

practising what he preached on that occasion, that the considerations now in his mind and the mind of the government are those to which he referred in his remarks in 1934. I ask the house, on what grounds could a government candidate in Halifax claim the confidence of the electors today? I ask, in the two years since the end of the war what have the government accomplished upon which they could base any claim to the confidence of the people of Halifax?

Mr. BRUNELLE: What about the by-election in Cartier?

Mr. KNOWLES: They have taken off more controls since then.

Mr. MERRITT: I wish to refer only to a few points. For instance, could any government candidate, or any member of the government supporting him, go to Halifax tomorrow and promise houses at \$13.82 a month, as they did in 1945. Could they go to that province, knowing conditions down there, and say that, while they had the power to do so, they made any notable contribution to the betterment of labour-management relations, so that management and labour might come to agreements without these crippling strikes? Could they go there in the hope that their taxation policy in the past two years would lead the people of Halifax to place confidence in them; or are they waiting until this new budget comes in, under which we may not have deferred taxation relief of the nature we had last year?

The most important reason, I suggest, for their failure to place the confidence of the people of Halifax to the test, is this, that they will not be able to go to Halifax in the coming by-election and offer to the people of that constituency any constructive policy for the future, a policy which would lead the people of Canada to have any confidence in the Liberal party, or any hope of the people's chances of getting through the next few years in a condition of stability. That, I believe, is the real reason why the government need not expect any success at the next election. Now that they are taking off controls, they do not seem to be able to produce any alternative for the future, which would give us a good run at the fence.

However that may be, I would not have risen at all if we had heard one word from any member of the government as to when the by-election is to take place, or some good excuse setting out why it can be longer deferred. I do not believe they can give a good excuse; and certainly I am not going to sit silent in the House of Commons, and not

bring to Your Honour's attention as forcibly as I can not only the government's neglect to issue a writ, but also their apparent inability any longer to account for the delay.

I shall now take my seat, not with a request but with a demand that the writ be issued at once, because there is no longer any reason why it should be withheld. I see one of the ministers laughing when I use the word "demand." I am not a bit surprised to see a smile on the faces of some hon. members opposite when I use that word, because it is not more than three weeks ago that I heard the hon. member from Middlesex-West (Mr. McCubbin) say, "We must trust this government." Then, hon. members in the C.C.F., sitting to my left, rise in their places and say, "We plead with this government." Well, I don't trust this government, and I don't plead with it. I say again: I demand an answer to this question.

Mr. GORDON B. ISNOR (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, when the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) referred to the three points I was wondering which of those he considered most important from a political point of view. Was he speaking chiefly to the first and second, which were really worth bringing before the government, or was he directing his attention chiefly to the third point, one which seemed to give him some satisfaction? After listening to the last hon. member, I am satisfied that perhaps it was the third point the leader of the opposition had in mind, when he opened the discussion this afternoon.

May I say that I still believe definitely and sincerely that the winter is no time to hold an election in the city and county of Halifax.

An hon. MEMBER: Is this not spring?

Mr. GRAYDON: What about 1940?

Mr. ISNOR: I had a handsome majority in 1940, and also in 1945.

Mr. GRAYDON: It was in the winter, too.

Mr. ISNOR: I sat here quietly and listened to the political speeches of at least two hon. members, with interjections from time to time undoubtedly by the hon. member for Peel (Mr. Graydon). I want to say to the hon. member who comes from the extreme west of Canada, and who saw Halifax only once in his life—

Mr. MERRITT: To my regret.

Mr. ISNOR: —it is unfortunate that he did not happen to see our province to a greater extent. If he had, perhaps he would