

no matter what the state of his health, you are not doing your duty to Parliament unless you have your Prime Minister in his seat now and constantly during the session. I do not think that the good sense of the House or of the country will march easily with my hon. friend's opinion in that respect. I have alluded once before somewhere to the pathetic side of the life and work of a Prime Minister of this Dominion; for it has its pathetic side. My hon. friend is young and strong and the future is before him. If he ever gets out from the light and free atmosphere of criticism and assumes the burdens of the office of Prime Minister of this country, he will find that they are nerve-racking and body-racking; that they involve body toil and body pain; that morally, mentally and physically there is a strain upon the man who holds that office, all of which call for sympathy rather than criticism when the strain proves to be too great to bear. And if that is true in normal times, when we have storms and ebullitions only under shelter of the wings of peace, what must be involved in these duties in times such as we have lately gone through, when the war winds blow, when currents and counter-currents come alternately; when immense responsibilities must be assumed and quick decisions made?—What the duties of the Prime Minister must be under these conditions I know, because I have sat by and have seen. I tell you that in my heart of hearts, as in the heart of hearts of all of us, there will be a spot free from censure, free from criticism, free from stern rebuke—a spot in which is generated human nature's just recognition of merit and of toil. This I say of what must fairly be our attitude with regard to the Prime Minister. We have not failed to recognize the responsibilities devolving upon the Leader of the Opposition in time of peace or in time of war. His also is a brain-racking and a body-racking office, and my sympathies went out to the old chief who lead the battalions of hon. gentlemen opposite for so many years, when in his advancing years I noted how the sense of the responsibilities and of the burdens which he had to bear grew upon him. I knew that in his mind and in his heart there were struggles of statesmanship but little known to those who could see only what was apparent from the outside.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition says that certain Ministers should have been here last year and the session before that. He asserts that the Prime Minister and several of his Ministers were not only out of this House but out of Canada: That

they were in Europe, and that they should have been here. I challenge that position and I ask the judgment of the people of Canada upon it.

I ask the judgment of the people of Canada on that statement with a full impression and conviction that the people do not agree with my hon. friend in that respect. If 500,000 of the bone and sinew, the flower of this country, left home and business, went across the seas, spent their years, their blood, many of them their lives, for the cause for which we were all fighting, and gained the cause, who shall rise and say that the responsible ministers shall not, after the victories of the war, strive to make certain the victories of the peace? If the dictum of my hon. friend holds good, Lloyd George would have tied himself down in Downing street. Did he? The Italian ministers would have tied themselves down in Rome. Did they? The United States President would have confined himself to Washington. Did he? Not simply a responsible minister, but the head of that country, thought—and his country agreed with him—that when the lines were to be gathered up after war's ravages and peace was to be framed and tempered to the conditions of the time, it was no less a person than himself, with his authority and his representative position, who should be on the spot to lay the lines of peace. Surely my hon. friend cannot hold to the dictum he has laid down. If he does, he puts himself in the minority in this country and in the world.

My hon. friend first mentions some things as rumours. Then in that geometric or arithmetic progression upon which we go from less to greater, his next sentence makes of those rumours facts, and on those facts, whose mothers were rumours, he founds an argument for an indictment of the Government. Imagination is a fine servant, but a bad master; and imagination is the mother of rumours, and rumours are mischievous and generally as far off from facts as it is possible to get them. There would in fact be no spice in a rumour if it were a fact. Rumour is not a fact, and thereby it allures, and it catches, and it does not tie you down to argument. It is so easy to say: So-and-so told me such-and-such. Off it goes; nobody is responsible; but it is on its trot; it is started in the race, and it goes to the uttermost parts of the world. And so on all the rumours which he then makes into facts, he founds the pleasing proposition that there was a Government seated opposite him that had one head, two heads, three heads—the first,