

Government tried to handle, but failed to handle to the satisfaction of the country.

Mr. LANDERKIN. What do you think of the question yourself?

Mr. CRAIG. The hon. gentleman ought to ask a question a little more to the point, because everybody knows what I thought of the question and what I think of it to-day. Then the hon. member for West Lambton said that the Conservative party had put before the country something labelled "National Policy," which had been able to accomplish great wonders. No doubt it did, but the trouble is the National Policy was lost sight of during the last election in the agitation resulting from that other question, or we might have a different tale to tell to-day. I would, however, warn the hon. member for West Lambton not to say too much about the National Policy, because he does not know what the policy of his own party may be yet, and he may find that he has made a great mistake if he ridicules that policy and then discovers that his own party has not altered it so very much as he may have led the people to imagine they would. I do not know what he may yet have to say about coal oil. It is true that that has not much to do with the question that we are now discussing, but it is just as relevant and as germane to it as the remarks the hon. gentleman made about the National Policy. I do not propose to answer the legal argument, because I think that was answered before the hon. gentleman spoke. The hon. gentleman certainly failed to answer the arguments adduced by the hon. member for Halifax, which, to my mind, were very strong indeed. One reason given for the issue of these Governor General's warrants is that the late Government acted in such a manner as to prevent Parliament being called in time. Well, a very convincing answer was given to that, when it was pointed out that the late Government asked very reasonably for three months' estimates, so that the public service might not suffer.

The MINISTER OF MARINE AND FISHERIES. Hear, hear.

Mr. CRAIG. The hon. gentleman says "hear, hear." I am satisfied of this, that if hon. gentlemen opposite had had any idea that they would have been returned to power, they would have consented. I do not think they had the remotest hope of being elected, or they would not have objected as much as they did to the three months' estimates being passed. The request that three months' supplies should be voted last session was a most reasonable one. We knew that a certain time must elapse before the Government and Parliament could be called together, but the Opposition were unwilling even to grant that moderate request of the late Government, and, owing to their obstructive tactics, the present Government found themselves in the predicament of having no funds, when they came into office.

Mr. CRAIG.

Another reason given for the issue of these warrants is that there was urgency and great need for the money. Now, I would just make this remark—and here I speak not as a lawyer, as the Minister of Trade and Commerce said, but as a business man—he said there was very great and urgent need for the money. I say this: I may admit that there was need for the first warrant, and that the necessity for the money would excuse the issue of it; but what is the excuse for issuing a warrant on the 18th of August, the very day before the meeting of Parliament? I do not think that the necessity for money could have been so urgent that it could not be put off until Parliament had been asked to sanction the expenditure. But though the necessity for the money might excuse the issue of Governor General's warrants, yet it does not justify the issue of those warrants. Why, if there was no necessity for money, there would be no control at all over the Executive. If they did not need money, they would not need to call Parliament at all. And so, if we justify the issue of warrants on the ground that the money is needed, we give an excuse for not calling Parliament together. The need for money, instead of being a reason for issuing Governor General's warrants, is the very strongest argument against it. I noticed that the Minister of Trade and Commerce did not speak in a very combative manner in discussing this question: as the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Borden) said, he did not seem to be at his best. I was struck with one remark he made. He expressed the hope that the necessity for this would not occur again; that is to say, he did not want to make this a precedent. I am not treating this as a party question, and have no wish to do so, but I think it is right, as the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce himself admitted, that the attention of the country should be called to this matter. If the Government can justify themselves to the country, so much the better for them. I have no doubt they will justify their action to their own supporters or most of them. But the question is: Can they justify themselves to the country; are the people satisfied that they should, while in Opposition, strongly object to the issue of Governor General's warrants, and criticise them every time they were used, and then, when they get into power, to do the very thing which previously they had condemned? If the country approves of that, the Government are all right. But it is a most important question, which concerns the people and concerns our parliamentary institutions. It may be said—it was said by the hon. member for West Lambton (Mr. Lister): What is the danger; the money is spent for the public benefit? We are an honest Government; we are not like the gentlemen recently in power. The country should not trust them with Governor General's warrants, but you may trust us to take all the Governor General's war-