

The Senate was a mill-stone around the neck of the Canadian people which he prayed that Providence would soon remove.

I presume the right hon. gentleman is still praying. But he is not praying in the form in which this House should pray, by a concrete motion to bring about a result. And, if I may say so without being flippant, I do not think that the locality in which he is praying is quite consistent with his prayer, for he is now a member of the Chamber which he hoped Providence would abolish. But here was the statement of a gentleman who was making an appeal to the people as the result of which he hoped and expected—and his hope was realized—that he would have a seat in the cabinet councils of a governing party. And ever since then that gentleman has been in the cabinet of the party in power. Whether it was that the number of people who joined in that prayer was not sufficient, or whether it is that he wants help in regard to it, I know not. But, assuming him to have been sincere in 1896, if he were still a member of this Chamber, I cannot for the life of me see how he could help but second the motion to send this petition to the King, as the practical way to gain the result he wanted of removing this millstone from about the neck of the Canadian people. So, to begin with, I have the authority of the present Minister of Trade and Commerce who, in 1896, made the statement I have just referred to, but after he got into power he neglected absolutely to do anything to supplement his statement made previous to getting into power, in Massey Hall, Toronto. But we ought to do something, it is up to every member of parliament to do his duty in this respect, as in every other. If we find, in the light of the experience of forty-two years, that there was a mistake made by the fathers of confederation in constituting that second Chamber, it is our duty now to pass a resolution in the shape of a petition to the King asking him to have an Act passed in Great Britain by which our constitution would be amended and this evil removed.

Now, following upon that expression of opinion of the Minister of Trade and Commerce, we find that several other members of both political parties in this country have from time to time agitated for some reform in regard to this matter, if not for the total abolition of the Senate, as some of them have suggested, but which has never been, until the last year, put in a concrete form in this House. I think this is the way to settle the question. If a majority of the people in this country, speaking through their representatives, are not in favour of abolition, they can say so, and we will know then what the people want done about it. If, on the other hand, the majority of the people in this country, speak-

ing through their representatives in this House, are against the second Chamber, they can vote for this motion, knowing they are voting on a concrete resolution, and getting a concrete result; knowing that if the majority of them petition for it, the petition goes to Great Britain, and something will be done. Now, we had also from Ontario a very celebrated gentleman, a man highly respected, who has gone to his great reward, Sir Oliver Mowat. He spoke in favour of abolishing the Senate, although some hon. gentlemen may think that he merely wanted to reform it. Let me give the exact language he used in 1893:

We are agreed as to the necessity of a fundamental reform of the Senate, if for any reason it must or should be retained.

Now, the latter part of Sir Oliver Mowat's statement is the strongest argument in the world for its abolition. He says we must have some fundamental reform of it, if for any reason it must or should be retained, clearly admitting that in his opinion it was not necessary it should be retained. Now, in a matter of this kind which deals with the constitution of the country, we do not want to act hastily or thoughtlessly, but with the greatest care. And am I not right in saying to-day that, with the experience of forty years under our constitution, for at least one-half of that time there has been a steady agitation in the country for the abolition of the Senate as absolutely necessary for the welfare of this country? Am I not right then in saying that it is high time now that somebody should move in order that this House may be seized of the question in a concrete form, not by mere academic discussions of resolutions, but by some positive action that will secure a removal of the evil? In my opinion the only way to remove it is either by the abolition of the Senate entirely, or else its reform in some way. As I have said, no two of us can agree upon what would be a practical reform; therefore, the only thing that is left us to do is to go to the foot of the Throne in Great Britain and ask to have the constitution amended so that the Senate may be entirely abolished. Now, Sir, I ask this question: Would those who have since been called the fathers of confederation, who thought they knew what this country needed, and asked for a second Chamber, in the light of the information we have to-day, could they have known what was likely to happen, would the fathers of confederation have done as they did and asked for a second Chamber? Did they not do it rather because, when drawing up the constitution, they were guided by the example of Great Britain, without realizing that her example might not fit this Canada of ours? There was the House of Lords in England and they thought we should also have a second Chamber in this country. But in the very constitu-