

appointed by the council, because in that council only one minister sat who had any right whatever to be there. The government which obtained the vote of confidence of the House in January last carried on for a number of months and succeeded in obtaining successive votes of confidence on the Address, on the budget and on the main measures of its political programme throughout the session. But when it found that the support upon which it could rely from the independent groups in this House was tottering, when it found that majorities were dwindling to one or two, becoming the expression not of the House, but merely of whatever members happened to be in the House at the time the votes were taken; when it found that it had become impossible to carry on, although the government had not been defeated, the then Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) went to His Excellency and advised dissolution, and dissolution was refused. What other course was there for the present leader of the opposition to take than to resign and to make way because he could not obtain dissolution?

The minister of so many portfolios that I do not know by which to designate him, the hon. member for Fort William (Mr. Manion) tried to demonstrate this afternoon that in a number of instances dissolution had been refused in the past. He said that he was going to cite sixteen instances. You have heard them, Sir, and you have noticed that every one of those cases was either concerning a colony, not a dominion, or concerning a province, not a dominion again, and that all of them date back over fifty years ago in the history of British institutions. If my hon. friend is willing to go back fifty years in the history of the liberties of the British dominions we on this side of the House are not. We stand for the liberties as we have them to-day; we stand for more liberties that may come to-morrow, but we shall certainly never go back to dead books or to forgotten periods of past history for examples of what we should do to-day. This is why one after the other we rise in our place on this question of collective privilege to protest against the situation which now obtains.

The leader of the opposition was criticized very severely because after tendering his resignation he did not advise His Excellency as to his successor, or did not make it easier for his successor to carry on the business of the House. How could he do so, when the very advice that he was giving was that no one could carry on, neither himself nor any other leader in the House?

[Mr. Rinfret.]

Mr. SUTHERLAND (South Oxford): Why did he not resign right after the election when he was defeated at the polls?

Mr. KING (Kootenay): He was not.

Mr. RINFRET: My hon. friend cannot have followed me, because this is the very point I have been trying to make so far. I should be glad to repeat my argument, but the rules of the House prevent my doing so. I may tell my hon. friend, if he finds any comfort in it, that whatever I said about this matter I said nothing about the Australian treaty.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (South Oxford): Will the hon. member permit a question?

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. RINFRET: I certainly will. I should like to hear the question, but I cannot possibly reply to it unless it is put. The reason why I made this remark to my hon. friend is that whatever we discuss in this House, whether it be the Address, the budget, rural credits, old age pensions or anything else, when it comes to my hon. friend it always revolves around the Australian treaty.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (South Oxford): My hon. friend will not find me renouncing all past rules and establishing new precedents on a question of this kind, precedents that have never before been heard of in this or in any other British parliament.

Mr. RINFRET: That is my hon. friend's opinion, and naturally he is entitled to it; but if he had the same idea of the liberties of members of this House and of the rights of the common people as we cherish and foster, instead of making the statement he made he would protest against this House being ruled by a government formed of temporary members who have no right whatever to administer the affairs of this country. My hon. friend was so much concerned over certain problems that they perhaps prevented him from giving the fullest attention to a question like this which, in my opinion, is much more momentous than most of the questions to which he gave so much time during the course of the session.

I was arguing that it was impossible for the present leader of the opposition to recommend to His Excellency the name of a possible successor who could carry on the business of the House, when his very reason for recommending dissolution was that there was no such possible successor. That is very plain. He may have been wrong in believing that; he may have had a wrong insight into conditions in