

ties, and that is what we must deal with in this particular case. Nor is it clear that the largest group in this House has the right to form a government; and that to my mind is very important.

Mr. EDWARDS (Frontenac-Addington): Why not let the three per cent do it?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Perhaps we shall. It is not at all clear that the largest group has the right to form a government. We had a curious situation in Great Britain in 1924. It was not closely parallel to this, but it affords a rather interesting study. Hon. members will remember that although the largest group in the House was the Conservative party, Labour came in and formed a government. A writer of the time sums up the situation in the *Fortnightly Review*:

To-day we see three sharply distinguished and organized parties, no one of which can hold office without the consent of one of the others. This, then, is an entirely new phenomenon, and the question was, which was to be the fortunate or unfortunate party who was to hold office in the new parliament. The Conservative party still remained much the largest, the Liberal party the smallest, and the Labour party, though it had now risen to only 190, was clearly, through constituting the regular opposition, in no position to carry on the King's government without extraneous support. Practically the decision rested with the Liberals.

And the position which Mr. Asquith took will appear in the following sentences:

I think there is no ground for departing from the normal usage, and if the Labour party is willing to assume the burden of office in such conditions, they have the absolute, undoubted right to claim it.

He went on to suggest that there might be co-operation between the parties.

In the important sphere of social legislation where progressive thought has grasped the same ideals . . . there is no reason why there should not be—I will not say co-operation between the Liberal and Labour parties only, but I hope between a large number of all parties, real co-operation in those fields of activity, no less than in the reassertion of the moral authority of Great Britain in the councils of the world. . . . I would say that the Liberal party—and if as their leader I would speak—without forfeiting its complete and unfettered independence, without playing false to any of its principles or promises, is prepared to make its contribution to the task.

Now it would seem to me, looking at the present situation from an independent point of view, that both the old parties are failing to recognize all that is implied in the presence of a large number of groups in this House. Whether we like it or not, the groups are here in Canada, as they are in most legislatures in the world to-day. Some people say that they are here to pass away, but that is not at all evident. At any rate the groups are here and it is just as well for us

to acknowledge that fact. We must further recognize that no longer is there any one single issue that clearly divides the two old parties. Any one of us who was present in the last House must have had that fact forced upon his attention; no one single issue any longer divides those two parties. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) referred several times to the government as being appointed by the House. Well, that may be technically correct, but in practice the government is really chosen by the party that happens to be in the majority at the time. There is a great difference. It may be said that ultimately the government is responsible to the House, but I repeat that in practice it is chosen by the party that has the largest following. Setting aside legal and constitutional fictions, we are bound to recognize that the government has come to be simply a committee of the largest party in the House. The Irish Free State has taken one step in advance in this regard. From Article 53 of the constitution we learn that:—the president of the council shall be appointed on the nomination of the *Dail Eireann*.

Furthermore, the other ministers who are to hold office as members of the executive council shall be appointed on the nomination of the president with the assent of the *Dail Eireann*. In other words, there is coming to be more definitely a reference to the House of the appointment of the government. Why not in Canada as in other places? Further, I suggest that the British model is not the only one we ought to study in this country. It is often said that the situation in France and Belgium, where there are large numbers of groups, is very unsatisfactory owing to the unstable character of the government. May I suggest then that we study the situation that exists in Switzerland? I can hardly take the time of the House at this hour to quote extensively from it, but I have here Viscount Bryce's book on *Modern Democracies*. Let me quote a paragraph:

The Federal Council (*Bundsrath*) is one of the institutions of Switzerland that best deserves study. In no other modern republic is executive power entrusted to a council instead of to a man, and in no other free country has the working executive so little to do with party politics. The council is not a cabinet, like that of Britain and the countries which have imitated her cabinet system, for it does not lead the legislature, and is not displaceable thereby. Neither is it independent of the legislature, like the executive of the United States and of other republics which have borrowed therefrom the so-called "presidential system," and though it has some of the features of both those schemes, it differs from both in having no distinctly partisan character. It stands outside party, is not