

Now everyone admits that they do not come under that heading. If they did, it would not be for them to vacate their seats, for if they did come under that heading their seats would become vacated by virtue of the statute. So that part of the resolution does not apply.

The second reason which is urged why the actions in this House of these hon. members are a violation and an infringement of the privileges of the House is:

2. That if they do not hold such offices legally they have no right to control the business of government in this House and to ask for supply for the departments of which they state they are acting ministers.

Mr. DUNNING: Hear, hear.

Mr. CAHAN: The hon. gentleman says, "hear, hear." But what does it mean to say they have no right to control the business of this House? Who controls the business of this House? This House controls its own business. This House is in supreme control. The members of this House control the business of this House under the direction of His Honour the Speaker. Even when the right hon. the Prime Minister in former days was sitting in the House, he did not control the business of this House. If he wished to make a motion that a certain order of business should be proceeded with, he made it, and the House could adopt or reject the motion as it saw fit. This House has control, under the direction of the Speaker, of its own business. Therefore hon. gentlemen who sit in the seats to my left, and who have been designated as acting for and on behalf of the Prime Minister, selected by him in order to temporarily supervise, during this interregnum, the various departments of the government of which he is Prime Minister—they do not control the business of government in this House.

Let us see what is the other reason. I quote again:

2. That if they do not hold such offices legally—

We admit they do not hold the offices at all, and therefore it is immaterial whether they hold them legally or illegally. They do not hold them at all. But this part of the resolution says:

That if they do not hold such offices legally they have no right to control the business of government in this House.

They do not undertake the control of business in this House. This House controls its own business under the direction of the Speaker and in accordance with the practice and rules of parliament. It proceeds:

They have no right to ask for supply for the departments of which they state they are acting ministers.

When did they ask for supply?

Mr. DUNNING: Yesterday.

Mr. CAHAN: Never. No minister ever asks for supply. His Excellency the Governor General comes to this House with an Address and asks for supply for his government, and, in the ordinary course, any member of this House, when once he has the authority of His Excellency the Governor General to submit the Address from His Excellency dealing with supply, if he has that authority, as a member of a committee of the Privy Council, whether he holds any ministerial office or not, has the right to rise in this House and make the ordinary motion for going into committee of Supply, and when in committee of Supply, to move for the passing of the various items submitted by His Excellency. I have always had the highest opinion of the former Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe), and I will venture my reputation that he never drafted a resolution such as that, which it is inconceivable that any member having an intelligent appreciation of the powers of this House and of the action of His Excellency the Governor General in addressing this House for supply, could ever have drafted and submitted to the House.

If I might be allowed to diverge for one moment, Mr. Speaker, to consider the case of privilege which was stated to this House this afternoon, in the discussion of which Your Honour allowed very, very wide departures, if I may say so, from the single definite issue placed before the House in the statement of privilege which was first made, a whole mountain of constitutional controversies was erected in that connection, and now we find that this mountain has laboured and given birth to this ridiculous little mouse which we find in this resolution, the whole tendency of which is to present to the House, by a circuitous way, a motion of want of confidence in the existing government.

Mr. DUNNING: But you say the government does not exist.

Mr. CAHAN: The government exists as long as there is a Prime Minister in this country who is sworn into office and has the right to select the other members of his ministry, and, under our practice, he is given reasonable time to do so. When the government of the right hon. leader of the opposition came into office he was allowed a reasonable time of several weeks in which to form his ministry. How did he form it? What is the basis for the extraordinary criticism made here with respect to a meeting of the com-