

mission he has been calling this a government by commission and a government of drift, alleging that we relegate subjects to commissions instead of discharging the work ourselves. Does he want an election on that subject? Does he want to appeal to the country to decide whether we should have had another Grand Trunk commission. I think not. Why does he go up and down this country talking about a drifting government and a government by commissions, when he in the last and greatest offender?—when he knows this government refused to drift, and refused to appoint a commission even though demanded by himself and his party? A commission may have been appointed since that time to deal with some particular subject, but with nothing of the nature or the magnitude of the Grand Trunk problem. I do not know of a single commission appointed since. Can hon. gentlemen opposite think of one? Not one of them can. They are the last commission people themselves, so why do they stand and talk about more and more commissions?

That is the position they assume. It has the support of the hon. member for Marquette, a Western member, who wants an appeal to the country just before a census—an appeal which would result in Western Canada being under-represented in this House for nearly four years.

The leader of the Opposition cannot stand to have a seat vacant in Parliament now. There has to be a representative in Parliament for every constituency. He can hardly wait until a deceased and honoured member of this House is in his grave before he appeals to Parliament for an election in that constituency. He wants an election right off in East Elgin, and he thinks we are doing a grave injustice to that constituency because the writ has not been issued already, although the revered member for that constituency has been dead little more than two weeks. When he was talking in that strain he should have remembered that his late leader sat in this House through a whole Parliament representing two constituencies, or affecting to do so, when the whole principle of representation means that in such a case one constituency is unrepresented—and during that Parliament he himself sat as a colleague of his leader. The hon. member who sits to his right, or who should sit to his right at the present time (Mr. Lemieux) was elected two years ago last December for two counties, and he has refused to resign from either of them yet. Does the hon. gentle-

[Mr. Meighen.]

man think he is going to impress the House with his earnestness when he appeals for an election in East Elgin two weeks after the decease of the member for that constituency, and thinks it is all right for the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Lemieux) to allow Maisonneuve to be unrepresented in this Parliament for two and a half years?

The hon. member for Marquette goes back to his county and the West having proclaimed that, on the grounds set out in this amendment,—because the Prime Minister is ill, because there is an Acting Minister of Public Works, and because of other things of which no one is cognizant, but which he says combine to produce a condition of uncertainty—he thinks Western Canada should do without ten to twenty representatives to whom it is in all justice entitled for three years in the Parliament of Canada. Let not the hon. member think he can separate the reasons given from the conclusion when he votes for a specific amendment. He votes to disfranchise Western Canada to the extent of ten to twenty per cent, if not more, and he votes to do so because the Prime Minister is ill and cannot be here, and because there is an Acting Minister of Public Works.

Now, I have sought to examine the resolution that hon. members are asked to vote upon to-night, and to examine the reasons adduced in support of it by hon. gentlemen opposite, and hon. gentlemen angularly opposite as well; and I appeal to all hon. gentlemen everywhere to allow Western Canada to get its representation, which it assuredly will; because there is no intention to have an election until an opportunity is provided to give Western Canada its full share of representation after the census is taken. I appeal to all to repudiate the preamble and repudiate the conclusion, and to stand by stable, firm and honest government.

On motion of Mr. Michael Clark (Red Deer) the debate was adjourned.

On motion of Sir George Foster the House adjourned at 11.15 p.m.

Friday, March 5, 1920.

The House met at Three o'clock.

RAILWAY ACT, 1919, AMENDMENT.

Mr. J. E. ARMSTRONG (East Lambton) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 3, to amend the Railway Act, 1919.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Explain.