Able Review of Canada's Present Day Condition and the Policy that Will Put Her on Highroad to Prosperity

Premier Meighen in Speech at Ottawa, Declared Country Had Lost Millions of Dollars Through the Disgraceful Conduct of the King Government in its Administration of the Customs Department– No Constitutional Issue Involved – Customs Inquiry Will be Continued by Sir Francis Lemieux, and the Intention of the Government is to Restore the Principle of Protection in the Customs Tariff

Premier Meighen's speech with which he opened his election campaign on Friday night at Ottawa, was as follows:—

"It is but a few short months since, on the eve of last year's election we met in this hall before. It is altogether fitting that in the very meeting place where the last campaign ended the present campaign should begin.

Conservative Party Enjoys United Counsel of Leaders.

"The exigencies of the late war, the trials and tribulations of those dark and terrible years brought in their train some degree of misunderstanding, resulting, I am sorry to say, in disunion in the ranks of the Conservative party. From such disunion we have suffered for some years and even in the late campaign. It is a matter of pride and gratification that we have evidence now that these experiences are passing away, and that the great Conservative party of Macdonald and Cartier is restored to its pristine vigour and enjoys the united counsel of its leaders in every province, the magnificent welcome you have given to the Hon. Mr. Patenaude tonight is witness to the feeling of loyalty, comradeship and confidence which pervades the party from coast to coast. I am proud indeed to have associated with me such a man as Mr. Patenaude and to share with him the great responsibility of government in this country. I am proud to have associated with me on this platform so many members of the new government, and especially to have appear with me as a speaker, the Honorable Senator Robertson, a man who I believe is trusted more by the ranks of labor in this Dominion than is any other Canadian.

Liberal Legislative Record Not Impressive

"At the time of the last October election the government of the Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King had been four years in power, it had enjoyed through those four years a very narrow majority over Progressives and Conservatives together, but it had been accorded the support of the sixty-five members of the Progressive party on all subjects of policy, upon which they and the government itself had been elected. Even in the enjoyment of such overwhelming support as against fifty members of the Conservative party its legislative record had not been impressive. It had trifled with its own pledges, and had scoffed at its promises to the people, and had sought to cover its retreat from a definite and positive policy to which in 1919 it had become committed, under a series of excuses. In every attempt at initiating important Legislation it had bungled and had many times been compelled to reverse its proposals and withdraw its bills. In fiscal matters it had adopted a course of fitful and irrational tariff tinkering merely to placate its allies. It had disturbed business, frightened capital, contracted employment, dried up or almost dried up immigration and had driven hundreds of thousands of our sons and daughters into a foreign land.

King Govt. Tried and Defeated on its Record.

"Tried on its record, the King Government was defeated; in 133 constituencies out of 245 its candidates lost the poll. Nine ministers of the crown, including the Prime Minister, were rejected by their constituents and the Conservative party led at the polls in seven out of the nine provinces.

"Mr. King had appealed to the country on the ground that he required a substantial majority over all others and declared expressly that without this majority he could not undertake to solve the problems of the country. He declared that without such a majority his administration would be helpless and could not shoulder the responsibilities of government. After the elections, the narrow majority of the last parliament was swept away Mr. King returned with only seats out of the 245.

"The Conservative party had by far the largest popular vote and had 116 members in the House of Commons. Notwithstanding their leaders' pre-election professions, the surviving members of Mr. King's government, still determined to hold on to power. They decided to lay before the remnant of the Progressive party, which now held the balance of power, a series of promises of definite and important legislation upon which the country as a whole had not rendered a verdict. Thus it was sought to purchase a continuance in office and to hold in derision and defiance the verdict of the Canadian people.

Disgraceful and Ill-tempered Exit of King.

