

Perhaps he will permit me to say in public what I have already said to him privately, that on personal grounds it was to me a source both of pride and of pleasure to learn that His Excellency had chosen as his first adviser one who in university days was a fellow undergraduate, and whose friendship, through a quarter of a century, had survived the vicissitudes of time, not excepting the differences of party warfare and acrimonies of political debate.

I realize, in the discharge of our public duties in the opposing positions in which we now stand in virtue of our respective political faiths, there is much that needs to be said that may bring a challenge to all the virtues we possess. I can promise him, however, that in seeking to fulfill the demands of public obligation, I shall strive with him to preserve the highest traditions of our public life, and to be governed in all things by its amenities, and never by its animosities.

Mr. Speaker, if I do not undertake to refer at any length to the Address which His Excellency has presented to the House, I hope it will not be thought of as being in any way discourteous to His Excellency. There is one matter which transcends all others in importance, and that is the present position of the Government and of this Parliament with respect to the will of the people. By what right by what authority, do my right honourable friend and the members of his ministry presume to carry on the Government of this country? That is the question which the Administration must answer to the satisfaction of Parliament and of the country, before consideration can be given to any of the lesser matters mentioned in the Speech from the Throne. Can the will of the people be further ignored, and their rights in matters pertaining to legislation and administration be further usurped?

In the olden days of British history there was a time when the Crown, in order to find out under what authority certain gentlemen throughout the Kingdom exercised the rights and privileges of positions and offices they held, issued to such persons, a writ known as quo warranto, to discover by what right, by what warrant, they held the positions which they occupied. King Edward I served the barons of his day with this writ of quo warranto to discover by what warrant, by what right, they were enjoying certain privileges. Later the Crown made use of the same writ as a means of discovering by what warrant and by what right certain of the chartered

cities of England exercised coveted privileges. It was used, I think, by other sovereigns in order to find out by what warrant and by what right certain sheriffs carried on the duties of their office. In the name of the people of this country I should like to ask my right hon. friend, by what warrant, by what right, he attempts to carry on the government of Canada at the present time?

Since we last assembled in this Chamber, changes of far-reaching import and significance have taken place. The Government which was then in power has resigned and a new Government has been formed. In order that the situation may be fairly understood outside this House, may I direct attention to certain facts and circumstances. Since Parliament last assembled every member of the old administration has resigned his position; for the Prime Minister, in tendering his resignation, tendered also the resignation of every member of his Cabinet. Indeed, there was a time subsequent to the prorogation of Parliament last year—a brief moment it was, of course—when there was no ministry carrying on the government of this country. My right hon. friend selected one colleague on the day that he was sworn in; others he selected some three days later, and others later still.

The ministry which we met when Parliament was last assembled was a Unionist administration. It was a Government that had been formed from each of the historic political parties on a basis of assumed equality in numbers and talent. It was formed with relation to a particular issue arising out of the war which was then in progress. It purported to be a war administration, concerned solely with the successful prosecution and termination of the war and problems incidental thereto. Upon its character, its personnel, and its purpose in these particulars, it made its appeal to the electorate and won the support which returned it to power.

The Government which meets Parliament to-day is an entirely new and different Government. Will my right hon. friend contend that in character his is a Union Government? Will he contend that it is a coalition composed of members of both the old political parties, chosen because they are supposed to be of equality in talent as well as in numbers? Will he contend for a moment that it is a war Government with a mandate from the people of this country to carry on their business? Those are questions which I want my right

hon. friend to answer when he rises to address the House. The ministry has, as I have said, changed in character, in personnel, and in purpose from the Government formed in 1917.

Permit me to enlarge for a minute on these several points. As I have already said, the ministry which meets Parliament to-day has an entirely different character from the ministry which we met when Parliament was last assembled. That ministry was a Unionist ministry. My right hon. friend will hardly contend that his ministry is a Unionist ministry. He was the first to destroy the word "Unionist"; he absolutely cut it out of the vocabulary of his Government. He will hardly say that his ministry is composed of the members of the old historic parties. He, almost more than anyone else in this country, has been doing all he can to destroy the reputations of the old political parties and to say that they have outlived their usefulness. Surely he does not believe that any one is deceived as to the character of the present administration through the use of the name "National Liberal and Conservative" which, despite his abuse of the historic parties, he has chosen as that of his administration. Was there ever such a jumble of inconsistencies and insincerities!

My right hon. friend will probably contend that the situation thus created was not dissimilar to situations which arose after the death of Sir John A. Macdonald, when Sir John was succeeded in June, 1891, by Sir John Abbott; when Sir John Thompson succeeded Sir John Abbott in December, 1892; when Sir Mackenzie Bowell succeeded Sir John Thompson in December, 1894; and lastly when Sir Charles Tupper succeeded Sir Mackenzie Bowell in May, 1896. In other words, he will probably contend that in the course of one Parliament one ministry has a right to succeed another as in that period between 1891 and 1896. I presume my right hon. friend will attempt to have the House believe that the succession in office of his ministry to the previous ministry is a case parallel to the cases which I have just mentioned. As a matter of fact, there is no parallel.

The governments of which I have just spoken between 1891 and 1896 were all Tory Governments, holding office by virtue of a policy upon which the electors had passed in March, 1891, in normal times and under normal conditions. They were one in character, in purpose and in aim. The Government which my right hon. friend has

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formed cannot lay claim to any succession of that kind. The Government which he succeeded was a Unionist Government; the Government that he has formed to-day is a reactionary Tory administration; it is a reversion back to a type of Toryism such as this country has not known for a great many years. Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend will hardly contend that there is anything of a coalitionist character in his administration. The former Government was a coalition Government, or so-called at all events; it pretended to be such; but the Government of my right hon. friend is wholly different in that respect.

One of two alternatives alone is possible. Either the Government of my right hon. friend is, as it purports to be, an entirely new Government, with a new name, a new Prime Minister, a new set of principles and policies, and the support of a new party, the existence of which remains as yet to be discovered; or it is the soiled remnant and ragged edges of the old Unionist administration which it itself disowns, travelling under counterfeits and aliases, and purporting in all things to be what in reality it is not.

Take whichever alternative you will, the consequence is one and the same. The Government is without authority from the people of this country to conduct its affairs, and stands as a usurper of their political rights even in the eyes of multitudes of those who helped to return to power the previous administration.

But, Sir, lest there should be any doubt as regards the character of the present administration, may I refer to the personnel of the two administrations? It is necessary to do this in order to bring out one of the points which I think it is of importance to bring out, namely, the difference between the basis on which the Government of my right hon. friend was formed and that on which the previous administration was formed. Aliases, disguises and counterfeits aside, the character of the two administrations is to be determined by the respective personnels. Here is a list of the names of those who composed the ministry of the ex-Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) at the time that it made its appeal to the people. I think I am in order in quoting the names at this moment:

The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Borden.
Minister of Trade and Commerce, Rt. Hon. Sir Geo. E. Foster.
Minister of Finance, Hon. Sir Thomas White.
Minister of Justice, Hon. Chas. J. Doherty.