

Prime Minister King asks People for Mandate to Continue Canada's War Effort

"My Colleagues and Myself Have Given Every Ounce of Our Strength and Every Hour of Our Time in the Most Devoted Manner Possible Endeavouring to Further Canada's War Effort and the Interests of the Nation."—King

The events of last week in Ottawa were of such history making importance that we reproduce the following extracts from the address of Prime Minister King delivered in Parliament. In it the Prime Minister frankly places before the people of Canada the facts leading up to the present situation which made a general election necessary and which influenced him in the momentous decision to let the people of the nation say who they want to carry on their government at this critical time.

Speaking in the House Rt. Hon. Mr. King said:

May I say, Mr. Speaker, that at that time I had hoped that circumstances might be such as would permit another session of this parliament being held before a general election. But as I have said, no one can foresee what is likely to take place in a time of war, and none can foretell the degree to which a government may continue to enjoy the confidence of the people in carrying on the affairs of the nation at so critical a time. I was careful therefore to say that it would be desirable when parliament next assembled to have had a careful review in the interval of all circumstances which would bear on the question of whether it would be advisable to proceed in a period of war with a pre-election session, or to have on the hustings such discussion as must necessarily take place—in other words, to avoid two political battles, one in parliament and one on the hustings as well.

I had felt, I must say, up until a very short time ago that it was going to be possible, at a session called in the month of January, to present to this parliament the measures which the government felt it would be necessary, before an appeal to the people, to carry through for the effective prosecution of the war. I had always been very much concerned, as I think the house is well aware, about the long period of time required by our elections act for a general election. Under the act and its administration I think something like eight weeks is required to elapse between the date of dissolution and the day of election. I had felt that possibly we might get over the difficulty of having such a long interval while war was on and parliament was not in session, by shortening the time in which there would be no parliament through an amendment to our elections act to reduce the period in which the country would be without a parliament to something like four weeks. I spoke to my hon. friend the leader of the opposition about that prior to the special session of last year. I should have liked to introduce such a measure at that time, but I gathered from what he said to me and from what others have said, that the introduction of any measure to amend the elections act would be certain to create some suspicion in the minds of some hon. members and to provoke a kind of discussion that would not be advisable.

I had hoped there would be a feeling of sufficient confidence in the present administration, and an evidence of sufficient unity between all parts of this country to have enabled us, at a session at this time, to introduce a number of measures and then to go to the country a little later on. Until a week or two ago—indeed, until a week ago—it was my intention that this should be the procedure. But, as hon. members know, just a week ago today, or yesterday, the premier of the largest province in this country introduced in the Ontario legislature a resolution which was directed in no uncertain terms at the government of Canada now administering its affairs. That resolution was seconded by the leader of the Conservative opposition in the Ontario legislature; and when it came to a vote, the resolution was supported by all of the ministers of the Ontario government who were present in the house at the time, by some of the members of the Liberal party in Ontario and by all of the Conservative members in the legislature. The resolution had been preceded by some discussion in the legislature—a discussion which had taken place, I think, for a couple of days—attacking the manner in which this government has sought to administer the affairs of the country during this period of war. I think I would have paid little or no attention to that discussion had

it been confined to the leader of the government of Ontario and to the leader of the opposition of Ontario; I would have allowed it to pass, and not made further mention of the matter other than to discuss the merits of any points which might have been raised in the discussion. However, when the Ontario legislature adopted the resolution and it was given a permanent place on the records of the legislature, quite a different situation presented itself to this government. May I read the resolution?

That this house has heard with interest the reports made by the prime minister and the leader of the opposition of the result of their visit to Ottawa, to discuss war measures with the national government and this house hereby endorses the statements made by the two members in question and joins with them in regretting that the federal government at Ottawa has made so little effort to prosecute Canada's duty in the war in the vigorous manner the people of Canada desire to see.

I ask hon. members to notice the extent of the charge which is made there. It is a charge against the federal government. It is not against myself alone personally but against the entire administration. There have been, as no doubt hon. members are aware, many other attacks upon me personally as leader of the government; but this is against the government at Ottawa, and the charge is that we have made so little effort to prosecute the war. It is further suggested that this criticism, or censure, or whatever it is, is being made in the name of the people of Canada, because it reads: "to prosecute Canada's duty in the war in the vigorous manner the people of Canada desire to see."

