

and great prestige, like Mr. Churchill, obliged to return before their electors. A day or two ago Mr. Henderson resigned. No one will for a moment suggest that in England the affairs of State are not far more important than they are in Canada owing to the entanglement in which the whole British Empire is at present and the fact that everything is centralized in London from all parts of the world; and yet I contend that the successor of the Hon. Mr. Henderson will be obliged, in spite of the stress of time and circumstances to go before his electors, whether there is a big offensive in the East or whether there is a big offensive in the West. I appeal to the right hon. gentleman and ask him not to create that dangerous precedent in Canada.

Hon. Sir SAM HUGHES (Victoria): May I ask the Prime Minister for an interpretation of the words "by commission" in section 1, subsection 5a: "There shall be a Minister of the Overseas Military Affairs who shall be appointed by commission."

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: It places him in the same position as the other ministers. All ministers are appointed by commission under the Governor General's hand and the great seal of Canada.

Sir SAM HUGHES: When General Carson was appointed to this position he was not appointed by commission.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: He was not a minister.

Sir SAM HUGHES: And why add the words "and shall be a minister of the Crown"?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Because the intention was to make him a minister of the Crown.

Sir SAM HUGHES: Why not let it be "there shall be a Minister of Overseas Military Affairs who shall be appointed and he shall be a minister of the Crown"? What would be the difference between that and the present reading?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: There would be really no difference except that it is desirable to make it plain that he shall be appointed in the same way as other ministers are appointed.

Sir SAM HUGHES: The Bill, as has been stated here, introduces a new principle. From time immemorial, or ever since the establishment of responsible government in Britain, any member of the popu-

[Mr. Lemieux.]

lar Chamber accepting a position as minister of the Crown must go before his constituents for re-election. I might point out that to-day, with all the struggling that has gone on in the world's history against autocracy, there are but two free governments upwards of one hundred years old; one is the Government of the United States, and the other is the Government of Great Britain. Students of history who have examined this question find that the cause of the downfall of free governments and the establishment of autocratic governments is due to actions such as we are called upon to exercise here to-day, that is, the gradual relinquishing on the part of the people, members of Parliament and the people of the country behind them, of the rights and privileges that properly belong to the people. The tendency of the human race is to be governed, is to be passive. We have had instances of it in this House. We have had instances of it where both sides have relegated to their leaders the management of the affairs of the country without, as many maintain proper supervision of their actions.

So far as I am personally concerned, I have always been a firm believer in responsible Government, but I regret to say that, in my opinion, responsible Government in the Dominion of Canada has not had a fair chance.

A Minister of the Crown in Canada, on matters of policy, should be responsible to his colleagues in the Cabinet, and, of course, to his party in the House, but on the details of his own department he should be responsible to the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister alone. The policy of having all matters of detail brought before the Cabinet Council and discussed is undoubtedly detrimental to the best interests of the public. That has been found to be the case in England and in Canada in this war. That is the reason why people say: "Oh, in war times you must have autocratic government." I do not agree with any such doctrine in any sense at all. I believe in government by the people, through the people and for the people, and I firmly believe that, when a person aspiring to become a minister of the Crown wishes to be confirmed in that position it is his duty to go before the electorate. If he cannot go in one constituency, surely the Government is popular enough to find him a constituency where he can go before the electorate and seek re-election. Otherwise, we shall be governed by an autocracy,