"Under these circumstances one session has been passed and another election is upon us. The government of Mr. Mackenzie King has been censured in the House of Commons by a decisive majority, in which censure the great proportion of its own allies were compelled to join. That government is no longer in office. The story of its ungraceful and ill-tempered exit I shall refer to later. For the present what I want to ask you is this. Have the revelations of the past session been such as to add to the credit of the Mackenzie King administration; has the story of the six months ended three weeks ago been such as to generate in the breasts of the people either pride or confidence in the government which has gone from power?

"Into the revelations of the past session I intend now to enquire. The inquiry will not be inspired by ambition to detect a minor error here or a minor error there. No one with any experience in the great organism of government can fail to be aware that errors of detail are bound to occur and that from such errors no supervision, however honest or competent, can keep the gigantic system wholly free. In common fairness this fact must at all times be kept in mind. I shall not consider any indictment against an administration worth while unless it goes to the very root of government, unless it shows incompetence, inefficiency or corruption affecting the very vitals of government itself, and menacing in serious degree the public weal.

Story of the Past Session.

"What then is the story of this session? It has been constituted in the main of the work of what is known as the Stevens committee. This committee was established early in the session on the demand of the Hon. H. H. Stevens, Member for Vancouver Centre after an attack on the administration of the Customs and Excise department, which in the severity of its terms and the confidence with which it was launched startled the entire Dominion. The committee was composed of four Liberal followers of the government, four Conservatives and one Progressive. The one Progressive was Mr. Kennedy who up to the time of the revelation which the committee unearthed had through five years given his allegiance with all but unerring devotion to the government of Mr. Mackenzie King. The committee therefore was certainly not a jury wholly prejudiced against the accused.

"Through four months it prosecuted its work. The Customs department was day by day subjected to scrutiny. All sorts of difficulties were encountered; witnesses escaped; the books of manufacturers disappeared; the authority of the committee itself was flouted, testimony was given which on its face was false. But against all of these difficulties the committee labored on and only ceased its efforts because of the approach of the session's end. The evidence is now in the hands of the people of Canada. It covers only a fraction of the operations of the customs and excise department, but within that fraction it has discovered and absolutely established such a profundity of incompetence, inefficiency, and neglect, such a mass of malfeasance on the part of officials of high and low rank and of the Minister himself indeed, such a welter of wickedness as has never been practiced before in the revelations of any Canadian parliament. My only request of the people of Canada at an hour such as this is read the testimony as printed in the committee's reports; read the report, the findings of the committee itself of its Liberal members and its Progressive member and then as honest men and women ask yourselves whether the story there revealed would be possible under a government which was reasonably honest or reasonably competent. The volume of the evidence given is so vast that there is a tendency to reel back in despair before attacking the task. The public mind has had a tendency to become confused by the mere immensity of the evidence adduced.

Percentage of Customs Revenue Seriously Reduced Under Liberals.

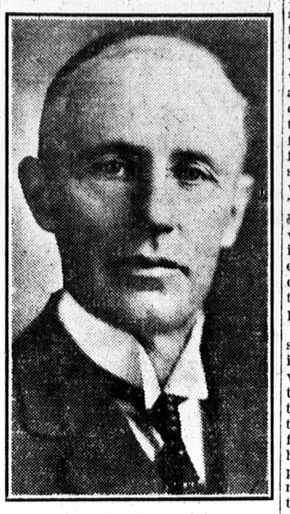
"I ask this audience to be good enough to get first of all a clear comprehension of what this Customs and Excise department means to Canada. Are you aware that through this department something over two hundred millions of dollars were collected in 1920, or 62 per cent of all the revenue of Canada? Are you aware that although that percentage under the last government has been seriously reduced, the tax payers of Canada are still paying to the officials of that department approximately one hundred and fifty million dollars a year; there is the department which has in its custody the great bulk of the taxation taken from the hard earnings of the Canadian people year by year. There is the department on the honesty of which the people of Canada absolutely must depend, on the honesty of which livelihood of scores of thousands of our workers, on the honesty of which thousands of business institutions are dependent as to whether they keep alive or go bankrupt.

