

have a Prime Minister who, not being in the House, is not responsible to parliament, and acting ministers who, being in the House, are responsible to no electorate. They have not been sworn in and have not made any move to secure the endorsement of their electors before coming into the House to administer the affairs of the country. No one disputes the fact that Mr. Meighen could have had three other ministers sworn along with himself in order to pass orders in council appointing acting ministers. Why then did he not take that course? For the very reason advanced by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) in giving his advice to His Excellency. If Mr. Meighen had attempted to withdraw three ministers from this House he could not command a majority. Are we responsible for that situation? It is a situation we deplore; it is regrettable that neither party can properly carry on owing to the complexity of this parliament. When we met in January it was perfectly reasonable to assume that the government might expect the support of a group who had supported it in the past and whose policy in more than one respect approximated its own. To-day however it is different. We find the independents voting differently on every question as it comes up. No one is able to predict how any vote will go. If a member happens to be called out to the telephone at the moment the division bell rings, the result is likely to be affected. We have had more than one vote which has been decided by a bare majority of one or two, and if a member happens to be ill and is unable to take his seat, the division may swing in the opposite direction.

Is it proper that the business of the country should be conducted under such conditions? Again I ask, did not the leader of the Liberal party follow the proper course in advising His Excellency that neither party could carry on under the circumstances and that a dissolution was therefore necessary? Hon. gentlemen opposite seem to think they can carry on. They come to the House without a prime minister, that via media which, as they claimed not long ago, is essential to proper government. They have not one sworn minister on the treasury benches and yet they want to carry on. More than that, they wanted to rush things through in one day. When we asked the leader of the House (Sir Henry Drayton) the other night what was going to be the business the following day he said, "It will be prorogation." They were going to do it all in one day; they were going to pass millions of dollars.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: You are wrong.

Mr. RINFRET: I know I am wrong at this moment—I am quoting you.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I know my hon. friend wishes to be fair, as he usually is. His may be one lone voice in the wilderness, but I pay him that compliment. What I said was that I thought all the contentious business had been disposed of, and as the estimates were all government business we might be able to conclude.

Mr. RINFRET: The point is not whether the items are warrantable or not. It is not a matter of spending so many thousands on a break-water or so many thousands on a lighthouse. The question is, are there ministers in the House who can be entrusted with the public money? That is the point. We do not claim that no money should be spent on public works. They are our estimates, it is true; but we do not want to entrust any men in this country or in this House with public money until we are satisfied that they have a right to administer it. I think this is a great principle which every member of this House should be very jealous to guard and protect and this is the issue in this discussion. It is not merely the passing of a bill or the voting of an estimate, it is the very principle that no man should be entrusted with any of the public money until he has complied with the constitution, and we claim that the present government have not done so. It would be belittling that question and losing sight of it to claim that because the estimates which were before the House last evening were devised by us, we should entrust that money to a group of men who have no right to it. We might as well go outside the House and entrust it to a private company, if we followed the line of argument of my hon. friend. It is not a question of whether or not the money should be spent; the question is who should spend it, and I say again that my hon. friend either loses sight of the question or does not speak his mind in taking the stand he has just indicated.

This is a momentous question, Mr. Speaker, and I rose for no other purpose than to join my protest with that of the right hon. leader of the opposition, who placed that question so clearly before the public last night. I was as much impressed by that address as was my good friend from Bow River (Mr. Garland) who rose in his place in a moment of well-understood enthusiasm and said it was one of the finest speeches delivered in this House for a very long time. Let me tell my right hon. leader that I would not