I do not think I need say to hon. members that, since war was declared, and this parliament decided that Canada would participate in the war—decided in the unanimous manner in which it did—my colleagues and myself have given every ounce of our strength and every hour of our time in the most devoted manner possible endeavouring to further Canada's war effort, and the interests of the nation. We have not tried to do so in a dramatic or spectacular manner. We are too conscious of the gravity of the responsibility which is ours. But we have steadily, day in, day out, given the most careful and thoughtful consideration to every step that should be taken to see that that step would be taken in a manner which would meet with the approval of the people of Canada, and which, so far as the war is concerned, would best serve to further Canada's war effort in the most effective manner possible. I had thought, and I believe, that the Canadian people approve both the manner in which the government has undertaken its duties, and the way in which it has discharged them. The very fact that we have to-day throughout the country a chorus, one might almost say, of the press expressing the hope that this administration will continue to carry on, is the best evidence that at least the press of the country, which have to do with the moulding of public opinion, and know something about current opinion, believe that this government has solidly behind it the support of the people.

However, that is not the only thing. Even that resolution might have been put to one side were it not for the evident purpose which lies back of it. That resolution was passed to start a political campaign while this parliament was in session, to have advantage taken of the fact that my colleagues and myself would be obliged to give our attention and our whole attention while parliament was sitting to the work of parliament as well as to the problems of the war and the carrying on of Canada's war effort, while other gentlemen were to be free to criticize our effort, to misrepresent everything that was done, and everything that to them might seem to be left undone. In other words, we were to continue to carry the grave responsibility of doing our duty in the matter of Canada's war effort, and at the same time assume a very great responsibility—not as great as the other, but a very great responsibility—of meeting parliament day in and day out and to try to so conduct debates here as to have due regard for what is taking place in Europe and the care to be exercised with respect

to whatever is said and whatever is done, and to have at the same time an electoral campaign carried on against us by those who are political opponents of the administration.

What is the cry already? Already, after this resolution is passed, the leader of the Conservative party of Ontario, at a political meeting, tells the meeting, and through the meeting the province, and through the province the country, that the election must start at once; and he gives them the slogan, "King must go." That is to be the slogan. I am quite prepared to accept that slogan if he will add the words, "to the country." But I ask hon. members: How can I be expected to do what is expected of me by this country in a time of war as leader of the government of Canada if all of my time and thought is to be surrounded by the animosities of political opponents who are seeking to undermine every effort that is being put forward in the leadership of the administration?

I should have thought that, at least until this house had met and expressed its views, those who have any sense of public duty would have been content to allow their political animosity not to be given too much expression. However, it is now evident that a political campaign has begun. That being so, I ask hon. members whether it is wise to try to carry on a political campaign in the country and a political campaign in this parliament—two campaigns at one and the same time—while war is going on at the front.

People the world over will understand, I believe, what may be said on the hustings, and they will be prepared to make some allowance for extreme statements made in the course of a political campaign. They can understand political opponents speaking there in a different way than where they have the responsibility which rests upon members in this house. It is a very different thing to have such discussions introduced into the debates in this house as is inevitable once a campaign has started in the country.

Apart from that, however, may I say there are very strong reasons—and they are set forth in the speech from the throne—why it is in the public interest, in the interest of the country, and in the interest of the allied powers, if we are to have an election, as it is now perfectly evident that we must have, we should have it just as soon as possible, and have it over at the earliest moment.

In the first place, as indicated by the speech from the throne, this is the sixth session of the present parliament, one session having been a special one. This parliament was returned in 1935 and this is 1940. That in itself, in my opinion, is the strongest reason why there should be an election at this time. Some may say that this was not the case with Sir Robert Borden; that this was not the view that he took. Sir Robert Borden's government was returned to power in 1911 and war came on in 1914. Sir Robert had been in office for only three years, and there were the most cogent of reasons why he should carry on. He had still another two years before his term would be completed. Our situation, however, is quite different. As everyone knows, this is the last session of this parliament. When the time came for dissolution as fixed by the constitution, Sir Robert Borden found difficulties in the way, because of the stage to which the war had advanced, of giving to the people the right to which they are periodically entitled of declaring to whom they wish to entrust the management of their affairs, and this at a very critical time. There is, therefore, the strongest constitutional reason why we should meet the country just as soon as we possibly can.

