

days' session we realized to the full the condition which the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Maclean) the other day recalled to us as having been described by an English poet in words put into the mouth of a Roman of old lamenting the disappearance of those days "when none were for a party and all were for the State." In those four or five days we realized that. I hope that we will still, notwithstanding the difference of opinion that exists between us as to this particular measure, be in that frame of mind. There could be no doubt about it at that time and what did this Parliament, then in the full enjoyment of its mandate, under the impulse of that common sentiment, realize? Was it wondering about the rights of the people, was it wondering whether it should have a referendum, was it anxious even about the rights of the people's representatives? Not a bit. This Parliament did at that time, and under the inspiration of the impulse that prevailed then, something that was absolutely unprecedented in the annals of Canadian Parliaments and, I am not quite sure whether one could not safely say, in the annals of any British Parliament. Parliament then handed over to this Government, that was not moribund then, absolutely its entire legislative powers in so far as matters pertaining to the war were concerned. Conditions were so critical that the people's representatives were willing to forego their control over legislation and to hand it over to the Government, a Government that had not been elected to deal with these matters in particular. Parliament then realized that what would be necessary would be prompt action and it thought it was worth while to sacrifice even the right of the people to make their own legislation through their own representatives in order to ensure that needed action would be taken at the proper moment and that there should be no delay. That is what Parliament did then, a live Parliament, a Parliament that had an unquestioned mandate. I am not going to claim now that the Government might do what it chose. I think it might have done what it believed to be right, but this Government, in carrying out its duty, has been truly conservative in the exercise of its powers. But, I have referred to their wide scope as indicating what this Parliament in the vigour of its life, when its mandate was undoubted and its motives of the highest, thought it proper to do on behalf of the people. It was absolutely like the action that the earliest democratic peoples realized, in very ancient times, to be the proper action in like conditions. We all know that

when the State was in peril, when the enemy was at the gate, when civil commotion threatened, in the old Rome of the Republican days, the people, ever jealous of their rights, stood not upon them, and the Senate said to the consuls: Take care that nothing of evil befall the Commonwealth. *Caveant consules ne quid detrimenti Republica capiat,*" and left to them the plenitude of power.

And in virtue of what Parliament did then, in the full vigour of its life and unquestioned mandate, I venture to say the Government might have proceeded upon the authority so conferred to enact the present measure. We have not sought to do so, nor would we dream of going that far. I refer to the legislation merely to show what this Parliament thought was the proper line of action in the day of its fullest vigour. In 1916 what did this Parliament do? Parliament voted that it was desirable that though, under our written constitution our mandate expired in October last, the mandate of Parliament should be extended for another year, and to-day the hon. gentlemen who supported that motion, who felt that the good of the country imperatively demanded such action, now say one after the other, "Oh, we did something we had not any right to do; although we did it with our eyes open, we had no right to do it, and therefore we do not now represent the people." I was amazed to hear members make speeches in this Chamber on the strength of the fact that they did not represent the people. I desire to say one word with reference to that proposition.

It is quite true that, under our written constitution, this House was elected for a fixed period of five years. But the constitution of this country is susceptible of amendment, and the people may express their will tacitly, just as clearly as by their vote, and when, in 1916, this Parliament, composed of representatives about whose mandate there was no doubt, gentlemen who represented the entire country, unanimously said that the safety of the country required that there should be no election, but that the life of Parliament should be extended, and when the people of Canada from one end to the other ratified that decision, I say, Mr. Speaker, that we then modified the constitution in the most regular and normal British way, that is by what is done and accepted as being the needful thing to meet new and unprovided for conditions. It is true we have a written