

stock. That hon. gentleman said that since his advent to this House as a supporter of the Union Government—a Government composed of the best elements of both of the old parties—he had found himself abundantly satisfied. I want to say as an old Liberal that I have never sat behind any Government, nor have I ever observed any Government—whether it called itself Liberal or Conservative—for the last thirty or thirty-five years that in my judgment was more progressive, or was even more radical, than this Government has been. It has—not only in my case but in the case of many others—deserved, but compelled my support. When it made an honest effort to deal with public ownership, and there was no other course it was able to pursue, I had no difficulty in agreeing with it and supporting it on that point.

Now let us look at the achievements of the Government—and I am not going to dwell upon the record in detail as the subject was thoroughly covered by the Acting Prime Minister. The Government, at least, dealt efficiently and satisfactorily with the war. That was the great issue when the Government was elected in 1917, and the war has been won. It is true the war cost a great deal of money, and involved the lives of 60,000 of the flower of our race, but even that was not too great a price to pay for liberty. But the war was won and the Government did all that could be expected of it in that direction. We have also had from the Government women's franchise. We have had the Civil Service, under a commission, removed entirely from the vicious system that prevailed under the old regime. So far as my observation goes there is no patronage in the Civil Service to-day. And there is no patronage in connection with the awarding of contracts as there used to be. Then prohibition was made effective in Canada by virtue of the conduct of the Government. Further, there has been control of prices and accompanying it the creation of a Board of Commerce, and while many may be ready to sneer, I want to say that a great deal has been accomplished in that connection. We have had, in connection with the adjustment of war problems, the demobilization of 500,000 troops, soldiers' civil re-establishment and vocational training, the granting of pensions and the care of returned soldiers. We have had the inauguration of a housing scheme, the establishment of a Health Department, the adoption of public ownership of railways, the consolidation of our Railway Act, and the passage of a bankruptcy law. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this was a very fair pro-

[Mr. Richardson.]

gramme and a very fair record of accomplishment for the time that this Government has been in office.

There are many other questions that should, and doubtless will, be dealt with, but just why there should be a declaration in favour of a general election at the present time I for one cannot understand. I do not believe there is any public demand throughout the country for a general election. I believe with the ex-Minister of Finance, that the people who do the thinking, the people who have the interest of this country most deeply at heart, are anxious to see this Government carry on. I think with my hon. friend that if you were to have a general election you would not have stability of Government for five, ten or fifteen years. What you would likely have would be Government by groups and a disturbing succession of administrations. It is perfectly true that there is a good deal of unrest throughout the Dominion, but that is inevitable after war and it is inevitable during war time.

Sometimes I have stood by and listened to groups of people denouncing all governments—denouncing municipal, provincial and Dominion governments, denouncing everything that is—and the manner in which that denunciation was carried on was so insensate I could not help thinking of the experience of Samson who pulled down the pillars of the temple and in so doing perished himself in the catastrophe. These thousands of people throughout the land who indulge in general and wholesale criticism of everything that exists have no conception of what their influence is leading to. It might easily result as disastrously as did the act of Samson; it might pull down the constitution of our country. Those who rock the boat in perilous and dangerous times are a menace to the community. In my judgment nothing could occur that would be more likely to disturb the national craft and bring chaos in the country than a general election at the present time. It might be desirable in a year or two. I believe the country is progressing in the direction of settling down, and when that time comes then let us have a dissolution and let the best men, or the best group, or the best party, win.

I wish to offer an observation or two on the same lines as my hon. friend the member for Parkdale. He spoke of the desirability of a rapprochement with the province of Quebec, because it is charged that there are no representatives from the great province of Quebec in this Government. It is true there is one member of the Gov-