

*Dissolution of Parliament*

I do know there is a great deal of dissatisfaction already, even before the war has begun in earnest. I suggest that the least this government can do is to give a full account of its stewardship during the last six months. During the special session which we had in September we had no opportunity of discussing the general affairs of the country. It is all very well to say that the war is all-important, but in Canada there are other important matters than the war; and the war will be successful only as there are people in the country who will support it. But the people are not contented to-day. I repeat, the least the government can do, if it is an honest government, is to give a direct account of its stewardship.

We are told that we cannot do what Great Britain does, that we cannot come together every few weeks, almost in continuous session, to discuss the affairs of the state. The government over there is subject to a barrage of criticism from the opposition and that has been generally considered to be a very good thing; but this government seems to avoid criticism. There is no reason why the acts of the last three months since war was declared should not be fully considered.

We are coming to the point where we are governed by order in council. The officials have been kind enough to send me advance copies of orders in council. They come to my desk almost daily. I cannot begin to keep track of them, they are so numerous. Some of these orders in council are taking away the fundamental rights of British people—the right to free speech, the right to free assembly, the right to the exercise of unionism under war conditions, and so on. This condition is coming to pass, and now we are to be denied the rights of parliament. We were taught in our school days that the Magna Charta, the Bill of Rights and similar instruments had settled all these matters forever for the British people, but it would seem as if each generation must make secure its own rights and fight these battles over again in new forms.

The people of the country are anxious to know how some of these war contracts have been let, and they have a right to know. A great many people in Canada want to know, and they have a right to know, how all these dollar-a-year men have been selected, what their qualifications are, and what are the advantages which an inside knowledge may give them. The people of the country want to know why it was that the government got away from the five per cent profit legislation. It may be all very well to say, "Oh, well, under the War Measures Act we can do

that"; but this five per cent profit limit was the considered position of this parliament a year ago. Under the War Measures Act apparently anything can be done and so the five per cent profit limit has been swept aside. What will come next? Is there any guarantee whatever?

We are told now that under the regulations in connection with the War Measures Act we are going to have an arrangement with regard to the vote of soldiers overseas. Why should there be any recourse to that procedure when parliament is now sitting? This is the place in which to do that sort of thing, but we are not to have the right to discuss these orders in council.

Some people have been quite enthusiastic over the recent bond issue. Three and a quarter per cent sounds very fine, but the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) the other day made a most revealing statement. I have a high regard for him, but it was one of the most cynical remarks I have ever heard broadcast throughout the country when he advocated "profitable patriotism". In the last war the various revelations that were made showed the profitable patriotism that had been manifested on the part of the bacon people, the boots people, and a whole lot of others; and now the Minister of Justice actually appeals to the cupidity of the Canadian people and says that we ought to have "profitable patriotism" in this country. It is a low motive to which to appeal.

There is something further I wish to say. If this parliament continues I shall say it at greater length on some future occasion. I desire to say something about the methods that have been used in Canada to compel young men to enlist. It is quite true that because of the opposition of the province of Quebec we have no conscription legislation on our books. But it is also true that in very many parts of the country men who have been on relief for years have been urged to enlist, and told that unless they enlist their relief will be cut off. That is the most despicable form of conscription I know of. I want to say a word for the youth of this country. The Prime Minister will probably rise in his place and say that we have no conscription in this country. No conscription? When thousands of our youth have been forced to enlist by the desperate alternative of enlisting or starving to death, it is time someone said something about the matter. These young fellows who are going to the war have a right to know what provision will be made for them when they come back. One of the bitterest things said to me was said by a returned man in my own

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