There is the department which is the very heart of the financial and business life of Canada.

Fraud and Incompetence in Vitals of King Government.

"This country may be ever so rich by nature, our mines may give up their previous natures, our water may secure the wealth of food; our soil may produce its harvests in abundance, but what of all these blessings if there is fraud and incompetence in the very vitals of government. Then even nature will be defeated. There will be failure instead of success, there will be a dearth of employment instead of a healthy growth; there may be a sale of our assets to foreign lands in abundance but there will be a want and idleness at home. We thought last year that much of the trouble of Canada was due to fickleness and instability of our finance policy and we were right; but we know now that in addition to this there has been as well an utter absence of these elementary essentials of honest finance administration without which even the best of fiscal policies will be in vain. In the customs department the government made itself the ally of free traders of other countries to enable them to depose of their wares to the people of Canada. Read the story of the army of stolen automobiles and how the friends of government officials were allowed to profit by this nefarious traffic, read the story of how the Minister himself winked at the business and how even those in his own office were permitted to benefit by trafficking in cars which others had stolen. Turn to the evidence on the subject of the prison-made goods, read how great masses of these germ-charged products, emitted from the prisons of the United States, have been shipped into Canada in tons against the law of the land to the knowledge of the Customs Department and indeed with the connivance of the department. Tons upon tons of this stuff, laden in all probability with disease carrying germs to the merchants' counters and to the people's homes in order that a few violators of the law might make themselves rich. You will find the story of the experience of the American people with the fatal effects of traffic in this kind of goods. You will find there how three firms alone brought in 150 tons. You will find there the opinion of highly respected business men that ninety per cent of the stolen goods of the United States have in these last three or four years found their way into Canada. You will find the declaration of employers of labor that there are classes of industry in this country which might multiply their employees 100 per cent if this nefarious traffic were stopped. You will find how in the silk industry alone, illegal importations have run up to between three or four million dollars a year. You will find how enterprise after enterprise has gone back and hundreds of men have been thrown upon the street because even if these men were to work for nothing, they could scarcely compete with the goods smuggled wholesale into Canada. You will find the opinion universally expressed that the fault has not been in the law; it has not been broken by legislation; it has been in the administration of the law by the late government. And right here let me say that the records of that investigation will be searched in vain for evidence which reflects on the government that went before. You will find in one or two papers careless assertions that the late government found the customs department in a mess. I defy any man to read the evidence and show me anything to substantiate a conclusion of that sort. The evidence shows and I have in my hand tonight extracts in large numbers that the degeneration of this department commenced with the advent of the King government, continued throughout the whole administration of Mr. Bureau, continued to the full knowledge of Mr. King and continued in the face of repeated protests by large numbers of the population of Canada, and especially by the business people of Canada. You will find that these protests fell in vain on the ears of the Prime Minister; that there was no response and only procrastination and delay; that in spite of these continued protests against the retention of officials known to be dishonest, known to be in alliance with smugglers and crooks; no steps whatever were taken to put right the organization of the department or to dismiss the responsible minister or the guilty officials. All that was ever accomplished was the passing of some anti-smuggling legislation in the session of 1925, and those who had sought its passage went one after the other into the witness box and declared that because of incompetent administration and disrupt officials, neither the new legislation nor the old would produce results. You will find in that evidence not the slightest sign of any appreciation of the enormity of the injury to the people of Canada, not the slightest sign of any sense of duty resulting in administrative action until the news of the proposed resolution of Mr. Stevens got out in the fall of 1925. Up to that time it was a matter of delegation following delegation of letters on letters and to most of which they did not reply at all, protest follow protest, of outrage following outrage. Bisaillon the arch swindler still in counsel, officials in the liquor and smuggling business themselves kept in positions of trust, honest men denied the right of earning a living because they could not compete against smugglers and thieves. To say that millions of dollars have been lost to the treasury is mild recital of the truth; to say that thousands of our workmen have been thrown our of employment is a grossly inadequate statement of the facts, to say that the moral sense of a section of the public service was dulled by those in authority into condonation of wrong — this also is undoubtedly. All these things will be borne in upon any intelligent Canadian who reads the evidence of the customs committee.

