

Hon. Mr. DICKEY—We must behave ourselves.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—If we behave ourselves, all right ; if not, our independence and freedom of action are to be attacked. If time permitted, I could quote eminent British authorities on this subject. Those authorities refer to threats of dissolution of the House of Commons. But the principle is equally applicable to this House. On all occasions when such threats have been made, the members of the House of Commons have resented them and the gentlemen making them have had to explain them before their fellow members. I could refer to the opinion of Lord Russell, as expressed in 1858, when Mr. Disraeli made the statement in Buckinghamshire that if gentlemen of the House of Commons chose to oppose the government on certain measures then before the country, they would have to account for their actions before their constituents. When parliament met, Lord Russell, in a very dignified and argumentative speech, took up the subject and had evidently the full sympathy of the House on the doctrine he laid down, that it was unconstitutional for any minister to throw out a threat for the purpose of influencing the House on any matter then before the country. That being the case, my hon. friend himself will see that if it is improper on the part of a minister of the Crown to threaten the House of Commons with dissolution unless they give their support to the ministers of the day, it is equally improper for a gentleman who announced his intention to become a minister of the Crown, and who is now a minister of the Crown, and a very important and leading one to throw out an intimation, as my hon. friend did, that if the Senate of Canada was not just to the incoming administration it might be necessary to reform it. I cannot think that there was the slightest necessity for any such intimation on the part of my honourable friend. Indeed his own speech to-day is the best possible proof that it was not called for. He has himself admitted that the history of this House is not such as to warrant the belief that it would act unjustly to any ministry. What has the experience been ? When the Mackenzie government was in power, there were only two in any way important measures of that government that were defeated in the Senate in the whole five years they were in power.

Hon. Sir OLIVER MOWAT—There were more than that.

Hon. Mr. FERGUSON—There may have been, but I think there were only two of any great importance. I think the hon. gentleman from Halifax made the same statement in this debate already, and it is substantially correct. I also know that, since I have been a member of this House myself, its members have not been inclined to accept unqualifiedly measures that the Conservative government have seen fit to introduce. I know it was so in the case of the Insolvency Act, which, after having been introduced in this House, was laid over for a year, when it was reintroduced in 1895. The feeling in this House was so decidedly against it, voiced by the hon. member from Monck to a considerable extent—and there is not a stronger Conservative in the Dominion of Canada than that gentleman—that the government thought it proper to drop that measure. This Conservative House was not inclined to carry the measure merely because the Conservative government had introduced it. I think the history of the Senate during the last eighteen years, and during the time the Mackenzie government were in power, has been such as to convince my hon. friend (and I believe he is convinced judging by his speech to-day) that they will be inclined to treat measures coming before them, whether from the government or otherwise, with fairness and justice and not on strictly party grounds. I was very much interested following my hon. friend in discussing this question of the Governor General's warrant, and my breath was almost taken away when I found the hon. gentleman giving the weight of his very great authority in support of the constitutionality of the issuing of these Governor General's warrants under the circumstances which existed. In connection with that matter, I have the opinion of a very eminent man, for whose legal and constitutional knowledge I know my hon. friend has the very greatest possible respect—Sir John Macdonald—and I wish to show what his opinions were on this subject. It will be found that he took a diametrically opposite view of the law from what my hon. friend has put before the House to-day. It was in 1878 when Sir Richard Cartwright, as Minister of Finance, asked the House to sanction a vote of money which had already been expended by the use of Governor General's warrants. It was in the case of some items that had been