

the provinces of Canada, shall be eligible as a member of the House of Commons or shall sit or vote therein.

Section 12 says:

(12) Nothing in this Act contained shall render ineligible, as aforesaid, any person holding the office of President of the Privy Council, Minister of Finance, Minister of Justice, Minister of Militia and Defence, Secretary of State, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Railways and Canals, Minister of Public Works, Postmaster General, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Inland Revenue, Minister of Customs, Minister of Marine and Fisheries, Minister of Trade and Commerce, or Solicitor General, or any office which is hereafter created, to be held by a member of the King's Privy Council for Canada, and entitling him to be a minister of the Crown, or shall disqualify any such person to sit or vote in the House of Commons, if he is elected while he holds such office and is not otherwise disqualified.

Now, the Government has judged fit to set aside this tradition which has prevailed in England for two centuries, and to retain the services of the Postmaster General by appointing him to this Chamber. Of course, the Government was at liberty to do so, but it seems to me that if the Government had stated at the same time its intention of repealing the Act which I have just read, it would not be placed in the false position it now occupies. I know that in 1915 the Asquith Government passed two Emergency Acts to absolve new appointees from returning to the people for election, and that in January last the Imperial Government announced its intention of presenting a Bill to repeal the Queen Anne Act of 1707. I see nothing in the Speech from the Throne, indicating a desire on the part of the present Government thus to repeal the Act which we have upon our Statute Book, and I will ask my honourable friend if the Government does not intend to do so, because it seems to me that it is useless to retain such an Act when the Government takes upon itself the responsibility of disregarding the verdict of the people as to the fitness of a man to enter or remain in the cabinet, and after his rejection to appoint him to the Upper Chamber. If the Government were to bring in such a measure, I do not say that I would support it, but it seems to me that the Government owes it to the people of this country to repeal that Act if it is to be governed by that war-time precedent which has been created.

I brush aside the reason given in an inspired despatch which was published at the time of the appointment of the Postmaster General to this House which appeared throughout the press, and which was favourably commented upon in the Mont-

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real Gazette as not being a logical or reasonable one. The reason given for the laying aside of this time-honoured precedent was that though the electors whom the Postmaster General represented in the Cabinet had not elected any representative to the House of Commons, yet in the bulk the minority throughout the province was large enough to entitle it to representation. This argument is valueless because our parliamentary institutions are solely based upon the majority system. The case would be very different if we had proportional representation. Then, it goes without saying, a large proportion of the population would not stand disfranchised, and would have the means of electing a representative. But so long as we cling to the absolute majority of one in each constituency as representing the will of the people, the reason given cannot stand the light of day. I raise this question because I think we owe to the people of Canada to be frank with them, and to tell them that the principle which we had solemnly embodied in an Act of Parliament has been set aside. It was altered by that precedent. Great Britain has altered it by the two Acts passed in 1914 and 1915; but Great Britain is following up that action by announcing the intention to withdraw the old Act which until that time governed the Parliament of England.

Hon. Mr. BLAIN: May I ask the honourable gentleman what was the position of the late Sir Richard Cartwright in this House?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Sir Richard Cartwright came from the other House, like many other members of this House. He had not been defeated.

Hon. Mr. BLAIN: He held the position of Minister of Trade and Commerce; is this not a precedent?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: My honourable friend is in error. Sir Richard Cartwright had not been rejected as a cabinet minister by his constituency, whereas the Postmaster General was rejected by his constituency—not only by one, but by two constituencies, and he is continued in office through his appointment to this Chamber.

The point which I make is that during two hundred years Great Britain has respected the will and judgment of the people and the Cabinet minister who failed of re-election lost his portfolio. It would never have occurred to a British Cabinet, after a member of the Cabinet had been defeated, to retain him in office by placing him in the House of Lords. I limit my argument to