THE PRIME MINISTER



RT. HON. ARTHUR MEIGHEN

Customs Dept. as an Instrument of Government had Collapsed

"The late Prime Minister pleaded before the House of Commons that he should be given credit for having passed some anti-smuggling legislation in 1925.

"I strongly supported that legislation. I believe in that legislation still, but the evidence before the Customs Committee showed that such legislation was effective for no more than a month. The utter ineffectiveness and malfeasance of the whole administrative machine had made all legislation vain. The fact is, the Customs department as an instrument of government had collapsed. Mr. Bisaillon is now pleading that he started investigations before Mr. Stevens gave notice of his resolution. So he did but only by two or three days, but Mr. Boivin had heard of Mr. Stevens' resolution and that is what started an investigation. Read the evidence of inspector Duncan and you will find there that Inspector Duncan at the very time he was asked to go down to Montreal and investigate the conduct of Bisaillon, the arch-malefactor of the whole maladoros organization, was told by the Hon. Mr. Boivin about the Stevens resolution. This evidence is uncontradicted and in the face of it Mr. Boivin cannot now be heard to say that he started an investigation in November 1925 for any other reason than because he had to. To Harry H. Stevens, the people of Canada owe the fact that anything whatever has been accomplished towards disclosing the disruptable plight into which the department of customs and excise had fallen.

Everyone's Duty to Read the Evidence.

"It is the duty of everyone who can to read the evidence taken before that committee. If you cannot read the evidence at least read the verdict. Remember the verdict is the verdict of the Liberal members of the committee in which the Progressive member joined. It is the verdict of the friends of the government, the followers of the government, members elected to support the government. The Conservative members as well agreeing with the finding so far as it went, but declared that it was not by any means so strong as the evidence justified. I am going to read you now from the verdict as found by the Liberal and Progressive members of the committee, and I ask you to reflect upon what must have been the evidence upon which would impel members friendly to their administration to come to these conclusions:

Clause 6.—"The evidence submitted to the committee leads to the general conclusion that for a long time the department of Customs and Excise had been slowly degenerating in efficiency and that the process was greatly accelorated in the last few years. Apparently the Hon. Jacques Bureau, then Minister of Customs, failed to appreciate and properly discharge the responsibilities of his office and as a result there was a lack of efficient, continuous and vigorous control of subordinates by the headquraters staff at Ottawa.

Deliberate Manipulation of Facts.

"In clause 7 the committee found that officials were persuaded by the Minister in charge to add to a statement of the facts in connection with a smuggling charge, a recommendation wholly at variance with the facts. These are the words of the report: Although as a rule, the facts are corrected recited in the summary submitted to the minister, the opinion is not infrequently at variance with such facts, and the recommendation is so drawn as to elicit a decision to which such facts are repugnant. This discrepancy is accounted for by the fact that the report on which the evidence was in many instances preceded by a conference, and the recommendation was dictated by an intelligent anticipation of the Minister's wishes in the premises."

"That is to say that a deliberate system was adopted of manipulating facts and recommendations without any regard to the rights of the people or the demands of justice. The committee recommended the prosecution of no less than 25 firms whom the evidence indicated had through the neglect of the department or worse failed to pay immense sums of money owing to the treasury of Canada.

In a word there are many other findings of a startling character and the unanimous verdict of the committee was that the department had rapidly degenerated and was indeed in a state of collapse, and that the people of Canada had to pay the penalty. Remember, again I ask you, that this is the verdict as found by the Liberal and Progressive members. In the face of this unanimous finding four in it all agreed, what can be said for the government of Mr. Mackenzie King?

