

posed by my hon. friend (Mr. Tweedie), it is necessary to ask for it now? For the first time in the history of this country we find a tendency on the part of political parties to use this signed resignation and when we are considering the Franchise Act under which the members of Parliament will in the future be elected, I believe it is the right time to get rid of this signed resignation business. It has nothing to do with the recall. It is, in my opinion, absolutely reactionary, and is brought forward for one reason and one reason only, that is, to perfect a political machine.

Mr. H. A. MACKIE: I think we ought to be careful when dealing with this matter about continually referring to the farmers as though they were entirely responsible for the idea of the recall in this country. Besides, I am not of the opinion that all the farmers of the country are of one thought and of one mind with those who are called the leaders of the farmers in this House. I am also of opinion that as soon as the farmers in general shall have discovered that their leaders are made of clay, a large number of them at all events will change their opinions very considerably. It is their gods that I attack; not the farmers as a class. For instance, I hold in my hand a pamphlet that was issued by the Tory Party in Alberta calling upon not only the farmers of that province, but everybody in the province to support the Opposition at the ensuing election because of their policy on the initiative, referendum and recall. So that our good Tories are as much at fault in that respect as the farmers.

I wish to say a few words with regard to the remarks made by the member for Shelburne and Queen's (Mr. Fielding), who says that "if the farmers want the recall, why, let them have it; if anybody wants anything, why, do not dispute it." I myself was to a certain extent in favour of the recall when I had not nearly as broad a view of politics as I have acquired since I came to Ottawa and have had opportunity to study the science of Government at closer range. What I see in the recall, whatever may be its form, is an intimidation of the member, who is asked to follow only a particular course and who must resign his seat if he does not follow that course. The clause that was put in the platform of the Conservative Party in Alberta with regard to the recall is as follows:

The recall is a method by which electors may exercise direct control over a representative. If
[Mr. Redman.]

he acts contrary to their will, he may, on petition of a certain percentage of the electors of his constituency, be suspended from office. A new election is then declared, at which the so-called representative may stand. The operation of the initiative and referendum tends to lessen the necessity for the exercise of this right.

Mr. Chairman, if the recall in any form whatsoever means that you may have by-elections all over the country at any time, it is bad even from the point of view of expenditure. But that is of minor importance when you consider that the recall appeals to the intellectual and moral weakness of the candidate, because it characterizes his whole course with a lack of courage in that he may not use his intelligence and his judgment for the best interests of Canada. It so controls or intimidates him that he may vote in this House against his conscience, and when he does that, it is a form of corruption. The recall in any form whatsoever is bad, and contrary to the opinion of my hon. friend (Mr. Fielding), I say that if the recall being bad in its essence, it then becomes the duty of this free Parliament to condemn it, since it is going to bring about in this country a condition of things which is not desirable. I shall be pleased to support the amendment.

Mr. BEST: I wish to support the amendment because I believe there is not in this House a member who is elected to represent only his own constituents, as distinguished from the people of Canada as a whole. The opinion of the people is that every member, who is elected by a majority of the voters of his constituency, is elected also to represent the Dominion of Canada as a whole. I was rather surprised to hear my hon. friend (Mr. Fielding) say: "If the farmers want this, why not let them have it?" The hon. member can surely see that the farmers are just as much divided in opinion on public questions as other classes in this House. We have many farmers sitting on the other end of the Chamber and others distributed throughout both sides of the House, and on every question that comes up in the House, the farmers are divided, just the same as hon. members in other pursuits in life, so that the farmers are not all of one opinion. I understood the hon. member for Ontario North (Mr. Halbert) to say that he would not want to sit in this House unless he knew that from 60 to 75 per cent of the people in the constituency that he represents were in favour of his being here.

Mr. HALBERT: I said that if 75 per cent of the electors of my riding signed a petition