But I would mention another circumstance. Had I thought that it would have been in the interests of the country so to do, I would have gone to the people immediately after the last special session in order that these charged with the great responsibility of government in war time might have a direct and unquestionable mandate from the electorate. I realized at that time, however, that it was necessary that Canada's war effort should be gotten under way as expeditiously as possible, that the country should be changed as speedily as possible from a peace-time to a war-time organization, that all necessary military



Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King
Prime Minister of Canada

and economic measures should be taken without delay. Once those measures were under way it was clear the situation would be entirely different. Fortunately, in the months that have elapsed since the special session, the government has been able to organize Canada's war effort and to do so very effectively. We have brought into the public service, irrespective of the parties to which they belong, key men who, I believe, enjoy the confidence of the people generally. We have formed the necessary boards to deal with the different war activities. All the work of organization with respect to the army, the navy and the air force has been admirably initiated and developed. The first Canadian division is now in Great Britain and the British commonwealth air training scheme is under way. We have just carried through, in the course of a day or two, our Canadian war loan, so that provision is made from that source for the financial needs of the country for the next considerable period of time. In connection with economic, financial and military affairs the basic work has been successfully planned and accomplished and the officials of the permanent service are at this moment in the best position—a better position than they are ever likely to be in at any other time—to carry out further development while a political campaign is in progress.

May I again ask hon. members this question: If an election is to take place, is it not wise to have it just as soon as we possibly can.

Now I hope hon. members will realize that what I am proposing at the moment is not to extend my time of office, or that of my colleagues, but solely to allow the people of this country to say, as they are entitled to say, who they wish to carry on their government during this very critical time. If I were seeking to extend the time of the present administration or to extend my own time as leader of the government of this dominion, then I might be open to criticism from hon. gentlemen opposite and from opponents in different parts of the country. But when I am prepared to entrust my political future and the political future of this administration—not merely prepared but anxious that it should be entrusted—to the voice of the people of this country, no criticism can be raised against an intent of that kind.

One other point. The taking of the military vote is an important matter in connection with an election in war time. I think this country still has vivid recollections of how that vote was taken in the last war. We do not want any more occurrences of the kind. We want a perfectly straightforward and honest expression of opinion from the military forces; they are, if anything, more entitled to it than any other class in this country. May I draw attention to this: That vote can, I believe, be taken while the first division is still in England, before its members may go to Europe, if an election is brought on before May. Though of this I cannot, of course, say. If delayed, the soldiers' vote will certainly have to be taken while they are fighting on the continent of Europe, which would present a very different situation. This government intends, as all hon. members know, if it is re-

turned, to see that this first division is reinforced in strength from month to month and week to week, but it also intends to see that a second division is sent overseas as soon as may be possible. Now that second division, the men who are likely to go in it and form part of it, are in this country at the present time; they can still be in the country during a political campaign if the latter is held immediately. I ask if it is not fairer to them, if it is not better for everyone, that while they are still in a position to exercise the franchise in their own land, they should have their right to record their vote with respect to the government that is to carry on when their lives are at stake?

One word further in regard to the holding of an election at this time. My colleagues and I have realized as perhaps no others could possibly begin to realize, how important it is that we should begin immediately to prepare for post-war problems. Parliament should be in a position to deal not merely with the immediate problems of war, but also with those problems which will arise as soon as the war is over and even before. Measures such as the unemployment insurance legislation should be passed as speedily as possible. I ask hon. members: Do they believe it is going to be possible to put through these measures except by a parliament that comes fresh from the people with a mandate to carry on the government and enact such necessary measures?

