

a majority in fact, and that therefore the House had pronounced the position of the new government to be unconstitutional and illegal—a judgment of a divided House which I think does not appeal either to the legal or the constitutional views of the great majority of the members in this House, or of the people in the country; I say if there is any doubt, when we come to pass the supplementary estimates, let the Prime Minister leave aside any single expenditure made by the late government which he deems as an exemplification of the view which he has expressed, and let him go to the courts of this country to procure a decision of that issue. In recent years we have had in this House many expressions of opinion from the opposite side, and even I think from the Prime Minister himself, that in legal matters there should be a judicial decision and not a political decision by the members of this House. I therefore ask him to assert the same dictum now. Let him take any item he may please and have the courts of this country decide whether the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen and his colleagues acted illegally and unconstitutionally in the expenditures they made during their term of office.

But if I may make one other passing reference to the hectic days of last June, I do think that the Prime Minister might have still further elucidated his own position in this House at the time that he went to the office of His Excellency the Governor General and asked for a dissolution without consulting parliament, and, when a dissolution was refused, resigning the high office which he then filled and leaving this country for the time being without governmental authority. I do not know what truth there is in the report, but I have noticed it in the press, and in view of its having been made and circulated I suggest to the Prime Minister that it is his bounden duty, in order that the facts may be known at no late date, to bring down to this House his own correspondence with His Excellency in the matter of his resignation when it was made in June last, because the report has been circulated from one end of the country to the other, and it is believed by many, that the Prime Minister on that occasion advised, and even urged, the Governor General to seek instructions from the colonial office as to his duty, and then His Excellency is reported to have replied to his prime minister of that day that in Canada he represented the king and the crown, and that he would make no such appeal to the colonial office. If such an event did take place, then I say the Prime Minister in June last assumed a position entirely inconsistent

[Mr. Cahan.]

with that which he assumes to-day on his return from the Imperial conference at London.

Now, with regard to the address of His Excellency the Governor General and the motion which we have before us with respect to an address in reply, I find in the speech from the throne one or two matters on which I may make some comment. First, with respect to the Hudson Bay railway which interests so large a section of the country, and which is supported and approved by such a large body of the members of this House. In the address it is stated that:

It has been decided to submit the study of conditions at the port of Nelson—

—to the careful examination of an outstanding British authority on tidal and estuarial conditions affecting harbours.

I wish that that statement had been somewhat enlarged. I think it is absolutely necessary in order that public opinion throughout the length and breadth of this country may be fully informed that we should have expert reports not only upon the navigability of Port Nelson, but the navigability at all seasons of the year or during any considerable time of the year of the Hudson straits and bay. Certain hon. gentlemen seem to think, and judging from the reports of some of the political speeches which I read during the last election campaign the idea was prevalent in the west, that for selfish commercial reasons the east was opposed to the opening up of the Hudson bay to the commerce of the world. That I do not think is correct. We who were born and bred in seaport towns and villages can count among our acquaintances not only mariners of steamships but mariners of sailing ships who during the last fifty or sixty years have made more or less frequent visits through Hudson straits to Hudson bay, and the current opinion in the east is due largely to our personal intercourse and communication with such men who have been upon the spot and have seen something of the conditions which prevail in that region. I myself have made one trip, not through the Hudson straits but in its proximity up along the northern Labrador coast, and it gave me certain pessimistic impressions. Possibly not being an expert I may be told those impressions were erroneous. This I do say, that if it can be established clearly and definitely that Hudson strait and Hudson bay are navigable for any considerable period of time during consecutive months of the year; if it can be shown with a degree of reasonable definiteness that that port may be opened up to afford cheaper freight rates