

not only doing what was good for itself but was setting an example to other countries in dealing with a situation arising out of inflation such as Canada and other countries were faced with in the last war. As nearly as I could judge, this parliament seemed to be almost of one accord with respect to maintaining the price-ceiling policy. As I have said, you cannot maintain a price ceiling without having wage stabilization. Because the Minister of Labour has had to refuse certain demands that have been made by labour in the way of increases in order to maintain the price ceiling, because he has stood firm in support of the policy of the government, he has been constantly attacked and his position has been made more difficult than it otherwise would have been. If there is another explanation I would be glad to hear it, or perhaps, I should say, I would be sorry to hear it. I honestly believe that that is the explanation of the feeling which has arisen in certain quarters in an effort to bring about a change in the portfolio of Minister of Labour.

Speaking of ministers of the crown, may I say this, because we had a new theory of government, of which I am going to speak in a moment, pronounced by my hon. friend this afternoon—the theory of the occupational basis of government: when a minister of the crown is sworn in as a member of a cabinet he becomes the representative of the people as a whole, no matter what his occupation may have been theretofore. He does not represent a class; he represents the people of Canada, and his responsibility is a part of the responsibility of the cabinet as a whole. When Mr. Mitchell came into the cabinet he had to assume his share of responsibility for the policy of the government; and if to-day he has to refuse certain demands that may be made upon him because of the policy of the government, the choice before him is to decide for himself, "Is it to be what in the end will be the greatest good for the greatest number by standing by a policy which for the moment makes me a bit unpopular?" or "Shall I resign from the ministry and thereby help to destroy a policy which will do more good to labour and others of my fellow men than could possibly be achieved in any other way?" Labour has no more right to think that the Minister of Labour represents labour only in the government than bankers or financiers have the right to think that the Minister of Finance is only their representative or than lawyers have to think that the Minister of Justice is exclusively their representative. When a minister of the crown takes the oath of office, by that is meant that he becomes one of a

group which have a united policy and collectively are responsible to parliament and through parliament to the people. That is the meaning of responsible government; and I hope that any efforts which are being misdirected against the Minister of Labour on any score such as that he is not doing his full duty in supporting government policy will not be pursued further unless there are grounds which will substantially support them.

My hon. friend spoke this afternoon of the government's national social insurance policy of which special mention is made in the speech from the throne. I am glad to feel that members of all parties in this house are more or less in accord that the time has come in our country's affairs when we should be giving all the thought we possibly can to these great questions of social security. The chief objection which the leader of the opposition raised to the social security policy as outlined was not to the policy itself but to the government's method of proceeding. He asked why in the first instance we should ask for a select committee of this House of Commons to study the whole question.

Well, there have been many reasons for that. One reason is that the question of social security, of any policy of social security which is to be a national policy for the whole of Canada, is a very large one. It is a question the proportions of which cannot be properly appreciated unless it is studied very carefully and with the aid of expert advice and information. For years to come the membership of this house will be concerned more with social and economic security than with any other question which will be to the fore, once the war is concluded. Anything that is done to-day in the way of making possible a further development on the lines of social security after the war will be of service to the war effort itself; because the men who are at the front are looking to us who are here to see that when they return they are not only given employment of a character befitting their worth, and ample opportunity to work, but that the conditions under which they will have to live hereafter will be different from those they have experienced before.

The government has felt that this question, as I have said, can be appreciated in its full significance only after a very careful study made on the part of members of not only one party but of all parties in the house. It is of very great importance that it should not become a matter of party discussion any more than can possibly be helped. It has been suggested that we should have introduced a bill. Had we introduced a bill what would have