Legitimate Business Injured by Smuggling

Permit me now to read a few extracts from the evidence given before the committee by a number of leading business men of Canada. These business men had under the stress of necessity banded themselves together to see if something could not be done to stop the wholesale smuggling business. Their organization had spent weeks and months getting at the facts and trying to effect a remedy, and when they gave their evidence they knew of their own knowledge what they were talking about. Colonel Robert Sterke, President of the Montreal Board of Trade, testified as follows: 'The conditions referred to have seriously injured legitimate business, and some of our members will appear before this committee to state what they believe has been the effect of the smuggling on their business. The council believes that the main cause of this smuggling has been gross incompetence and connivance on the part of certain customs officials. The council further believes that the prevention of the chief inspector from exercising his authority in Montreal has had very serious effects.

"James M. MacDonnell, member of the Council of the Montreal Board of Trade, made the following statement referring to the new statute of 1925, of which Mr. Mackenzie King boasts so much: 'Now as a result of this situation in the House of Commons at the time certain legislation was passed, and I suppose hopes were held out that it might be effective, but we were grievously disappointed with the results, and so far as you can learn it has resulted in nothing. I believe the legislation is not at fault; it is the administration, I believe there is force enough, if the matter were righteously done, to enforce that legislation.

Country Suffered by Loss of Industry and Taxes

"Mr. C. LaFolley, senior Canadian Partner, Mark Fisher, Sons and Company, of Montreal: 'For the past four years the market has been flooded with enormous quantities of goods, notably silks, unmanufactured and manufactured garments, woollens, tailors' trimmings, and other goods. The situation created by this is very serious —our country suffers in two ways; in the loss of the duty which should have been collected and again in the loss of the income tax which would have been paid had firms doing an honest business handled the same line of goods with a profit—

"I should like to see the law so administered that everybody would have an equal chance with his neighbor. It is not so at the present time.'

"Mr. Alfred J. Doherty, President of the Doherty Manufacturing Co., Ltd., of Toronto: 'We have in the last four years experienced a state of affairs in the manufacturing of silk garments in Canada that is dwindling down further every year; we cannot compete with the underground methods of selling merchandise in Canada.'

Smuggling on Elaborate and Extensive Scale.

"Mr. Herbert T. Piner, Vice-President of J. C. Bourchier, Ltd., Montreal: 'Now, 1924 was the year in which smuggling was at its height, and during the whole year our sales decreased to an extent of twenty-one per cent approximately, and we attribute that decrease to the fact that smuggling was carried on on such an elaborate and extensive scale.

"The preventative service apparently was not functioning, at least we could see no evidence of it.'

"Mr. M. Jacobs, of the Union Overall Co., Montreal: 'They (the Rock Island Smugglers), are doing about a million dollars a year with nobody to check them up, so they have a pretty free hand. Nobody could run a business like that—

"I should judge that about twenty-five per cent of the goods sold here in Canada are brought in from that particular point— There is no question that the goods are coming in, smuggled in, and they are sold under value and they cover the whole Dominion of Canada—I think we could operate easily, if this thing was stopped, and let them come in the open and fight with the rest of us. I think we could increase our business from twenty-five to forty per cent.'

Unfortunate Condition of Many Workmen Due to Mal-administration of King Govt.

"I ask the workers of Canada and especially the unemployed of Canada to remember that the unfortunate condition of many of them is directly due to the maladministration of the laws of this country by the late government of Canada.

"Mr. Charles K. Purkus, Manager of Caulfield, Burns and Midson, Ltd., Toronto: 'As far as dressing gowns and bathrobes are concerned, we have estimated that we are only making 25 per cent of what we should normally be making, through this condition at Rock Island.

At a meeting of the wholesale dry goods association of Canada held at Toronto on April 6, 1926, it was resolved 'That in the opinion of this association the domestic trade of the Dominion is seriously menaced by the wholesale smuggling which is going on. That the revenues of the country are being depleted by the evasion of duty on these smuggled goods to an extent which has necessitated additional taxes now becoming more than burdensome upon all classes of the community.'

