

of Commons, with a group substantially larger, elected at the same contest, opposing them. In circumstances corresponding to these no leader of a party, no former administration, has ever ventured to wait for the assembling of the House before resigning office. But, after all, we are past that stage now. We are in the House, we are here, and we find the government in those very circumstances asking this House to vote confidence in it and to enable it, in the words of its leader, to enjoy for four years more the sweets of office, to draw salaries and indemnities, and to mark time so far as the country is concerned.

I want to come now to the last paragraph of this amendment and to make some observations on the significance and constitutional effect of the absence of the Prime Minister—the assumed Prime Minister—from a seat in either house, because of rejection at the polls. The office of prime minister is an exalted office. The powers of a prime minister are very great. The functions and duties of a prime minister in parliament are not only important, they are supreme in their importance. The Prime Minister is not only the leader of the House, in whichever House he may be, but he is the spokesman of the nation before the crown or the representative of the crown. He is the spokesman, and the only spokesman, of the nation. He is the sole *via media* between parliament, as parliament, and the crown or the representative of the crown.

The office of prime minister has been described by authors not a few. The attributes of the office have been defined by Mr. Asquith, by Mr. Gladstone, by Mr. Low, in his latest work on the subject, and by numerous other authorities, and all concur that the Prime Minister's position is one not only of supremacy in the cabinet but of primacy; that he alone can speak with authority as between parliament and the crown. While His Honour the Speaker may, as between the House of Commons and the crown, be the *via media* here, as between parliament in the collective sense and the crown, the Prime Minister is the sole medium, except when the Houses for grave reason resort to joint address. Ever since our system of constitutional government, copied as it is from that of the Old Land, reached its maturity in Great Britain, the Prime Minister has been the sole selector of all his colleagues to constitute the ministry of the day. From 1839 to the present hour the Prime Minister has had solely in himself, without reference to the crown—that is to say, without the power of naming on the part of

the crown—the right to choose his colleagues and the right to present those colleagues as the executive committee of parliament, assuming that they have seats in either house; and since that time the doctrine of the unification, of the oneness, of the ministry has been complete. The ministry is embodied in the Prime Minister. He personifies his ministry in so far as parliament is concerned, in so far as the crown is concerned, and he speaks as between parliament and the crown. All this implies—and it is the result of many years of constitutional development, a development which proceeded against struggles not a few—that the minister known as the Prime Minister, in order to enable the government to function within the walls of parliament, must be a member of one of the houses of parliament. He must be a member because parliament has the right to demand that he come there to expound the policies of the government, to defend those policies, and admit his submission to the control of parliament. Otherwise though he be the king's servant he is not the agent of parliament.

Now, let me repeat; for I do not wish my words to be misunderstood, and still less to be misstated. To enable any ministry, assuming to act as advisers of the crown, to act as well as a committee of parliament, commonly known as the government, the Prime Minister must be a member of either house of parliament. In other words a government cannot ordinarily function in parliament unless the Prime Minister is a member. The House will note that I have not stated that parliament itself cannot, for certain purposes, function. I do not contend that parliament is powerless, even though a group of ministers assuming to be a government present themselves without a prime minister in either house. There have been cases—they are very old; they go back to the early part of the last century—when parliament has functioned in the absence of a prime minister although fortuitously, during a session, he had not a seat; but never until to-day, since the full fruition of responsible government, has a government sought to assert the authority of government and do the work of government in parliament while the Prime Minister was without a seat in either house. This statement is absolutely true, right back to the time when the ministry assumed the stature which it now possesses both in the British parliament and our own, that is, back to the time when the Prime Minister gained the right to choose his colleagues and when the doctrine of the oneness of the cabinet was established—back as far as 1839. Even though we go beyond that