

like Canada, I say it is high time to do as the Americans do in this respect and let the Canadian people know the exact time that they will be called upon as a jury to pass a verdict upon the actions of their government and parliament.

Mr. HEAPS: Do you favour a fixed term of parliament?

Mr. BOURASSA: Of course I do; I advocated that in the Quebec legislature twenty years ago. I advocated it in this parliament, I think, before I left twenty-three years ago—always subject, of course, to the prerogative of the king on the advice of his ministers to ask for dissolution and get it as a matter of right should the government be defeated in the house. That explains why I helped to save this government from disaster in 1926, when the then Governor General and the then leader of the opposition played football with the principles not only of the British constitution but as well of a true and sound democracy. I do not regret having done that, but I say to this government as I would to any other: Do not pose as wise men who possess in themselves all knowledge as to what is good for the country, who can decide within their own council whether an appeal should be made to the people this year or the other year. No; if you think there is a question of such importance that it requires consultation with the people, do as they now usually do in England—where they have no need to alter the constitution but may change the practice according to their needs—announce your policy; obtain a pronouncement of public opinion; place before the people your views. Do this and when the time comes you will get a saner verdict, one given in cooler blood, than can be brought about by any mysterious, underhand procedure involving all the wire-pullings which go with the sudden launching out upon an election in order to snatch an expression of public opinion. I have never believed in that, and I express my opinion about it this afternoon quite candidly.

Similarly, I do not think it is fair to the members of the house to leave them in ignorance of the day they will be called to Ottawa to meet in parliamentary session. Here I speak most disinterestedly because to me as to half the members who come from Quebec and Ontario, it does not make much difference. But to hon. members who come from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the maritime provinces—to them it is not a question of coming here for five days in the week and going home to meet their families and look after their business

between Saturday and Monday. It is a question either of leaving their families behind or of bringing them here, and of abandoning their private business affairs for five or six months. To members from these parts of the country it is extremely inconvenient not to know whether they will be called to Ottawa in January or in February. To millionaires or paupers it means nothing, but it does mean something to the average Canadian who is earning an honest living outside of parliament—because I know it is difficult to earn an honest living in parliament, even to earn honestly the indemnity we receive from the people of Canada. I say, therefore, that for the average member of parliament living at a considerable distance from Ottawa, the present arrangement in this respect is unjust. Again it is ridiculous to say that because it is done in London we should do it here. I repeat the illustration I have frequently used—that because it is raining in London I do not feel the necessity of turning up the bottom of my trousers. I choose my garments according to the climate of Canada, and I think we should fit the habits of parliament according to the needs of parliament. In England, three-fourths of the members of both houses live in London, and those who come from Wales and Scotland have only a few hours to travel to the capital. But when it is a question of travelling one, two or three thousand miles, to spend five months in Ottawa, I think it is due in justice to three-quarters of the members of the house to let them know in advance at what time of the year they will have to quit their personal business in order to attend to the business of the country. If that notice were given the members would be better off both in their private capacity and in the execution of their duty to the country.

My hon. friend the leader of the opposition has made an appeal to the members of this house to state whether or not they are more prosperous to-day than previously. I do not know about the hon. gentleman since he resigned all his directorships for the platonic honour of leading the great historic—and hysterical—Conservative party. He may not feel as prosperous as when he was free to denounce the former leader of his party as being the megaphone of some railroad company; but for those of us who have no prospect or ambition of becoming advisers of the crown, those of us who simply endeavour to exercise their humble functions, I do not think we are any worse off to-day. Those of us who have not been stock-gambling, whose sons and daughters still stay at home