"Richard E. Oaks, maker of women's cloaks, suits, and dresses, Toronto; 'The consequence is that for the last three or four years the ordinary women's ready-to-wear business as far as the manufacturers are concerned, has become almost bankrupt. Their capital is being gradually wiped out.

"It appears to us and I speak now for the organization that these evils could be overcome to a very great extent first by employing honest officials. We had hoped when the amendments to the customs acts went through last year, that there would be a stop, and I think there was for a time, to excessive smuggling, but we feel today that it is just as bad as ever.'

"Mr. P. R. Watson, manager of Grout's Ltd., St. Catherine's, testified referring to the smuggling of silks: 'It is our contention that at least 90 per cent of the goods stolen in the United States comes into Canada by the smuggling route.

"I would say as a conservative estimate of the amount of goods that comes into Canada by the smuggling route, or the undervalued route, or the various phases I have tried to mention, amounts to between $3,000,000 and $4,000,000—a very conservative estimate.

With Smuggling Stopped Employment Would Increase 100.

"We (the silk industry) employ about 3,750 employees, and if we could do away with the smuggling and the other phases of it, I am sure we could increase that by 100 per cent today. Not only could we do that, but we are willing to do it.'

"Mr. John Cowling, of Roe & Co., Montreal: 'I really and honestly dread to think what would have happened to the silk trade during the years 1922, 1923 and 1924 if our cause had not been championed the way it has been by the commercial protective association. The thing went on in 1923 and grew worse in 1924. I recommended to our concern that they get out of business, because we cannot make it go—it was impossible to import goods and sell them at a profit.'

"Mr. J. A. Caron, of Caron Bros., Montreal: 'The extent to which the business has been affected naturally is very hard to say definitely, but our estimate is that the jewelry business has been affected in the last three or four years to the extent of one third. Smuggling has been increasing very much.'

Liberals Strove Desperately to Thwart Stevens' Amendment.

"But now I am going to come to the verdict of the headquarters. Again I emphasize the fact that the House of Commons was not a prejudiced jury—Counting the Conservative members prejudiced if you like. Certain of the Progressive members were not protected against the government. It is only the truth which I think all of them would agree to in the way I put it, that their leaning was in favor of the government. Some of them were indeed about as strong supporters of the government as any Liberal elected. A series of amendments were proposed. The government fought desperately to avoid a direct decision; they struggled for days to lure their Progressive friends into blind alleys, and to get them to vote for something which would have wiped completely out the Stevens' amendment censuring the government. On all these arts they failed. Even men friendly disposed to the government could not face their conscience, they felt they could not face their constituents if they refused to censure the administration. When all the amendments had been deliberated and all the arguments had been passed, the period of the House of Commons, a House of Commons in which Liberals, Progressives, Independents together numbered twelve more than the Conservatives, this House of Commons censured the administration by a majority of 10. This House of Commons by a majority of 10 declared that the Prime Minister had known of the evils of the Customs Department, and that having such knowedge his refusal to remedy the evil was absolutely incapable of defence. This House of Commons by a majority of 10 censured not only the past Minister of Customs but the then Minister of Customs and the entire government for malfeasance of office.

Public Life of Canada Must be Vindicated and Good Name Restored

"I ask you, the people of Ottawa, and through you I ask the people of Canada, do you think a government with those hundreds of pages of evidence staring them in the face, do you think a government buried under the revelations which that evidence contains, do you think a government censured by a Parliament where the majority were its friends, do you think such a government should be exonerated by the people of Canada; I ask you again, do you believe a government responsible for the loss of millions of money of the Canadian people responsible for the wrecking of the livelihood of thousands of our workers by the competition of smuggled goods, responsible in a word for the utter collapse of a great department of state —do you think such a government should now get a certificate of character and be declared by the electors of Canada to be the kind of government the people want?

