in this House, and had been Prime Minister of Ontario. While Prime Minister of Ontario Sir George attended a dinner in London. He had the privilege of sitting beside Mr. Chamberlain, who said: "Oh, you come from Ontario. If I am not mistaken, you have in that province a Government which has been in power for some thirty years. That seems extraordinary to Englishmen on this side of the ocean, where a government seldom lives for more than one parliament. There have always been five per cent of the population dissatisfied, and every four or five years they upset the Government." Then he added this statement, which is interesting: "That habit of changing governments every four or five years has this advantage: an Act placed on the Statute Book, unless it has been received favourably by the Opposition, is not deemed to be a national Act until the party which has opposed it comes into power and respects it; then it becomes a national Act." Apparently the situation here is that the legislation of the last Parliament is not respected by this one, and is not deemed to be "national legislation."

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: With all respect, I would point this out. Though this Bill was introduced in the other House by a private member it did not affect private legislation at all, but repealed a public Act. Therefore the Government had to take a position upon it, and what may be described as reasons for the position taken, however weighty they may be, or however unimportant, were advanced by the Prime Minister. But they are not addressed to us. We are addressed in child's talk.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: It was not the Government that drafted the Bill or the reasons.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: But the Government must be responsible for the reasons in respect of the repeal of a public measure; therefore I call attention to the danger the Government get into when they permit, recognize and sanction the repeal of a public measure, which was a Government Bill, at the instance of a private member. There is this further to be remembered: the moral that the honourable member draws, which appears to give some merit to the system of discarding legislation objected to before the defeat of a government at an election, does not apply in the present case. This measure met with no objection from any party. Further, I venture this piece of

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information: one of its main sponsors, if not its main sponsor, was a most distinguished, useful and honoured servant of Canada who happens to have been appointed by the leader of the present Government.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I would draw attention to this fact. We used to receive from the House of Commons bills which gave us no inkling of the reason why they were introduced. Some of them amended sections of an Act by striking out or adding a few words here and there, and no ordinary member could find out the meaning of the changes without calling for the statute to be amended and ascertaining where the words were to be eliminated or added. It was the Senate of Canada who decided that the practice should be altered and that bills originating in either Chamber should contain reasons and explanations, and the text of the clause to be amended, so that every member could see at once what was to be effected.

My purpose in rising was simply to say that any private member can introduce a Bill to amend government legislation, and I believe—I stand to be corrected if I am wrong—the member who takes such action is the one who bears full responsibility for the drafting of the Bill and for the explanations accompanying it.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Not after the Bill passes the other Chamber.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I am not so sure about that.

The Hon. the SPEAKER: Is it your pleasure, honourable members, to adopt the motion for the second reading of the Bill?

Hon. Mr. ROBINSON: It appears to me that it might be a good idea to allow the motion to stand over until to-morrow, so that the sponsor of the Bill may have an opportunity to read this discussion. He might have something to say.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: He cannot say it to us.

Hon. Mr. LITTLE: The honourable gentleman means the sponsor in this House.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Oh, I beg pardon. I thought he meant the sponsor in the other House.

The Hon. the SPEAKER: Does the honourable senator move to postpone the second reading?

Hon. Mr. ROBINSON: Yes.