

ernment with a strong party behind it throws its strength into a measure and then sends that measure to the other House, if it is proper legislation you may depend upon its getting a fair show. But that may not be the case. I just throw out the suggestion that, looking at it from some points of view, it is not a demerit, but rather a merit that both sides of the House shall owe their fealty and loyalty, in a high and good sense, to the principles which unite and dominate their party. When a party outlives its principles, then some other principles have to be put in their place. That is the line of development in parliamentary and legislative institutions. Speaking as an individual, and not as leading in the House for the time being the party to which I belong, I would like to see some changes instituted so that the constitution of the Senate would in some respects be different from what it is in its general line of representation. It may be idealistic, but I would like to see in the Senate some special representation of great interests in this country other than political interests; for example, the great educational and scientific and moral interests of the country which tend just as much and perhaps even more towards making a country prosperous and great as do iron and copper and lead, and fish, and lumber.

To these intellectual, moral and spiritual forces, I should like to see representation given in the senatorial body; I should like to have those representatives mingle with the representatives of the more material, and in some respects more practical, interests. Could this be brought about, I think it would tend toward better legislation and improved tone in our political life.

These are just a few thoughts which have come to me as this discussion has gone on. What shall we do with the matter, now that it is here? The suggestion is made to send it to a committee of the House, to gather testimony upon the subject. Well, I have seen an infinite number of these committees appointed to gather testimony, and I ask myself what could such a committee gather on this subject that would be of great moment or would greatly help in the solution of this question? Is the country alive to the necessity of a change in the constitution of Senate? It certainly is not showing much interest in the matter. I am not sure but that the country has settled down to the idea that perhaps the system that we have is quite as good as any other. There is not a very wide in-

terest in the subject in this House, so far as I have been able to judge by this debate and similar debates in previous sessions. So, I do not know of any particular good which will come from the appointment of a committee armed with power to send for persons and papers and instructed to collect information as to an ideal constitution for our Senate. The facts can easily be learned. There are the different senatorial bodies of the world with their several constitutions, and any man can within a short time get together the information as to these. This is a question which does not depend so much on information, it seems to me, as upon the careful consideration of the historic development of government in the world in general, and especially in our own country and countries similar to ours. Judgment formed in this way is what will weigh in future changes to be made in the constitution of our Senate. I do not wish to dictate to the House, but as we are few in number this afternoon, and as the subject is an important one and members may desire to consider it for a little time, I would suggest that when we have ended our present discussion, the debate might be adjourned to be taken up later, when we may come to the conclusion to appoint a committee, or to deal with the question in some other way, as we think best.

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER: The tone of the remarks we have just heard from the leader of the House, Sir George Foster, is most commendable, and will be approved, I am sure, by every member of the House. As he has very properly said, the question is being treated academically, yet it is a very practical question, and I am more pleased than I can say that he has not closed the door to the suggestion of the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Maclean) to refer this matter to a committee. A committee composed of the hon. member for Welland, the hon. member for Halifax, the hon. member for Kingston, and the other hon. gentlemen who have addressed the House on this subject, would be able to collect, I am sure, valuable information on the subject, and to make very useful suggestions. I do not know that there is very much to be collected in the way of definite information, but a committee composed as I have suggested would be able to make a report to the House which would assist us in strengthening one of the weak places in our constitution. For, I have no doubt, if there is a weak point in the constitution of