

His administration was subsequently defeated on its financial policy; but leading opponents of the government held the view that such defeat did not warrant a resignation. His administration was defeated again in 1858 on its financial policy, and Mr. Disraeli, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer in that government, used these words:

Ever since the commencement of the session, the government has found itself frequently in the minority and that too in many instances on questions of no mean importance, but they have overlooked these matters, and they consider a vote on the second reading of the reform bill to be a censure upon the government which virtually deprived them of all authority. They advised the Queen to dissolve Parliament.

In 1865, under the premiership of Disraeli, the government suffered, at least, three serious defeats. Mr. Disraeli requested dissolution, but his request was not agreed to. Mr. Gladstone at that time denied the right of a minister to inflict penal dissolution on the country. He argued that there were two conditions necessary to justify an appeal to the country by a government whose existence is menaced by an adverse vote in the Commons. Firstly, he said that there should be an adequate cause of public policy; secondly, that there should be a rational prospect of a reversal of a vote of the House. He denied the propriety of a dissolution merely to determine a question concerning the administration of the party in office.

In 1873, Mr. Gladstone was himself defeated on the Irish University Education Bill, and he desired to resign. His resignation was opposed by Mr. Disraeli. During the period of the Gladstone government of that time the administration was defeated three times within one week on important motions, but did not resign.

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax): Were they government measures?

Mr. SHAW: Yes. May I, take the liberty of quoting a reference made by Mr. Balfour to the action of Mr. Gladstone? He says:

Mr. Gladstone was defeated on a motion which he declared vital to the life of his government, and he consented nevertheless to resume office in the very House of Commons which had so treated him. Whether his reasons were good or bad I will not pretend to say; but I may parenthetically remark that, in my judgment, the three great cases in which a ministry had resigned, have not been able to induce their opponents to take office, and have then resumed office themselves, have always been—I will not use such strong words as disastrous or discreditable—but certainly have been unfortunate, and do not hold out much inducement to their successors to follow the same course. Lord Melbourne, who resumed office after the Bedchamber controversy, as it was called, in 1839, did, I think, nothing but harm to himself, his ministers, and his party. Sir Robert Peel, under circumstances which I admit are wholly different, re-

sumed office in 1845, and by so doing destroyed the Tory party for more than twenty years.

Nor do I believe that anybody looking back upon the decision at which Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues arrived in 1873 would think that so far as they are concerned that course either was one which deserves the flattery of imitation.

I would direct the attention of the House to another incident which occurred in the year 1894. In that case an amendment was moved to the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. The amendment was moved by Mr. Labouchere, and it proposed that certain restrictions should be applied by the Commons with reference to the action of the House of Lords. In moving that amendment he spoke as follows:

No one could complain that this would be a vote of want of confidence. As he understood it, a vote of want of confidence would be if it were proposed to strike out any particular point on which their minds—

Referring to the ministry, of course,—

—were bent, or to add anything with which they did not themselves agree. Surely it was mere vanity and red-tapeism to say, "We do not agree with you, but we think the moment ill-chosen—we do not like to have our beautiful Address interfered with, and we will therefore vote against you."

In another place he said:

To look upon this as a vote of want of confidence was as though a slave owner, raving at a philanthropist who was seeking to strike off the chains of his slave, were to represent that the efforts of the philanthropist amounted to a vote of want of confidence.

The amendment was carried by the House and formed part of the Address. The government, strange to relate, voted against their own motion, and after its defeat they brought in a subsequent Address, which appeared to meet the desires of the House, and which was carried. The next incident of which I have a note is that in connection with the so-called cordite vote of 1891. Lord Rosebery's government was in power, and an amendment was proposed in supply that the salary of the Secretary of War, I think, should be reduced by the sum of £100.

Mr. MACLEAN (Halifax): Was it not a money vote for the purchase of cordite?

Mr. SHAW: Perhaps. At all events, the amendment carried and Lord Rosebery resigned. Now, Lord Rosebery's action in resigning as a result of that vote met with hostile criticism not only in the House but to a great extent in the country. Mr. Gladstone himself described it as entirely pusillanimous. I might remark in passing, in this connection, that no vote of want of confidence followed the action of parliament in carrying the amendment.