

covered by a veil of argument and satire, as it was this afternoon our relations will never be disturbed in Parliament.

In the meantime, until the House resumes the debate, I will attempt to discover and then to answer what there is of matter in his address.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

After Recess

The House resumed at eight o'clock.

Right Hon./ARTHUR MEIGHEN (continuing): Mr. Speaker, my desire is to extract as fairly as I can what there is of substance in the speech delivered by the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Mackenzie King) in the way of an attack on the position assumed by the present Government—to extract it and place it before the House in such form that at least the House can understand what the attack means and what was the argument by which it was sought to support that attack. I will have to drag the substance from under a mass of hyperbole, but the effort must be made.

I may have the aspiration—but if I have I certainly have not the talent—to rival my hon. friend in the power of declamation, a power that he has exercised throughout most of his life and which he has brought to some degree of perfection. All I aim to do in my humble way is to place before this House, in understandable terms, and through this House, before the country, the position this Government honestly takes; and the position which it believes it is in duty bound to take in the interests of the people.

My hon. friend (Mr. Mackenzie King) places before the House an amendment to the Address, in which he declares that this Government, has not the confidence of this House. Well, if that is the whole purpose of the amendment, it has no purpose at all. If the motion for the Address is defeated, that means that the House has no confidence in the Government. So the first question that arises in one's mind is: Why is this motion before the House at all? Why is this amendment here? It serves no purpose in the world—that is to say, so far as getting an expression of opinion on the part of this House is concerned as to confidence in the Government. I do not think I will proceed very far before the House will understand just what my hon. friend had in mind in bringing up this naked amend-

ment for discussion. It was not so much to throw an issue into Parliament as to see that Parliament did not get an issue at all.

Last session we had this same amendment—or, rather, we had an amendment calling for a dissolution, which my hon. friend says is still his persistent object and purpose. But he had the grace last session to embody in the amendment some reasons why in his judgment dissolution should take place. Last session he read the following as the reasons why the House should dissolve and an appeal to the people should be made:

The regrettable protracted absence of the Prime Minister, the widely accepted belief that it is not his intention to return to the duties of his office, the makeshift arrangements for the direction of important departments to which no minister has been regularly appointed, the attempt to carry on the public business when the three eastern Maritime Provinces are entirely unrepresented in the Cabinet—these and other things—

The other things being all unspecified—

—operate to produce a condition of uncertainty and instability from which a vigorous and efficient administration of the Dominion's affairs cannot be expected.

And those reasons are absent from this amendment. Why? Because they all ceased to be true. The very opposite is the fact in every instance, and my hon. friend, in search for some reasons that he could append to and embody in his amendment, finds none at all; so he simply comes forward with no reasons and states that the House should express its lack of confidence in the Government.

He wants to know by what right this Government is in office. By the sane right that every government is in office in Canada to-day or has ever been in office in this country—by the right of the confidence of a majority of the Parliament elected by a majority of the people. My hon. friend thought we had no right to be in office last session, but on every vote the government was sustained by a large majority, particularly on the vote in which he wished to declare that a dissolution should take place, "Oh", he says, "you may have a majority in Parliament, but you should not be there because you have a new Prime Minister and a new Government". Did not all the members of the old Government, he says, go out of office with the Prime Minister? Why certainly they did. Did they not all declare allegiance to the new Prime Minister and the new Government and take the oath of office again? Certainly