

here. In the first place, I want to speak of the group sitting to your right, which represents the Government; and it is sitting there because it happens to be the largest group. It happens to be so for a number of reasons, chief of which is that we have a system of voting which makes it very difficult for us to receive the proper expression of the will of the people at the ballot box, and if the figures given by the late Minister of Finance (Sir Henry Drayton) be correct, the Government represents about 41 per cent of the popular vote. But I am not quarrelling with that at all. They are the Government because they happen to have the largest group in this House, and they represent in my opinion—the statement of the hon. Minister of Justice (Sir Lomer Gouin) notwithstanding—the financial interests of this country primarily, but having, naturally, the desire that all the rest of us have to do the very best they can by the rank and file of the people as well. Of course, they have vociferated loudly against that charge, and some of them have actually risen to the point of oratory and punctuated their sentences with that much abused word, democracy, and told us that they seek to represent everybody. Well, democracy, no matter whether the term be used by hon. gentlemen on your right, Sir, or by those on your left, in popular parlance simply means an attenuated diaphanous nothing. As a matter of fact, the Government must take to itself the stigma which the hon. leader of the Opposition has placed upon them of being the representatives of the big interests. Then we look to the group which forms the so-called official Opposition, and I think we may say that they also when in power represent the big interests. They are what we might call to-day the politically unemployed, and are waiting their opportunity to serve the same interests, primarily that the present Government will serve. The third group is composed of representatives of the organized farmers. The fourth group—well, I must not forget the Independents, because I believe an hon. member stated that he was an Independent, that there were some others whom he described as half-Independents, and still others who were near-Independents. So, presumably, we have there also the nucleus of a group.

But that brings me to the consideration of the group for which I have the honour to speak this afternoon—the Labour group. We are very small, and for several reasons.

[Mr. Irvine.]

We are small because the great body of Labour has not yet been swung into political action; we are small also because the system of voting by means of which the present government holds power with 41 per cent of the total votes polled has prevented us through its gerrymandering from receiving the Labour vote that has been cast; then, again, we are small because of the way we are accustomed to measure things by so many tons *avoirdupois*, to such displacement, or by so many heads. If we are to measure that way we shall not make much of an impression on this House. However, I wish to state that the hon. member for Centre Winnipeg (Mr. Woodsworth) is the leader of the Labour group—and I am the group. But even if we are small, I should like to say, without any presumption whatsoever, that a small living seed, however small it may be, is greater than a dead trunk, however bulky it may be.

But the point to be made in this analysis is that each group represents a definite economic interest, and it is really futile to vociferate to the contrary. Each group has the right to be here and to make a contribution to the government of this country, and I am speaking in favour of the idea of so modifying our parliamentary system as to permit each group to make that contribution in a manner that will be satisfactory to itself and serviceable to Canada. The complex nature of this House is, as I have just intimated, evidence of the political betterment which corresponds to the nature of the economic structure of the state. Moreover, it is merely a replica of that which we find throughout the provinces. We find four or five groups in every provincial legislature; we observe the same tendency in Great Britain; we find some six groups in the parliament of South Africa; we find numerous groups in the parliaments throughout the various countries of Europe, each one reflecting that industrial development which has taken place during the last century.

These new factors mean a progressive readjustment of our political institutions in harmony with the economic life of the state. They must also be in harmony with the law of life generally; and that law, as stated by another authority, is that the internal must change to correspond with external changes. If that correspondence be not met, then there cannot be the fullest life. Therefore if this Parliament is to function in the highest interests of our people, it must find some way of modifying itself to correspond with the changes which