

immediate or more distant future. Personally I am not worried very much about any such suggestions. I am anxious to decide aright on the vote that will be taken on this question. I should prefer that we have a definite pronouncement in regard to certain questions that have been raised. I should like to be assured that some of these matters, such as rural credits, will be satisfactorily dealt with. I notice, by the way, that there is on the order paper a notice of motion standing in the name of the hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Stevens) which deals adequately with the question of rural credits. I should like to know that that question will be satisfactorily dealt with. I should also like to know that some of the other points raised will be satisfactorily handled—for instance the Hudson Bay railway and the matter of the Crownsnest pass rates on grain and flour.

I cannot say definitely just now how I shall cast my vote in the light of what further debate is likely to bring forth. The opinions I am expressing are not necessarily the opinions of this group; they may not represent the opinions of any other members of the group, but they do represent my own. We enjoy the privilege here of expressing our opinions and convictions without fear of any party whip or leader, and in what I have said to-day I have expressed what is my own personal opinion. If during the remainder of the debate the questions to which I have alluded are dealt with in such a manner that all doubt shall be removed from my mind and I can be convinced that the best interests of the country I represent will be served, by the bringing about of a certain result, I will cast my vote one way. If I am not thus assured I will cast my vote another way.

Mr. R. S. WHITE (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I crave the indulgence of the House while, for a short time, I endeavour to state some of the reasons why the amendment which has been placed in your hands should be adopted. That amendment is a bald narrative, a recital of plain, unvarnished facts, and there is no hon. member who can successfully controvert any statement in it from beginning to end, except perhaps in respect to the concluding paragraph. No one disputes the fact that a large majority of the ministerial candidates went down to defeat on 29th October last; that nine ministers of the crown, including the first minister, were beaten; that the Conservative party came back with its strength greater by 120 per cent; and that the popular vote was cast against the government. It is in such a situation that this House meets, with a defeated, a decimated, a discredited, a de-

graded government endeavouring to carry on the affairs of the country.

I followed with attention on Friday last, and have since read with great care, the speech of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) in which, fortified with many precedents, he endeavoured to sustain the view that the government as presently represented in this House is justified in carrying on. I trust the hon. minister will not think me offensive, because such is far from my thoughts, if I refer to the heading of one of those delightful papers of Addison in the Spectator: "Very busy about nothing and out of breath to no purpose."

Sir, there was not one single citation of a precedent from British constitutional history made by the Minister of Justice which has the slightest appositeness to the amendment that is now before the House. Everybody knows—and those who do not know will have learned from his speech—that governments in England have resigned after defeat at a general election without waiting the meeting of parliament, and that, on the other hand, governments have awaited the meeting of parliament after defeat at the polls before resigning from office. One of the latest examples—not very recent either, as it happened nearly sixty years ago—was that of the Disraeli government in 1868, which having a minority in the House was permitted by grace of the majority to carry on until the constituencies were re-organized and a general election could be held, and Todd, one time Librarian of this parliament and a recognized authority on constitutional law and procedure, used this language in reference to that situation:

This prolonged the unseemly and unconstitutional spectacle of a ministry holding office by sufferance and unable to exercise any effectual control over the proceedings of the House of Commons; a condition of things which, it need scarcely be said, was palpably at variance with the first principle of parliamentary government.

But Sir, another instance occurred in 1892, when the Salisbury government, having gone to the electors, and having been defeated at the polls, decided to continue in office until a vote of want of confidence was had in the House. In both those cases, and in every case cited by the Minister of Justice, there was a prime minister, but, sir, the minister has not cited one case—because there is no precedent—where a government decimated as this one has been, without any regular channel of communication between the House of Commons and the crown undertook to meet parliament and carry on the affairs of the country.

Now perhaps it is an act of impertinence on my part to tender any advice to the third