

*Unemployment Continuance Act*

are grievous. The whole idea of the conversion of night into day, the disruption of the common order—already hard pressed by our ordinary proceedings—in which time and business are distributed, and the exhibition of a great and powerful assembly in such an attitude before the community, almost amounts to a degradation and depth of insult offered to the house such as, I must say, we ought to endeavour to wipe out.

Proceeding further, he said:

We—

That is, the government of which he was the leader.

We propose that this decision shall be taken on what we think the only sound principle and under what we think the best and most adequate safeguards. There is but one sound principle in this house and that is that the majority of the house should prevail.

In emphasizing his remarks on the following page, he says:

But God forbid that we should see so vast an innovation introduced into the practice of this house, applicable to our ordinary procedure, as would be a rule of the house under which the voice of the majority was not to prevail over that of the minority.

And then he says in closing, page 1150:

I trust that the house will always continue to appreciate—I would almost say worship—liberty of speech, and that it will continue to tolerate, for the sake of liberty of speech, the licence of speech which mocks and counterfeits that liberty of speech. But, however large its fund of patience, and however wise that patience may be, I hope it will not carry that tolerance to such a point that it shall of itself become the grossest of all the vices of a legislative body, and that it shall reach a point where it will inflict upon the House of Commons an incapacity for the discharge of its duties.

I submit to the right hon. gentleman that the conduct of the opposition, with which he himself has identified his party, his policy and his vigorous personality, comes under the denunciation which I have quoted from the Right Hon. William Ewart Gladstone.

I find in A. G. Gardiner's life of Sir William Harcourt, who was with Mr. Gladstone in that crisis, a reference to the same topic. With regard to the necessity of closure the author said:

Harcourt took a stronger view than some of his colleagues, and circulated a long memorandum to the cabinet insisting that it was "essential to secure to a majority the right to prevail which lies at the bottom of parliamentary institutions."

Then as he developed his argument, he said that he wished to make:

"An emphatic assertion of the right of the majority."

And these are the words quoted:

To recognize in one-third or one-quarter of the house an absolute right . . . to postpone [Mr. Cahan.]

indefinitely the decision of a question is, in my judgment, to give a formal consecration to the principle of obstruction. . . . Why is it to be assumed that the minority will not abuse their veto when it is taken for granted that the majority will abuse their clôtüre. . . .

I could spend the entire time available even to the leader of the opposition in making similar quotations from eminent Liberal leaders of the past.

But the right hon. gentleman says if we follow the precedents established in the mother of parliaments we must look forward to the time when there may be socialistic control of this parliament of Canada. I do not wish to refer to myself personally—I have passed the age of threescore years and ten and I appreciate very keenly that my mentality, my prejudices and my predilections are born of the times in which I have lived and the vicissitudes of my own personal life—but I do not look forward with any fear or shrinking to the development of socialistic institutions in this country on a proper basis. I recognize that the strain and suffering through which we have passed and are passing has already borne fruit in remedial measures, socialistic in their tendencies, and those who are younger than I may well look forward to the time when those whose views are more socialistic than mine will assume the reins of government in this country. When they do they will assume the reins with the voice of a great majority of the Canadian people as manifested at the polls, they will assume office under our parliamentary institutions, not by force and violence, not by bullets and bayonets, but by the voice of the democracy of this great country. In that democracy, although I shall not live to see its development, I have the strongest possible confidence, and I think it would be a shame indeed if any minority in this house at any future time should attempt to thwart the views of the people, should attempt to thwart necessary and essential socialistic reforms by such procedure as we have witnessed in this house during the past few weeks.

I have had very few personal antagonisms in this life, and the right hon. leader of the opposition knows that I have no personal hostility to him. If in the heat of debate—I have not yet reviewed the Hansard report—I have said anything personally discourteous, I humbly ask to be forgiven. I know he has played a great part in the history of this country. I have no doubt that after he has passed into that bourne whence no traveller returns, his youthful followers in this house and the country will erect statues