

this House. But certainly he was logical, and the last thing we could reproach the leader of the opposition for is the course that he followed in that instance. How could he advise His Excellency as to the fact that he wanted a dissolution because no one could carry on, and in the same breath say: If dissolution is not granted, then I suggest that the leader of the Tory party can carry on. That would have been most illogical, and when my right hon. leader is criticized for having embarrassed the affairs of the country and of my hon. friends by the stand he takes, I cannot consider that argument seriously.

Is it not a strange thing, after we have been here for six months, being obstructed in every possible way, by every device that my hon. friends could imagine, to find that after they have claimed to hold power for two days they already feel that we are creating much embarrassment to their shadow cabinet. I shall remember all my life the scene which took place on Monday last when the then leader of the government got up in his place and, in a voice which betrayed the gravity of the moment, read to this House the document through which he was announcing that his cabinet had resigned. Before a minute had passed, the first thing that came to the mind of the then leader of the opposition (Mr. Meighen) was to rise and say: Well, now that you are out of it, I pray that you make it as easy as you can for us. Certainly we are not going to do anything merely to delay the business of the country. But in his time the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Meighen) was devising every means he could think of to prevent the estimates being voted and to keep bills from going through the House. Yet, so soon as the late government resigned, having before him the vision of a cabinet under his own control, the first thing he thought of in the gravity of that situation was reliance upon the benevolence of that very group of men against whom he had devised every scheme his fertile imagination could produce to make it difficult for them to carry on.

Do not let hon. gentlemen suppose that we are taking this stand to-day with any idea at all of embarrassing this government. As a matter of fact during the past couple of days this House has done some business. But when we were informed last evening of the procedure by means of which hon. gentlemen opposite came to occupy their seats, we had to rise in protest, not for any advantage that we might gain, not in the interests of our own party, but from the standpoint of the people at large. We could not allow

[Mr. Rinfret.]

such a situation to exist without comment. It has been shown by every text which has been quoted in this discussion that ministers, whatever their capacity, may be appointed only by a quorum of council. And a quorum comprises four ministers. Yet these hon. gentlemen, temporary ministers, acting ministers, and soon departing ministers, were appointed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Meighen) himself alone. He is the only minister who has been sworn in, and he, sitting by himself, presiding over himself, personally passed the orders in council appointing this acting ministry.

Mr. RYCKMAN: Just as Sir Wilfrid Laurier did.

An hon. MEMBER: He never did that.

Mr. RYCKMAN: He did. He "sat by himself, presided over himself," and made his own appointments.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: A self-made government.

Mr. RINFRET: I do not know to which period of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's career the hon. member alludes, but I venture to suggest that if Sir Wilfrid's record were compared with my hon. friends' he would find that the right was on Sir Wilfrid's side. I will not try to make any easy argument by going back to the days of Sir Wilfrid, but I may content myself with this observation: If we want to find an instance of a strict regard for the constitution, if we want to see a record of the business of the country carried on as it ought to be carried on, there is no one to whom we may look sooner than Sir Wilfrid Laurier. He was eminently fitted to promote the prosperity and to maintain the honour of this country, and no greater man in Canada's history can be mentioned. He was the right man in the right place. I say, he was the right man—words that are slightly different in sound from my hon. friend's name.

As I was saying, when Mr. Meighen appointed hon. gentlemen opposite he did so all by himself. He was the only one who had been properly sworn; he was the only one who had taken the oath of office, although there should have been at least four ministers properly sworn. Even conceding to the right hon. gentleman a brain capacity comparable to the sum total of that of four hon. gentlemen opposite, I still say that on the rock of constitution he should have stood with three other properly sworn ministers before attempting to pass such orders in council. This therefore is the situation. We