"Voices come to us from all over this land, voices of men of all parties and all creeds, voices from the clear-thinking minds of the women of our country, declaring that this kind of administration is not fit for the Dominion of Canada. I have in my possession letters from life-long Liberals declaring that in the presence of the scandals of the Customs Department everything in the past pales into insignificance, and that the public life of Canada must be vindicated and the good name of Canada restored.

King or His Ministers Have no Titles to be Restored to Office.

"Think of the effect throughout this Dominion; think of the effect on the name of Canada throughout the world, if after the revelations of incompetence, dishonesty and official collusion with fraud, the people of our country declare that such a government is the government they want. The late ministers of Mr. King's and Mr. King himself defeated by the House of Commons, censured by the representatives of the nation, these men surely have no title to be restored to office now. The verdict of the House of Commons will be the verdict of the nation multiplied in power and notice will be given that the people of this Dominion expect the trustees of this country to be loyal to their trust. Surely there is no one who wants it to be known to his friends, his family or his children that he gave a vote in a great crisis of his country to excuse neglect of high duties, to forgive the violation of trust, to condone the most distressing revelations of a wrong in the whole history of our nation.

King Seeks Desperately for Some Other Issue to Cloud Customs Probe.

Everybody knows the people will give no such vote. No one understands better than Mr. Mackenzie King himself; that is why he seeks desperately for some other issue to engage the people's minds. It is only natural that he would come to the conclusion that any issue in the world would be better for him than the issue raised by the customs committee. Not unnaturally today he struggles to convince his Liberal followers that some great constitutional question has arisen and that the people do not need to think about the customs scandal any more. The name of His Majesty's representative is dragged into the arena—something never known before in the history of elections in Canada. The conduct of His Majesty's representative was challenged flatly by Mr. Mackenzie King on the floor of Parliament. From this challenge his party now seeks to escape and from that challenge I think Mr. Mackenzie King himself would now like to escape. Nothing could be worse for Canada than to impeach the conduct of the representative of the throne and bring the great and revered link of empire into the turmoil of political strife. Nothing could be more indefensible, nothing indeed more censurable than that such a step should be taken in the presence of the admitted truth that that the representative of His Majesty acted with scrupulous honesty. This fact everybody admits. As a matter of truth, there is no constitutional issue. Are there any people in Canada really of opinion that the late government or any government at any time was entitled to dissolve a parliament while a vote of censure was under review? Some say that advice to dissolve parliament has not been refused in England by His Majesty the King in the space of one hundred years.

King Asked for Dissolution Only to Escape Vote of Censure.

What I would like to say is,—has any government in the space of one hundred years in England or in any of the British dominions ever asked for dissolution of parliament while a vote of censure was under debate? I give the answer myself. It can be definitely stated that never within a century, never in the history of parliamentary government as we have it today, has any Prime Minister ever demeaned himself to ask for dissolution while a vote of censure on his own government was under debate. In the present case that happened. For some days the motion to adopt the report of the Stevens committee was before the House, and a motion by Mr. Stevens was under discussion. The government sought by supporting a sub-amendment of one of its friends, to get that subamendment adopted and thereby prevent the House from voting on the Stevens amendment of censure. The government failed in this attempt. Its advice to the House to accept that sub-amendment was rejected by a majority of 2, the same night the advice of the same government was rejected again. A third time its advice was rejected and after those three reverses Ministers clearly saw that when the vote of censure itself would come up the days of the administration would be numbered. It then decided to change the jury. It did not like to be defeated; so the Prime Minister said to His Excellency: "This jury must disappear; this Parliament must be dissolved." The effect of that advice was simply this: "If Parliament shows signs of going against me, even if that parliament was elected on my own appeal, that parliament must not live." If such advice must always be accepted, no parliament could ever censure a minister. If such advice must always be accepted then the supremacy of parliament would be over and the Prime Minister would be supreme himself.

