

to play politics and defeat it. I say to that paper and to that writer the statement I have referred to is an impudent insult. I do not know of any party spirit at all in this House in relation to this Bill, and I know that ever since entering this House I have sought to use my influence against the manifestation of such a spirit on any occasion.

Some Hon. SENATORS: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Anyone who has followed our debate up to the present will have seen that on this question there is no uniformity of view on this side of the House. I do not think there is uniformity on the other side. Indeed, it might be surmised from the speech of at least one honourable gentleman who sits pretty nearly opposite, and who is my personal friend, that he had grave doubts as to whether I was orthodox about this question, and indeed he was uncertain how the die would be cast.

I have had some difficulty in coming to a decision. I have had no difficulty, however, after a week or two of listening to evidence and thoroughly trying to measure the merits of the Bill, in coming to a conclusion as to whether it is in the public interest that the Bill should pass. Perhaps it is just as well to say now what that conclusion is; not that I think it is of any more importance than the conclusion of anyone else. I do not think it is in the public interest that the Bill should pass—and I have not thought so for several weeks. The reason for my difficulty was this. I think this House should be very hesitant to defeat a Government measure introduced in the Senate, and thus to prevent that measure from reaching the Chamber known, and properly known, as the popular Chamber. It is my feeling that only in exceptional cases should such action be taken.

Though thoroughly decided in my own mind against the Bill itself, I supported and asked others to support the motion to report the Bill from committee. I think it would have been entirely wrong not to do so, but to allow the Bill to die in committee. It should be dealt with in this Chamber.

Many a time a measure of the present Government or of the last Government has been allowed to pass in the Senate without opposition although a large section at least of the members of the House would have voted against it if they had only dealt with it according to their belief as to the merits of the measure. Such was the case under the late Government: frequently measures were submitted to this House and unanimously supported, little criticism being made and no vote

taken. The conduct of the Opposition in that regard has been followed by the Opposition under the present Administration, although it is in a considerable majority in this Chamber. This, I think, is the proper course in the case of all measures which are merely a reflection of the Government's method of dealing with an administrative matter. I had no faith in, but was definitely opposed to, the plan of shifting the unemployment problem of Canada to a commission, but I did not ask that the measure be defeated here, nor did I even vote against it. That, it seemed to me, was something as to which the Government should have a free choice, and as to which it should abide by the consequence of its choice. The function of the Upper House was criticism and improvement of the measure.

Now, in view of one's opinion that we should be most careful about defeating a measure introduced here, is it possible that one should be so opposed to a measure as to advise its defeat? I am of opinion that this is a measure of major consequence and that a vote of this House in its favour would be regarded by the country as the considered judgment of the Senate of Canada after it had heard evidence for weeks and weighed all arguments advanced. This measure is of such paramount consequence that I do not feel justified in ranging myself with those who would permit the Bill to pass. As to that judgment, I have made it clear in conversation, and I want to state now in the most public way, that I am asking no one, for party reason or any other such reason, to vote as I do in this matter. The liberty of action of every honourable senator is equal to mine, and I am quite certain all will exercise that liberty. I personally do not want to be understood in this country as having put my support behind a measure of this consequence and helped to place the Senate in such a position that it could be said to have come to an affirmative conclusion after hearing the evidence.

Now I proceed to a very brief argument on the evidence, and I am afraid its brevity will impair its adequacy. The Bill seeks to remove difficulties and inequalities under which certain very important concerns of his country labour. Some people take the view that because these concerns are big they are vested, and that therefore it is a virtue to hit them. I have suffered much because of that line of attack, for I have been accused of being friendly to them when all I desired was to do what I thought was best for the Dominion. I will never range myself with those who attack any bill from that standpoint. I do not think