

ment. I want to help every government to do the best they can. I want to vote for the government when I think they ought to be voted for, but I do not want to be called upon to vote for the government when that means voting against something that I want to vote for. But until the present practice is changed I may be called upon, and every other hon. member may be called upon, to vote against the government that they do not want to defeat, in order to save a principle or to vote for a measure in which they have declared their belief. That is one of the points I would ask hon. members on the government side to consider. I believe the passing of this resolution would have the effect of stabilizing governments. We are living in a time when government majorities are not as large as they used to be, and their tendency seems to be to grow smaller, which leaves the life of an administration more precarious than heretofore. It would be better, I think, for all concerned, if Cabinets would look for a majority on the issue rather than counting heads before the issue is proposed. If hon. members will review the history of the Manitoba government in the last session or two they will find that, because it failed to take the short practical step which this resolution suggests it was in a position where it could not do any business for the people. It was afraid to move for fear it would be defeated. The consequence was that ultimately it had to be voted out of power. On the other hand, the province of Alberta, and Nova Scotia I believe also, passed resolutions similar to the one which I am here introducing, and, so far, I have heard only praise of their action. I have heard members of the Alberta legislature speak of the new freedom which they feel when they are voting on a measure, because they feel they are not voting to oust a government nor to keep one in power.

Again, this proposal will discourage parties from seeking power as an aim. While the present practice continues, parties will seek to build up a power for themselves, because they know that they will not be able to do anything unless they have assurance in advance of sufficient support. And so, whether it is an opposition party or a new party, or a group if you like, most of them look forward to the time when they will have power, when they will command enough support to carry the legislation which they desire. I suggest this is not democratic. Indeed it is very undesirable that any group or class should have power in parliament. Some of the hon. members on the government side demurred last year when I said that the present government represented a

class. I said that, not by way of criticism, but merely as a fact,—they do represent a class; and they have built up a power by that class to serve that class. I believe that the other party represents a class. I believe that the new party represents a class. I do not think it would be wise for this House to encourage classes to build up their strength with a view to obtaining power in this House. I look forward rather to the co-operative spirit in parliament. And let me say here, as I have said in my riding during the summer, that in my opinion more real respect for parliament has been shown by the present Cabinet than by any other Cabinet in recent Canadian history. But I believe that this is due as much to the fact that we have a different alignment of groups in this House, as to the democratic intentions of the Cabinet itself. However, I hope that the hon. members of this House will see the value of this resolution, first of all in leaving each member, whether in the government party or in any other party, free to consider every measure that is brought before this House on its own merits and to vote upon it according to his own intelligence or according to the desires of his constituents.

I have tried to personally outline the condition as it exists in our parliamentary practice at the present time, and have tried to show how embarrassing and how unfair it is to individual members especially on the government side. I have tried to show that good legislation might be defeated by this practice, or bad legislation might be enacted in the interests of the administration. I ask hon. members, then in their own interests, in the interest of parliament, and in the interest of progressive development of our constitutional system of government, to free themselves by voting for this resolution.

Mr. JOS. T. SHAW (Calgary West): The principle involved in the resolution before the House, Mr. Speaker, appears to me as worthy of serious consideration, and more especially is that the fact when, as we have been informed, the legislators of Alberta and the legislators of Nova Scotia have adopted similar resolutions.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Has my hon. friend copies of the resolutions to which he refers, and would he give them to the House?

Mr. SHAW: I regret to say, I have not. It is well established that executive government in this country rests upon two vital and essential principles: First, the selection of a select committee from the Privy Council, called the Cabinet, all members of which are, theoretically, at least, aligned together and