

chology is always involved. If you go back to the history of the parties you will find that their origin rested upon a very definite economic basis. If you go back about two hundred years you will come to the beginning of this "grand old party" system of which we hear so much boasting and of whose glorious traditions we are frequently reminded. And what were those beginnings? At the beginning of the industrial period a few old feudal lords who were able to survive the catastrophe of the passing away of feudalism, wishing to retain at least some of the power which they had enjoyed, organized a party called the Tory party. The word "Tory" meant in those days "bog-trotter". Then, at the dawn of the industrial period, certain others challenged the right of these Tories to have all the political power, and their party was called "Whig"—a Scotch word, which by the way, means "sour dook"—sour milk, if you please. Both these parties did excellent work; through many centuries they struggled with a great deal of sincerity. They made a splendid contribution to democratic government; they have been largely responsible for arousing in the people of this age a deeper desire for that greater democracy which is reflected in the principles of the Progressive and Labour groups in this House. But we must not stop there. There were only two parties at that time because there were only two conscious economic classes. But if there had been six economic classes two hundred years ago, would our ancient forefathers have had a two-party system of Government? I hardly think so; I think they would have established a six-party system of government. So to-day we have this complicated political system reflecting industrial development, and we are called upon to do for the twentieth century what our forefathers did for the centuries that have preceded us,—to modify the system of government in such a way as to make it practicable for Labour groups and Farmer groups to co-operate with any other kind of group in the best interests of this country. That is the plea I am trying to make; and in that connection I suggest—for it can only be a suggestion, of course,—that the Government move in that direction by not considering the defeat of a Government issue the defeat of the Government. That is not asking for very much,—and by the way, it might come in very handy sometimes for the Government, because it is not very strongly established as party governments go. We have just had, in the resignation of the Manitoba

[Mr. Irvine.]

government, an instance of the operation of this objectionable principle. There, a Liberal government was in power, although it was in the minority. If such an arrangement as I suggest had been effected there, they might not have been voted out of office; but situated as they were they could not adopt any courageous policy; they had to move along very cautiously, and, as a matter of fact, did not do very much of anything. Remove that condition of defeat when a government measure is voted down, and hon. members will be free to deal with the various issues coming before them according to their merits. It might also help to do away to some extent with what is called the "official" Opposition. The "official" Opposition is rather a strange thing to those of us who have been witnessing it in operation for the first time. Of course there is a psychological justification for opposition. It is admitted that what we call "opposition" is a factor in progress. But such opposition, if real, is always based upon a fundamental difference in principle. Viewed in this light, opposition is inevitable as long as the human mind is limited and has to deal with infinite problems. But I know of no place either in the world of matter or in the biological world where opposition exists for its own sake, except in parliament, and there we do find it established seemingly for its own sake. We do not need to cultivate that opposition which is justified by progress. That is a spontaneous thing; it springs from the very nature of the issue itself. Moreover it is constructive, because its ultimate aim is the discovery of the truth. But the opposition as we know it to-day is more or less of a crude burlesque of that psychological opposition which we find inseparable from a consideration by finite minds of infinite problems, and the Oppositions of parliament have one by one degenerated into a cantankerous negation more intent on casting slurs on the administration than upon cultivating a positive body of opinion. They are more anxious usually to gain power by sophistry, innuendoes and destructive criticism than by demonstrating their ability to have power by their wisdom. They seek power more through the weakness of the government than through their own strength. And, remember, I am not referring to the present Opposition in that regard. The present leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meighen) was Prime Minister of this country not so very long ago, and the present Government was then the Opposition, and it must be