

to escape from the censure of the parliament then sitting, you would have a storm from the Atlantic to the Pacific that would rock the very foundations of constitutional government in this country. But here we have His Excellency refusing to act on the advice of the Prime Minister; refusing to grant a dissolution and, following the constitutional practice laid down by the leader of the opposition himself, in the effort to ascertain if there is some member of parliament who was prepared to accept the duty of forming a new administration, His Excellency called upon the then leader of the opposition, the Right Hon. Mr. Meighen. The office of Prime Minister is now filled. It is now quite open to the present leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) to bring before this House any motion of want of confidence that he deems fit.

We still have, despite all the right hon. gentleman may say to the contrary, responsible self-government in this country, on exactly the same basis as responsible self-government exists in England, with regard to all matters which are within the legislative jurisdiction of this parliament, or  
1 a.m. within the administrative jurisdiction of the government of this country. If hon. gentlemen opposite think that this government now existing is not worthy of the confidence of this House, let them take the manly and courageous way, bring in a direct resolution of want of confidence and test the House. Let them not be content with this flimsy production, which does discredit to an ordinary, illiterate school-boy, dealing with the actions in this House of certain members who admittedly have conducted themselves with most perfect decorum.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: If the House were to pass that flimsy, contemptible resolution, would it not be a horrible vote of want of confidence in the government?

Mr. CAHAN: It might possibly be considered a vote of want of confidence, but why has not the hon. gentleman the frankness and the courage to come forward with a direct motion having that object in view, instead of a resolution which may with difficulty be distorted in some way into a motion of want of confidence?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The hon. gentleman wants to know why we have moved this—what does he call it?—flimsy, contemptible—

Mr. CAHAN: I did not say contemptible. That would have been unparliamentary and I should have been called to order.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: At any rate something awful.

Mr. CAHAN: Yes, more than that, something ridiculous and discreditable.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Of course it is all that because it gives the reason why the opposition have no confidence in the government. But surely we cannot help it if a ridiculous situation exists opposite.

Mr. CAHAN: All I have to say is that both reasons indicated in the motion are absolutely false and without foundation, and the motion could have been brought before the House only for the purpose—well, I had better not finish the sentence.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: One or other of the reasons must be true.

Mr. CAHAN: Not necessarily. I have cross-examined witnesses too many times not to be able to frame a question to which no answer could be given that might not tend to convict the accused. I see my hon. friend, the ex-Solicitor General (Mr. Cannon) sitting beside the leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) and as I know he is an adept at framing such questions, I rather suspect that he may have drafted this resolution.

Mr. CANNON: If this motion is of so little importance why speak so long?

Mr. CAHAN: I am trying to do justice to the inordinately long speech which the leader of the opposition made last night and which he has continued to-day. I have so much respect for the right hon. gentleman that really I could not with propriety reply in less than an hour.

Mr. CANNON: We are enjoying it.

Mr. CAHAN: It is suggested by one bright mind—it may have been the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Garland)—that possibly we may have a repetition of the double shuffle such as we had in 1858, when a government went out and came in again, and its members resumed their former offices. May I point out to the leader of the opposition, however, that, even if the double shuffle should now occur again, there is one member of the opposition who would not come in to office, and that is himself, for the simple reason that for a considerable number of years now in this country the office of Prime Minister has carried an emolument and the moment the hon. gentleman, no matter what