

*The Address*

testing about the rights of Parliament—who never ceases so to protest save to violate those rights himself. Yes, he said, I adopted the first way, I only asked him to leave his party and join us.

But we did get an insight into the negotiations later, and, I am bound to say, if my judgment is of any value at all to hon. members, a pretty faithful insight. The present hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Gardiner), speaking on the 15th day of January last at the city of Calgary before the United Farmers of Alberta in convention assembled, is reported in a Canadian Press despatch as follows—and if this report is in any sense incorrect, I would be glad indeed to have it corrected by any hon. gentleman here, particularly by the hon. member for Medicine Hat:

Mr. Crerar stated, he said, that there were two sections of the Liberal party,—

I have heard that belief expressed before.

—one progressive and the other autocratic—

Think of it!

—but that the larger portion was progressive. The position, he said, was that if they allowed the Progressive party to take the place of the Opposition, the autocratic members would seek to take control of the progressive section of the Liberal party, and that it was up to the progressive farmer members to see that that did not occur.

These are the words reported by the present hon. member for Medicine Hat as spoken by the leader of the Progressive party (Mr. Crerar) at Saskatoon, for be it remembered that after the terms of the present leader of the Government (Mr. Mackenzie King) were laid before the leader of the Progressive party through this missionary to Winnipeg, that leader thought it worth while to call together his followers at the city of Saskatoon and to take their opinion of the suggestions made and of the terms offered by the leader of the Government. Does any man who knows the hon. member for Marquette imagine that he would call his followers together at Saskatoon in order to put before them the suggestion that he should abandon them and go over to the Liberal party? Then the report of the hon. member for Medicine Hat as to this Saskatoon conference goes on as follows:

Mr. Crerar therefore proposed that a coalition arrangement—

Remember, a coalition arrangement.

—should be effected between the progressive Liberals and the Farmers, and a resolution was offered embodying the arrangement, but atten-

[Mr. Meighen.]

tion was called to the fact that the Alberta delegate, Mr. Gardiner, had not expressed his opinion.

Then Mr. Gardiner's opinion in antagonism to the suggestion of the resolution is recited. The hon. member for Medicine Hat goes on to say:

There was no question in my mind but that Mr. Crerar was there for the purpose of forming a coalition of the Progressives with the Liberal party.

A much more detailed, a much more understandable, and infinitely more creditable account of the proceedings than that contained in the mere assertion that all the leaders of the Progressive party were asked to do was to leave the party they were leading and come over to the Liberal fold as members of the Liberal government.

Now, let us have the facts as between these two versions. On the one hand is the assertion of the Prime Minister; on the other are not only the assertion but the detailed revelations of the hon. member for Medicine Hat, and as well the inference, naturally arising in the minds of reasonable men, that any such naked proposal as that declared to have been made by the present leader of the Government would never be such as would warrant the leader of the Progressive party calling his followers together, even to suggest to them that it be accepted. The country should know what was offered. What were the articles of policy that were offered to the Progressive party as the terms of coalition? What was to be the membership of the Government? What were the inducements laid before hon. gentlemen of the Progressive party that as a party would warrant them in taking such action as this?

I can not leave the subject without commenting that the resolution passed by those assembled at Saskatoon, according to this report, was to the effect:

That the leaders of the Progressives, especially Mr. Crerar,—

Those words "especially Mr. Crerar," apparently were struck out before the motion was put.

That the leaders of the Progressives were to be at liberty to do so that is go in on a Coalition basis but "on their own responsibility."

I am somewhat mystified as to what the effect of such a resolution would be. Would "tacit consent" be given to the formation of a coalition provided the leaders proceeding to do so "on their own responsibility?"