

House to decide how the Government shall deal with this matter.

After the American war of the revolution had ended, conditions in the United States were in a very precarious condition. One state was jealous of another. The currency was debased. There was financial distress—aye, even armed rebellion in the state of Connecticut—and George Washington made a speech in which he said: "Let us set up a banner to which all honest and wise men may resort."

Mr. Speaker, I propose this afternoon to set up a banner to which all wise and honest men may resort, in the form of this resolution, and I invite all those who agree with me, no matter where they sit in this House, to support this resolution. We have at the present time, Mr. Speaker, a somewhat extraordinary condition of affairs in this House and in this country. The Acting Prime Minister, in his eloquent and masterly address at the opening of the session, said that the ship of state never required more careful and sane handling than it did at the present time. I agree with him, but, Mr. Speaker, what is the condition of the ship of state to-day? The captain stands there with some of his officers around him, and to him enters the quartermaster from Moosejaw (Mr. Maharg). The quartermaster from Moosejaw says to the captain: "I belong to the starboard watch, and if you, captain, are not prepared to navigate the ship as I and my watch want, then we are going to desert the ship after next pay day, and you will have a large number of by-elections on your hands." Then the quartermaster from North Simcoe (Mr. Currie) approaches the captain. He is even more—not mutinous, I would not say mutinous—but more truculent than the quartermaster from Moosejaw, and he says: "Captain, I belong to the port watch, and if you are not prepared to navigate this ship as the port watch wants, then we are going to call in our friends who are not on board ship, but who agree with us, and you, captain, and your officers, are going to walk the plank." Then approaches with swift tread the quartermaster from Shelburne and Queens (Mr. Fielding), and he says: "Captain, I belong neither to the starboard watch nor to the port watch. I believe in party government, a party of one," and he goes on to say: "I tender you, captain, my independent support until I consider it is time for me and my friends to unite and make you walk the plank." I do not know whether I can congratulate or commiserate the Acting Prime Minister, the captain of the

ship, for the support he gets from the eloquent and the revered quartermaster from Shelburne and Queens.

But the captain of the ship, the Acting Prime Minister, is in a position which is hardly fair to him, or fair to this House, or fair to the country. I believe in party government. I think that this country will be best governed by a strong government believing in liberal principles, and with the courage to put those principles into practice, but I say this: That if we cannot have a strong Liberal Government, we should have a strong Conservative Government; we should have a government that stands for something. Does the Acting Prime Minister know whether he enjoys the confidence—no, I will not put it that way—does he know whether the views he holds on public questions are the views which his Cabinet holds in its entirety? I do not think he does. Does he know whether the views he holds on public questions are the views which his supporters, sitting to your right, Mr. Speaker, hold on public questions? I do not think he does, and yet he is entitled to know that. Our party system arose at the same time as did the system of responsible government, when that great man—because he was a great man, one of the great men of the world—William of Orange, came to be King of Great Britain and Ireland. He, at the beginning of his reign, endeavoured to have in his Cabinet the same balance and proportion of parties as were in the House. He had within his Cabinet both Whigs and Tories. The thing did not work. The House of Commons was broken up into factions, and the Earl of Sunderland devised a simple scheme and it was this: that the King should choose for his ministers those who belonged to the majority party of the House of Commons. Then arose our party government, then arose our system of responsible government; I believe one cannot exist without the other. If the majority of the people of this country believe in high tariffs, believe in leaving things as they are, then the Prime Minister, if that is his view, has got the right to know it, and he has got the right to have their support. But if the majority of the people of this country do not believe in high tariffs, but, on the contrary, believe in low tariffs, then the Liberal party should be in office and should rule.

There are two roads open before the Canadian people. There is first of all the road that leads straight on, which may be called the road of leaving things as they are. It is an easy road to travel on for a while.