

ernment would also have to inquire how far that particular piece of legislation, or that adverse vote, perhaps, on a resolution from the other side, affected the commitment of the government to the people of the country, upon which commitment it was returned to office. That would be a fundamental factor as well.

Another factor would be this: How long has the government been in office? If a government is newly returned with a strong and popular majority, then it would not be affected by as light considerations as might be regarded of moment under other circumstances. Still, a fourth factor would be this: How far do indications within parliament and beyond parliament reveal the support of the government in the popular mind? If, by the evidence of by-elections, if by what other evidences might be prominent, a government felt that it was losing popular support, then it would not take so important an adverse vote in parliament to justify its accepting that vote as want of confidence and resigning. All these things must be taken into account; but the tendency of the years has been to restrict the right of government to hang on to office rather than to amplify that right in the presence and under the mandate of an adverse vote of parliament.

As the Prime Minister, however, was speaking, and as he pictured a rather chaotic and dismal future for us if this resolution should pass, I could not help but think how appropriate, perhaps how embarrassing to his followers, that speech would have been just a few months before when the Minister of Militia and Defence, (Mr. Graham) came before this House with his estimates for his department. When the Prime Minister was stating how carefully a government reviewed its proposals before they were submitted to the House of Commons, how thoroughly the needs of the country were canvassed, how deliberate were all those considerations and all that premeditation, how final was the conclusion when the government came before the House of Commons and presented its proposals there, and how those proposals had to be supported or the government was bound to retire or be guilty of autocracy, that awful crime, I wondered how that speech would have sounded last session, had it been made just following the submission of the Minister of Militia and Defence to the rebellious mandate of a few of his followers behind.

I remember how, last session, the government declared that it had considered its proposals with the utmost finality, how it had reviewed the condition of the country and had come to the conclusion that if those militia estimates were reduced at all, then they were below

the margin of safety in Canada and the government could not take the responsibility. But within just a few short days the Minister of Militia came and he said: "I have decided to reduce these estimates; I have decided to drop about one million dollars from the margin of safety for Canada." How appropriate the speech of the Prime Minister to-night would have sounded had he risen to answer his Minister of Militia and Defence on that occasion. It would have been more appropriate and more to the point than it is in answer to the Address and the motion of the hon. member for Calgary East (Mr. Irvine). There the government declared that was vital; there it declared it stood and had to stand for the safety of the Dominion. Could anything be more vital than that? But having stood there, it dropped away and did so in order to accommodate itself to the wishes of a mutinous section behind. There was a case where the government should have stood, if ever such a case existed in the parliament of Canada. There is a case where this government receded and surrendered.

I do not subscribe to the viewpoint, I might say to the general theory or principle that seems to animate certain hon. gentlemen in this House. I do not for a moment challenge the sincerity of their attitude; in fact I know that their viewpoint is the viewpoint of the majority, at least it was, of those they represent, for this very principle has been under consideration at popular assemblies of their followers through this country many a time, and I think it has usually received approval. I do not subscribe to the viewpoint that the government of Canada is in the nature of a hired servant whose only duty is to obey the directions, the orders, the mandates of the representatives in parliament who support it, of parliament as a whole, and of the populace of the country. I do not subscribe to the theory that the government is in the relation of a hired man to this House. I do not believe in the hired man theory at all; I did not believe it when I was in office and I do not change my belief when in opposition. Such a theory is entirely at variance with the whole idea of constitutional government. The government is in no sense the hired man of the House of Commons; it is not a committee of the House of Commons. We had that theory brought forward last session, and these words came from the mouth of the Prime Minister, although we did not hear much to that effect this afternoon. The fact is that the theory is wrong; it is not British at all. I repeat, a government is not a committee of the House of Commons: it is the responsible