Move was in Effect to Choke and Strangle Parliament.

"In the last one hundred years in England there have been thirty-four administrations. Of these administrations nineteen resigned, they advising dissolution simply because they could not command a majority in parliament. Such is the course the late Prime Minister should have taken. During the same period there have taken place twenty-five dissolutions followed by general elections. Of those twenty-five not less than thirteen were granted to governments which came into office since the previous general elections just as did the one of which I have the honor to be head.

"D'Israeli in 1869 made it absolutely clear, as have other Prime Ministers many times, that so coming into office has the right of dissolution, but even a government coming into office after a general election held under the auspices of another, even such a government would not have any right of dissolution in the midst of a debate on a vote of censure. To demand such a right is not to plead for responsible government; it is to plead for irresponsible government, to demand such a right is not to uphold our parliamentary institutions; it is really to stifle those institutions; to demand such a right is not to plead the cause of parliament. It is in effect to choke and strangle parliament and prevent parliament from expressing its will.

"Under representatives of the crown such as those who have honored this Dominion as Governor General, there need never be any fear for responsible government in Canada. The sphere of discretion left to a Governor General under our constitution and under our practice is a limited sphere indeed, but it is a sphere of dignity and great responsibility. Within the ambit of discretion residing still in the crown in England and residing in the Governors in the Dominions, there is a responsibility as great as falls to any estate of the realm or to any House of Parliament, with all deference and in no spirit of controversy I say, that within the sphere of that discretion the plain duty of the Governor General is not to weaken responsible government, not to undermine the right of parliament; not at all, it is to make sure that responsible government is maintained, that the rights of parliament are respected, that the still higher rights of the people are held sacred. It is his duty to make sure that parliament is not stifled by government but that every government is held responsible to parliament and every parliament held responsible to the people.

Dispels Ridiculous Talk as to Legislation Not Being put into Effect.

"There are some who say that the legislative efforts of the last session have been wasted, that we should not have dissolved so suddenly. My answer is simple and short. First of all, dissolution took place just exactly as it would have taken place had Mr. King's request to the Governor General been granted. Once the order for dissolution was signed which His Excellency was asked to sign, then there would no longer have been parliament. But in the second place Mr. King induced a technical majority of one to decide that the government of which I was the head was not legally constituted. It seemed to me rather curious that a parliamentary majority composed mostly of Progressives and other laymen, could come to the conclusion that its knowledge of law was better than that of the Department of Justice—for they decided to override the opinion of the Department of Justice. Nevertheless, the fact that that vote was given declaring that we were not legally constituted, surely put it out of the power of those who so voted to complain that we did not come back to parliament and presume to function as a government in parliament. It is puerile and nonsensical to vote that a government is not a government and then to complain that that government does not come back to parliament to complete legislation. No further answer is necessary. As a matter of fact, however, the legislation which was actually passed by both houses and which failed to be signed by the Governor General is in all important features being put into effect. The government has power by statute to give effect to much of this legislation and has taken steps to do so, and today all reductions in taxes passed by the House and by the Senate are actually in operation.

Present Govt. Administering Affairs Carefully and Honestly.

"I will tell you now what the present government considers its duty to the people of Canada. First of all, we feel that we should carry out so far as we legally can, the will of both Houses of Parliament so far as expressed. As already stated, this is being done. We feel it is our duty to hold the situation and await the verdict of the people and in the meantime to administer public affairs carefully, economically and honestly, and to prepare to initiate new policies when a few weeks from now the people give us, as they will, a strong and overwhelming mandate to govern Canada.

Eminent Justice Named to Continue Customs Probe.

"Already we have taken steps to eradicate the cancer in the Customs Department. The investigation which necessarily could cover only a fraction of the service, is being continued. A judge has been appointed in the manner decided by parliamentary resolution, and I am proud to be able to say that the

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