

I came to the conclusion that to attempt to carry on public business with a condition such as we were witnessing towards the end of last week would be to bring the great and honourable institution of parliament more or less into disrepute; and having that view I was obliged to consider whether it was desirable to attempt any longer to carry on parliament. I went to His Excellency and said I was of opinion that I would not longer take the responsibility of carrying on as Prime Minister, believing that the best interests of the state were not being served by any government attempting to carry on under the circumstances, which now exist—

And so on. That was the position in which the Prime Minister found himself, and an even clearer statement was made by the ex-Minister of Agriculture, who said:

We ourselves have gone through six months of more or less excruciating agony, wondering at every moment what was going to happen next, and the only gratifying feature of that trial has been the knowledge that during that time, with the aid of our associates, we have been able to put a good deal of first class legislation on the statutes of Canada.

Further on the hon. gentleman said:

—and because of what we suffered, because of my own experience, I feel a certain amount of sympathy for hon. gentlemen opposite now that they are starting to sweat, so to speak. Just as we could not stand indefinitely the humiliation of being over there, neither can they. By the time they prorogue and get out of this House they will know what it is to occupy both benches.

That was the position in which hon. members of the government found themselves on Friday last when dissolution was determined upon. The government was not able to get dissolution, and later on I shall have something to say about that. It resigned and the present government came into office. On Tuesday the debate on the Customs resolution was resumed. The right hon. leader of the opposition has stated to this House that he could have avoided defeat on that resolution with reference to the Customs report. How he knows that is beyond me, because he suffered a slashing defeat at the close of that same day. He says he would have been able to carry on very well and get through the resolution under debate.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend says this government suffered defeat on that day. Will he tell me what government motion was before the House that was defeated?

Mr. GEARY: The resolution containing the censure of the government.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: No government resolution before the House was defeated. How can the hon. member say the government was defeated on any resolution? A government is not defeated on resolutions of private members.

Mr. GEARY: It may not have been technically a government motion, but it was a report of its own committee, and there were resolutions before the House which my hon. friends were opposing tooth and nail as a government, resolutions censuring the government and one of its members.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Does my hon. friend say that the first vote that took place under this present administration, that went counter to hon. gentlemen opposite, meant that they were defeated?

Mr. GEARY: No. This government secured the biggest majority of the House during this session.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: In its history.

Mr. GEARY: We had a majority of twelve, or something of that sort, on a division, which shows that we retain the confidence of the House pretty well up to the present moment. However that may be, my right hon. friend says he knew he could have pulled through and weathered the storm. I disagree with him, and subsequent events show that he could not have done so. He saw himself face to face with disaster that could not be avoided, and that is the reason of his resignation. Up till Tuesday last there had been no word of any sort touching this question which is now said to be of more vital importance than any question which has come before this parliament for many years. On Wednesday did my hon. friends on the other side say that this ministry should not be in office, and that there was this great issue before the country? No they did not. They came with still another resolution purporting to be a tariff resolution. They asked this House to say that because of the tariff policy of this party, upon which, so far as I am concerned, I stand four square, it should not be permitted to continue in office. I tell them that that policy as enunciated in June, 1925, is still the policy of the Conservative party. It has been debated many times during this session of parliament. None of my friends of the Progressive party had any doubt as to where the Conservative party stood on that issue. It was nothing new to them, and still they were solemnly asked to censure this government by a vote on that question. However, the government was sustained in this House. The resolution my hon. friends submitted had no relevance whatever to the issue before the House and no relevance to the present situation; it was designed simply as a trick to draw votes against this government. That trick failed, and on Wednesday night we came