

in a very unattainable position; and I have simply to say, what I have said on former occasions, that any government that finds itself in that position is in duty bound to go to the Governor General and tender its resignation and appeal to the people who, after all, are the final arbiters in matters of this kind. There can be no question about that. In my opinion, far from having a democratic intent, the resolution tends in exactly the opposite direction. It seeks to allow the government to stay in office after it has lost the confidence of its own supporters—

Mr. FORKE: No.

Mr. STEWART (Argenteuil):—until a vote of want of confidence is proposed. I cannot interpret the resolution in any other way, and so far as I am concerned I should not want to remain in office one moment after having lost the confidence of the supporters of the government or of the House itself upon any important government measure.

Something has been said this evening in regard to the government's obligation to assume full responsibility. Well, it should take responsibility. But that does not necessarily mean that the eighteen or twenty members who constitute the government of the day should take upon themselves, in an autocratic spirit, to dominate the policy of 234 odd members in the House. That, I take it, is not the spirit of responsible government. But it undoubtedly means that after consultation with their followers they have decided upon a policy, but they have not sufficient strength to carry it in the House of Commons, and they are defeated. Then they have lost the confidence of the people's representatives and they ought to resign.

Mr. IRVINE: Mr. Speaker, I certainly make no pretence at being a student of constitutional government, but I think I can pass a fair judgment upon the opinions of other students of the subject, and therefore I would say that if the present government never gets nearer to unanimity of opinion upon a government measure than its ministers and supporters have reached upon what they consider to be the constitutional form of government, it would be better if they entrusted matters of policy entirely to this House.

The Prime Minister tells us that this is a Bolsheviki, Sovietical proposition; the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Maclean) tells us that this is nothing more nor less than a mild declaration of a policy that has been recognized in all British history by the constitution, and therefore it is useless to vote

on it because it has always been in vogue. Then another hon. member tells us that this is making straight for the United States system of government; and still another tells us that it is something else. I am beginning to wonder what this thing is anyhow. I am referring, of course, to the British constitution—that admirable thing which does not exist.

The hon. member for Halifax reminded me of that ancient school of Greek philosophers who undertook to eliminate space and motion by metaphysics. They argued thus: space looks like nothing; nothing does not exist; therefore space does not exist. Motion must have space in which to move, but if space does not exist, then motion has no place in which to move; therefore motion does not exist; and therefore neither space nor motion exists. He begins by a metaphysical process to eliminate any meaning from the resolution whatsoever, and then he concludes that it is a statement of the British constitution, and he finishes up by telling us that it is not entirely like the British constitution, because if it were the government would be bound to resign after receiving an adverse vote, which point he spent considerable time in rebutting. So I do not know if I should take his argument seriously. Obviously either the resolution or the British constitution is not understood by the hon. gentlemen who have undertaken to criticise this motion.

The hon. Prime Minister surprised and rather disappointed me with the nature and spirit of his argument. This is no time or place for change. That is the argument of the Prime Minister of a Liberal government. We are to be cautious of all innovation, because the world is filled with unrest; and we are to be careful lest a Soviet system might be born here, as we understand that one has been born somewhere else. These are unworthy arguments in connection with a matter of this kind, as the right hon. leader of the Opposition so ably pointed out.

I do not think to-day that anyone regards seriously an argument which tries to put a tag of some kind or another upon any proposition that may be put forward. There is manifestly nothing of the Soviet character about this resolution, although I am not so absolutely sure whether the Prime Minister meant that as a compliment or as a reproach. It would be perhaps calamitous for some public men if it should transpire after a few decades that the Soviet system of government is a very good system. For the present, however, I neither advocate nor defend it. This is a proposal which I understand is in