

caution was that year and moreover when all the signals of distress were out and flying in this and other countries. But what was the right hon. gentleman doing then? Pushing up the expenditure until he had authorized an expenditure of \$141,000,000 for the current year upon which we are now about to enter. That was the time when my right hon. friend should have been cautious. But the elections were coming on, and he did not wish to put on the curb at that time. But after all that tremendous appropriation has been made, after the elections are over, my right hon. friend comes down, about twelve months after the danger signals are up, after the time for action has passed, and says that we must exercise exceptional caution. I can tell my right hon. friend that the financial condition of this country is not a thing which can be faced with equanimity by men who are serious and have any idea of the gravity of the situation, and that it has been largely brought about by my hon. friend himself and his uncurbed expenditures and appropriations.

There is one other point, and that is with reference to the commission of Judge Cassels. I would ask my right hon. friend how he can refuse, immediately and consecutively, to extend the probe of examination, fearless and full, into the other spending departments of this government? Here I wish to call my right hon. friend's attention to something which occurred in the course of the campaign. The right hon. gentleman was meeting the charge of corruption, meeting the charge of extravagance in departmental administration and, down at Niagara, what did he say? I want the House to listen. He said:

Let me go one step farther. We are charged with having been corrupt. In the session of eight months duration which was drawn to a close a few weeks ago was there any charge made against the government such as was made against the Conservative government in the days of the Pacific scandal?

And so on.

No, sir, no charge of that kind was made, but charges were made against whom?

He goes on to say against the officials of the departments. Here is the point:

What was our conduct? We did, sir, what any honest man would have done, what any honest government would have done, what Hon. Alex. Mackenzie would have done; we appointed a commission to investigate.

What was he talking about? About the extravagance and corruption in the administration of the departments. We did what any other government would have done; we appointed a commission to investigate.

The commission sat and reported having gone through the whole matter they brought in a report in which they state that there

Mr. FOSTER.

were irregularities. There were no names given. It simply confirmed our suspicions, and, our suspicions being aroused, we appointed another commission. Something more was done. We took one of the judges of the land, a man whose honour was beyond reproach—Justice Cassels,—to carry out the investigation. Sir, could we do anything more?

There was but one impression to be taken from that, namely, that the Prime Minister of Canada said to the electorate: We appointed a commission in 1907 to investigate mal-administration in the departments. The right hon. gentleman stated that more than once. What are the facts of the case? He himself knows well. He appointed no commission to examine into the mal-administration of the departments. His own Minister of Justice says that he did not. His own Minister of Marine and Fisheries says that he did not. The commission itself declares that he did not and yet my right hon. friend was content to make the statement to the people of Canada that these charges were being pressed home, that the government did not wait for charges, that they appointed a commission in order to investigate these matters and they were going to find out and punish the guilty. The right hon. gentleman has taken up one part and a very small part of the body of the departments of this country. He has found it gangrened from the point at which the knife entered to the place where the knife was taken out again—gangrened in every respect. He has had witnesses state on oath that what was being done in the Department of Marine and Fisheries was being done in every other department. Does my right hon. friend propose to go farther? Does he propose to examine into other departments and appoint a full and free commission with power to examine into all the points in the case? Does he or does he not propose to probe the other spending departments or is he willing to allow the impression to go broadcast that all the other departments are just as bad as the Department of Marine and Fisheries? There is one thing that surprises me. It is that the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Brodeur) still occupies his seat—a man who, for three years, nearly, has been in that department, who has opportunities and has had opportunities for obtaining a full knowledge of his department, who has been aided by the press, aided by the committees, aided by gentlemen on this side of the House, who has had all the distinctive blotches pointed out to him and who has not only not tried to deal with them, but who has absolutely refused to do it. With such a record as has been shown in that hon. gentleman's department, not only at the centre here but in every branch where the investigation has proceeded, after it has been proved that it has been absolutely untrustworthy and unreliable that hon.