

not possibly compel a government to keep office if the government did not wish to do so, still would liberate them and all the members in the House from a most embarrassing, unfair bondage which exists at the present time.

It was said a few minutes ago that we must judge an administration by the legislation which it brings down. That is absolutely true; but good servants sometimes make mistakes, and if, as I said a few moments ago, a hired man should refuse to work at all because he was criticised for making one or two mistakes, he would not be, in my opinion, in a proper frame of mind. A good administration may make mistakes. Why should they, at any time, say to this House: "Now, this is our policy; you can take it or not; if you do not vote this thing through, we are going to quit the job." They may be simply making a mistake; there may be nothing sinister or malvolent on the part of the administration. While I think all respect and consideration should be given to government measures, it does not follow that every measure is given the greatest consideration by the Cabinet. If such was the case, what would be the purpose of this House to discuss these questions? If a government has all knowledge, and can always decide wisely on all questions, why then have any body superior to the government, to pass upon government measures to criticise, to ask questions, and all that sort of thing? I do not think the argument advanced in that case is valid.

The right hon. gentleman who leads the government also advanced the opinion that this change which we are proposing would increase rather than decrease the danger of autocracy. I cannot feel that that is so at all. It seems to me that the difficulty which the right hon. gentleman conjured up is met by the provision in the latter part of the resolution requiring a specific vote of confidence or no confidence in the government. Supposing a government brings down a measure, and says: "We believe this is a very important measure; we commend it to your consideration." And supposing it is given consideration by the House and it is turned down. The government has a right to say then: "Does this mean that you wish us to resign?" The government has a perfect right to do that; in fact, it ought to do it, and then it will get its answer as to what this House decides it should do. In my opinion, the difficulties and dangers of greater autocracy are met by the requiring of a specific vote of want of confidence after a government defeat.

Nor do I think that such a change as is proposed would, in the natural course of

events, lead a ministry to be careless as to what it brought before the House. I felt when that point was raised that there was really very little in it. Surely a self-respecting and competent ministry would not, because it was liberated from a difficult position, bring down for the consideration of the House all kinds of questions regardless of whether they were worth considering or not. To suppose that would be to assume that the government had very little sense. No assemblage of people, I take it, would make a practice of doing that sort of thing. Now, it seems to me that this question was pretty forcibly presented to the House the other day by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) and I want to read one little quotation he gave. Referring to the two amendments that were presented on that occasion he figuratively held up his hands in horror at the impropriety of the action which was then proposed, and he quoted Tennyson as follows:

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens down  
From precedent to precedent.

Everyone here, I think, will subscribe to that; it is what we want. But we do not want stagnation. We want freedom to broaden down, and this is the time when this particular step in the broadening down, or rather the broadening out, of freedom ought to be taken. The Minister of Finance, I think, answered his own objection very properly just a few minutes earlier when he quoted another extract, which I shall read to the House, and which I think is exceedingly pertinent:

New occasions teach new duties;  
Time makes ancient good uncouth.  
They must upward still, and onward,  
Who would keep abreast of truth.

Conditions are changing, and I maintain that this is the next step, not a revolutionary step that would produce chaos or insurrection or anything of that kind, but something that would free us from a very humiliating, disagreeable and embarrassing kind of bondage. I think, Sir, that some support can be secured for the case which we are presenting from the attitude of the government last year. Every hon. member here, will recall the debate on the oleomargarine question. The Prime Minister, I think, stated, when that matter was submitted to the House, that the government was divided and had no policy. The right hon. the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meighen) was apparently stricken with horror at that suggestion, but to me it seemed a very proper and very desirable attitude on the part of the government. In presenting the problem to the House in that way the government