

an amendment, and if it is not law to-day it is not the fault of the Opposition; it is not even the fault of the Upper Chamber; it is the fault of the Government who could not introduce a Bill in accordance with the terms of the constitution. Here is the Bill which was introduced last year with regard to helping the provinces in regard to agriculture. It became law; no objection having been taken to it. Section 4 of that Bill provides that Parliament shall appropriate a certain sum of money. Sub-section 1 of section 4 provides:

The remainder of the appropriation for each year shall be allotted and paid to the governments of the respective provinces in proportion to the populations of the said provinces respectively as determined by the latest decennial census.

Is that fair? This is fair and this is constitutional? Every year an appropriation shall be made according to the census then in force and the money shall be paid to the local Government. Are those the terms of the Highways Bill? They are not. If those had been the terms of the Highways Bill, the Highways Bill would be law to-day as the Agricultural Bill is law to-day. Here are the terms of the Highways Bill; compare them with the terms I have just read from the Agricultural Bill:

The Governor in Council may, in any year, and upon such terms and subject to such conditions as are prescribed by Order in Council, grant to the several provinces of the Dominion in aid of the improvement of existing highways or bridges, or the construction of new highways or bridges, or for all or any such purposes, subsidies not exceeding in the whole such sum as may in such year be voted by parliament for that purpose.

The Government may, at their sweet will, not pay directly to the provinces, as provided for in the Act for aiding agriculture, but pay or not pay to the provinces, or keep for themselves if they want to do so, the money appropriated by Parliament. I ask the hon. member for York, N.B., who was not in the House last year and who perhaps has not given this legislation the attention which we who were in the House have given to it, to compare the Act with the Bill and then to tell us that he can approve of the Highways Bill. Would he not say, on the contrary, in fairness, that the only method which should have been adopted was the one adopted by the Minister of Agriculture of paying the money to the provinces and letting them expend it themselves. This is the constitution. If we admit—and that nobody can deny—that the highways are under the control of the local Legislature,

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier].

why was it not done and why was the same principle not adopted in the Highways Bill as in the Agriculture Instruction Bill? Up to the present time we have not received a satisfactory answer on this point, and never shall we, because there is no explanation to be given.

The other thing which is not to be found referred to in the Speech from the Throne is the Naval Aid Bill. It was not more than three weeks ago that the correspondent in the London Times, who is supposed to be deep in the secrets of the Government, wrote to his paper, in a letter which everybody could have read if he had cared to, that the Naval Bill would be introduced again. It is not to be introduced. As to this, I have no comment to make, except that the non-introduction of the Bill to-day is the best possible justification of the attitude of the Liberal party on this question and of the amendment voted by the Senate last session.

The action of the Senate last session, on almost the last day of the last session, just before prorogation, called forth strong animadversions from the other side of the House. The Minister of Finance (Mr. White) on that occasion reviewed the action and attitude of an old friend of his and mine, Sir George Ross, now the leader of the Liberal party in the Senate. He endeavoured to be severe, and very severe to Sir George Ross. He compared him with Daniel Webster, whom he called the great apostate, and applied to him the verses which were applied to Webster:

Walk backwards; with averted gaze  
And hide the shame.

The passion of my hon. friend has had time to cool. At all events, I tell him—and I hope he is cool enough to understand—that the strictures which he passed upon the dead were the greatest eulogy which he could pass upon the living statesman, because the strictures which were put upon Daniel Webster have not been justified by the impartial judgment of history. On the contrary, men there are to-day, and men there were in the day of Daniel Webster, to take exception to the strictures passed upon him for the action which was adverted to by my hon. friend last session. In 1850, as my hon. friend knows, the differences between the North and the South in the American Union were becoming very acute. There was a chasm which was every day growing greater, and Henry Clay, who was the greatest apostate of the Union of that time, brought in a resolution which was