

MISS MACPHAIL: Then the hon. gentleman is not as intelligent as I thought he was. As I was going on to say, agriculture said: This kind of thing is no good; we are going to organize ourselves as an industry. They said to themselves: Our politics is our business, and we have been foolish in letting other people look after our business; we will never do well that way; we will send people to Ottawa; we will choose them, finance and elect them; we will control them. These ideas were not as clearly defined in their minds perhaps as I have now stated them, but they were more or less clearly in the minds of the people who voted to send the sixty-five independents to the house in 1921. The idea was that these members would vote on issues as they found them in the house, that they would be attached neither to the Liberal nor the Conservative party, nor indeed be antagonistic to either, but be here to look after the interests of agriculture and be an agricultural group in the house. I want to review the comparative failure of the working out of that splendid idea.

In 1921, the sixty-five came to this house—and we must, in recalling what has happened since then, remember that the sixty-five were for the most part men who up until then had been either very ardent Conservatives or ardent Liberals. They were party people with a party bias—a very difficult mind to work independently with. We had not been here long till it became evident to everybody in our group, and I should think to everybody else, that there was dissension among us. I should say that three of the sixty-five were Labour members, and there was no dissension among them, nor between them and us. But from within our own group we lost two to the Liberal party. The dissension among the remaining members, arose on principle, not on legislation. On the legislation we wanted, we all agreed; but on method and in outlook we were two different groups, two schools of political thought, trying to function as one, and it could not possibly go on. The larger number believed in party politics. While they condemned parties, they sought to perpetuate a new party. We, a small group, did not believe in party politics. We believed in an altogether new psychology, which I shall try to make plain to you in a moment. If you think of the personnel of the sixty-five in 1921 and the personnel that are here to-day, you will see quite clearly that those who represent the new school of thought, have been returned while those who perpetuated parties while denouncing them with words were driven by the logic of events either into private life

or into the Liberal party. Others again, as suits them better, are being driven a step at a time, which the government no doubt considers a step in the right direction. If I took my whole forty minutes I could not tell you what we suffered in 1921 and on down to 1925. The government secured two of our men, and thus gave themselves a party majority, and having done so the issues did not have to be debated on their merits. The legislative programs which the government brought down between 1921 and 1925 do not take long to enumerate. We got almost nothing out of them—the Crowsnest pass rates legislation excepted, we got nothing at all. We went to the country in 1925 because the Liberals had not lived up to their promises, because our farm group had not clearly understood what they were, because we lacked aggressive action and leadership. We were both very much discredited in the country, and only those of the new school and those who sit with our hon. friends opposite came back.

At that time it will be recalled that the government found themselves in a position where they had to do the will of the House of Commons—the will of the people of Canada. No doubt most uncomfortable for the government, but excellent for the people. In 1926 we got a legislative program from the government which was not their program, but the program that had been introduced into this house by the independent group by resolution during the four sessions between 1921 and 1925. Anyone who cares to go over the legislation of that time will find that I am telling the truth. We got a reduction in the tariff—the only real reduction the Liberal party has ever been guilty of; we got rural credits; we got old age pensions—not as good as it might have been, but certainly something worth while; we got the Hudson Bay railway. In fact we got very many things, and this legislative program captured the imagination of the people, with the result that the electorate sent back the Liberal government as you see it to-day. And they sent back the independent group that sits in this quarter of the house.

MR. SPENCER: In increased numbers.

MISS MACPHAIL: Yes. The Liberal party benefited very much from having brought down for the consideration of the house legislation which met the approval of the country. That is what accounts for the Liberal majority in the house to-day. I do not need to tell them; I do not think they can deny this.

Before I proceed further let me say something about our idea. We are here not to