

primary duties here? It is laid down, and I presume correctly laid down, that our special duty is to criticise, revise and amend the measures that are sent up to us. There are other things besides, but dealing now with the measures sent up to us from the other House, those are the duties we have to discharge here, and very important duties they are. It is very important for even friends to criticise our work, to have friends revise it and friends amend it. I apprehend that there is important work of that sort to be done but not in a spirit of partisanship, and I expect that this House, constituted as it is, will feel that to be so. It is no wonder that, without experience, similar Houses have acted differently in the past. The old legislative councils, we know, used to be obstructive to the popular Houses. That was one cause of the rebellion of 1837-38. That rebellion was suppressed, and everyone of us is glad that it was, but after the rebellion was put down by the people of the country with little or no help from England, responsible government was granted to one province after another, and then there was no further trouble with the legislative councils. I have considerable reliance upon the spirit in which legislation will be investigated and treated here, even when it is legislation which has not the approval of the party to which the majority of this House belong. For myself, I mean to use my best endeavours to do what can be done for the purpose of making our constitution, as it stands now, workable. I had something to do with framing the present constitution of this House. I was one of the ministers of Canada who took part in the Quebec Conference at which the constitution was agreed to by the representatives of the various provinces, the constitution which was afterwards approved of by their respective legislatures, and which having been put into the form of an Imperial Act of Parliament, is now our constitution. I do not say that I then thought that the system adopted for this House was a safe system for us. I did not think so, but my leader, Mr. George Brown, the leader of the Liberal party of his day—a very strong man in every respect—was in favour of an appointed House, and a House appointed for life. So, with the exception of two of us, were all the other ministers from the then province of Canada, and the delegates from all the

other provinces represented at that conference. The only two members who took a different view in that respect were the Hon. William McDougall and myself. We spoke against it in the convention, but we got no help in the matter; and we therefore accepted the proposition of our colleagues. We accepted it because we regarded confederation as a very great thing. It not only put an end to the troubles then existing, but it laid the foundations of a great nation here, and we were Canadians enough to rejoice in preparing the way for a great nation. Canada has made great progress since then, and I hope under Liberal rule it will make greater progress still. I was responsible, therefore, in a measure for the House being constituted as it is now. I should myself have preferred that in some way or other the House should be elected from the first, but you cannot introduce an elective system gradually. To make it effective it would have to be introduced thoroughly and so as to affect the whole House at one time. Such being the constitution of the House, and having been appointed to the position I occupy now, I mean to do my best to make the system workable, to make the House such a House as one can defend, that it may have a larger amount of confidence in the country, and more supporters in the country than it has now,—that, in fact, it may be popular with both parties. It is popular enough with one party now, but it is a pity that it should be popular with only one party. I shall do my best to point out the way in which I think it can be made popular with all, consistently with its dignity and its rights. With this House I expect to be associated during the remainder of my political life. I have come nearly enough to the end now to believe that I shall die a member of this House and a senator of Canada; and I shall endeavour to make the Senate so far as they will permit me, acceptable to the whole country, even to those who have been hitherto opposed to it.

Hon. Sir FRANK SMITH—It has been for the last 18 years very acceptable.

Hon. Sir OLIVER MOWAT—Yes; to one party. I do not wish to enter into a controversy on the subject. One side or the other is wrong, but at all events it is not acceptable to both parties—that is indisputable. I thought it a fitting thing, that