

period. While there may be no danger to-day in breaking the law of Parliament, we must remember that if this precedent is once established and it is declared lawful to adjourn for four days, it can, without violation of the principle thus established, be declared lawful to adjourn for a week or for four weeks. The safe course to pursue is to follow the law as we have received it, particularly when no harm can be done, and no obstacle is thrown in the way of the First Minister, but every move is facilitated for doing what he wishes to do and what, in the interests of the country, he ought to do. There can be no sound reason for the Government asking for the adjournment which the leader of the House asks, and I think the hon. gentleman should yield to the request, made not only by those on this side of the House, but by some of his own followers, that the usual course should be pursued and this House should meet from day to day, accepting from the Government the fact, if it should be a fact, that they have not yet formed their Administration, and giving them from time to time such delay as they may require for the purpose of accomplishing that object. I think, Sir, the hon. gentleman is making a mistake in forcing the House to vote upon this question, seeing that the meeting of the House from day to day can do no harm and that it will be in accordance with the law of the land.

Mr. O'BRIEN. The practical difference between adjournment from day to day and adjournment from now till Tuesday is comparatively trifling, and because it is comparatively trifling, there is all the more reason why the constitutional rule should not be departed from. The hon. member for West Assiniboia (Mr. Davin) made a remark which this House would do well to bear in mind, to the effect that this House followed too much the custom of effacing itself and allowing the executive to govern without regard to parliamentary rule, and not only without regard to parliamentary rule, but in defiance of constitutional usage. I will not go into that subject now, otherwise it might be shown that this Government, which is so ready now to lay aside constitutional rule, only a little while ago was willing to carry out what they claimed to be a constitutional rule with regard to the legislation concerning Manitoba schools, in which case they falsely alleged that the constitution compelled them to do something which, even though against their own convictions, they had decided to do. It is for that reason that every opportunity should be taken by this House to assert its rights and powers and privileges. Especially as it causes no public inconvenience there is all the more reason why, on the present occasion, hon. members should not accede to the request of the hon. gentleman who now leads the House. But the hon. member for West Assiniboia made another remark with which I cannot so

entirely coincide. The hon. gentleman spoke of the devotion to Imperial interests shown by the gentlemen on this side of the House. He laid great stress upon the long tradition and long experience of the Conservative party in governing this country. I am not going to enter into this question so far as the traditions of the past and the history of the country are concerned; but, Sir, it was a very extraordinary thing, in view of such a remark, to find that at the very time when the Empire was threatened from every quarter, when danger was apparently near us, these hon. gentlemen, who are said to be so careful for the Imperial interests, should choose that particular moment to bring their cabal to a head. Sir, it is a comparatively unimportant matter to this House, and a comparatively unimportant matter to this country, whether these hon. gentlemen who are now engaged in what I think has been justly termed a conspiracy had the right to disagree with their leader or not. It is a trifling matter whether there were domestic circumstances which justified the break up of the Government. It may be that their contention is correct; it may be that they found from experience, though they showed it in a most extraordinary fashion, that their leader was incompetent to carry on the affairs of the country. But it is a most extraordinary state of affairs and discredits these gentlemen who pretend to be so careful on Imperial interests, that they should choose such a moment to break up the Government which, if it was capable of carrying on affairs before was capable of continuing still longer. Where do we find the Finance Minister at the time when it was of the utmost importance to the Empire that all its resources should be most readily available? Instead of attending to his duty we find him carrying on a conspiracy which, so long as his name remains upon the roll of Parliament, will be to him a disgrace. Where was the Minister of Militia at the time when the resources of the country might have been required for the maintenance of Imperial interests? Instead of devoting himself to the best husbanding and arrangement of our resources, unfortunately for his reputation, he was also a party to this cabal. Where was the Minister of Railways at the time when the means of communication throughout Canada were of the utmost importance in the Imperial interest? Instead of being at his post and attending to the duties of his department, which might, at any moment, have become most important, he, also, was carrying on this same conspiracy and this same cabal. Other members of the Government, of less note, whose duties were, perhaps, less important, also allowed themselves to be led into the same undertaking. Sir, it does not lie in the mouths of any hon. gentlemen who talk about their devotion to Imperial interests, to defend, or excuse, or palliate

Mr. LISTER.