Mr. Speaker, when at previous sessions we were considering the possibility of this country having to decide the part it would take should a great war come in Europe, as the leader of the Liberal party and the leader of the present administration I took the position very strongly, time and time again, that parliament would decide that question. I was told from many sides that it was ridiculous to think of allowing parliament to decide the question of peace or war, that the war would speedily assume proportions which would make impossible anything in the way of parliamentary discussion. I gave my word to the people of this country that parliament would decide, and that the extent to which Canada would participate in the war would depend upon the decision of our own parliament and the provision that parliament might make. I kept my word in that regard. Parliament did decide—it gave its decision in no uncertain terms, and gave this government the means wherewith to carry on Canada's war effort. Now we are confronted with a situation in which our strength is being impaired by those who seek to create in the public mind distrust concerning both our ability and our patriotic efforts. There is only one national authority higher than parliament; that is the people themselves whose servants as members of parliament we all are. Just as I was prepared to trust parliament to make the decision as to Canada's participation in war, so I am prepared to trust the people with respect to the all-important decision as to what government is to administer their affairs during the years in which this war may be waged and probably be concerned with the terms of peace.

It is not an easy or light responsibility, Mr. Speaker, which my colleagues and I have at this time and have had during the past four or five months—yes, and I might well say during the last few years. We are in the midst of the worst situation this world has ever known; and I am afraid that the situation is going to get worse and worse. No one can say how long this war will last. Those who seem to be best informed tell us it is not going to be one year or two years; it may be three years; it may be longer than that. As respects the countries that may be drawn into the conflict, there appears to be a danger of the war spreading over vast areas than were ever thought of before it commenced.

So may I say that if we have to carry the grave responsibility of office in war and at a time of war such as the present, then we must be fortified by the voice of this country, expressed in no uncertain terms. If there is any group of men more capable of carrying on Canada's war effort and likely to do so more effectively, then the people should have the right to entrust them with that great obligation. We propose to leave it to the people of Canada to say whom they wish to carry on the government of Canada in this period of world war.

EYES EXAMINED
— AND —
GLASSES FITTED
— by —
DR. P. P. SMYTH
— at —
GLENN'S DRUG STORE
EVERY FRIDAY 2 to 5 P.M.
Phone HYland 2081 Open Evenings
Res. Phone 9788

Bowden Lumber & Coal
CO., LTD
LUMBER OF ALL KINDS
Insulux, Donnacoona Board, etc.
LANSENG
WILLOWDALE 42 HUDSON 0236

DE FOREST
RADIO
CANADA'S MOST POPULAR RADIO

Have an exquisite new 1940 model in your Home
SEE THEM TODAY!
Never before and, we believe, never again, will we be able to offer so much radio for so little money. Small in size, but mighty in power, source of a wealth of radio entertainment. The De Forest "Grand" model gives you 7-tube performance from 5 genuine Rogers tubes. Features never before obtainable at such low prices. Let us show you the De Forest range of radios today.
The GRAND
The ideal "personal" radio. Powerful Performance. Large Power Transformer. Genuine walnut cabinet. Size 8" x 12 3/4" x 6 3/4". 5 3/4". Dynamic speaker. Covers entire broadcast band. ONLY **\$22.95**

Grand GARFIELD YEREX
YONGE ST. RICHMOND HILL

R. H. KANE
TINSMITHING
FURNACES - PLUMBING
HEATING
Septic Tanks Installed
Pumps
Barn & Stable Equipment
74 Yonge Street
Richmond Hill Phone 92-B

INSURANCE
LIFE, FIRE,
ACCIDENT, SICKNESS
PLATE GLASS, AUTOMOBILE
BURGLARY, GUARANTEE BONDS
SPECIAL RATES TO FARMERS
ON ALL CARS
TARIFF & NONTARIFF CO'S
A. G. Savage
Old Post Office
Richmond Hill

Milk
er, Mother and especially the Children.
Is a Perfect Food for Father.
MILK Builds Muscles.
MILK is Energy Food.
MILK Supplies Essential Elements.
USE MORE MILK
And Be Assured of a Safe, Wholesome Supply by Securing it from
Richmond Hill Dairy
G. S. WALWIN, Prop.
Dependable Milk & Dairy Produce
Phone 42 Richmond Hill