

The Prime Minister

"I declare myself peremptorily against national registration," Mr. Hanson said. "It is unequivocally a measure of conscription. Parliament, according to my belief, has no mandate to vote conscription."

It seems to me most unfortunate that on so serious a matter as this the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson) should have been thus misrepresented.

THE PRIME MINISTER

CONGRATULATIONS ON TWENTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF ELECTION AS LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

On the orders of the day:

Hon. GROTE STIRLING (Yale): I have already had the pleasure of shaking the Prime Minister's hand on this occasion, but I feel sure that had the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson) been present this morning he would have desired to add his congratulations to my own and those of others on the occasion of the right hon. gentleman having attained his majority as leader of the Liberal party.

Right Hon. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Minister of Justice): I desire to join with my hon. friend (Mr. Stirling) in making reference to the twenty-first anniversary of the Prime Minister's election to leadership of the Liberal party. I do so as one who has enjoyed not only the closest cooperation but the most intimate friendship with the Prime Minister, and I am happy to offer him my congratulations and good wishes. I believe, in fact I know, that he is the only leader of a political party in the world who is still at the head of his country after twenty-one years of leadership. He has gone through six general elections and has been successful in five—which I confess may not be for all members of the house an unmixed blessing; however, it is quite an achievement. I know that all hon. members will join with me when I express admiration for the Prime Minister's talents, his energy, his tremendous capacity for work, all of which have been placed at all times at the service of Canada. To-day, in this crisis, he is not only the man of a party but he is the man of Canada, the man of his country. In the contest in which we are engaged he represents the spirit of Canada, with all its vigour, its vitality, its sincerity and its eagerness to achieve victory. I am happy indeed, speaking as the dean of the house, which I do not do very often, to offer our congratulations to the Prime Minister. Et je puis dire qu'en le faisant je parle au nom de ma province.

[Mr. Stirling.]

Mr. VINCENT DUPUIS (Chambly-Rouville): Mr. Speaker, on this very happy occasion I cannot resist the temptation to say a word on behalf of my own district. It is now twenty-one years, as has been said already, since the national Liberal convention met in Ottawa to choose a successor to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The delegates decided to vote in favour of a distinguished young man, the grandson of a great patriot, well known by the labour class for his work on their behalf. When called upon by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, upon the suggestion of Sir William Mulock, he organized the Department of Labour and became the first minister of labour in Canada. But I am sure that one of the principal motives which animated the delegates in their choice was his unlimited fidelity to Sir Wilfrid, in victory or in defeat.

I shall not undertake to recite all that he has accomplished since that time, except to repeat what the right hon. Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) has already said, that the Prime Minister is the only leader of a party in the world who is still in office after so many years of leadership.

The main object of his life has been to maintain unity in this country, and after twenty-one years of leadership I am sure that the right hon. gentleman could repeat the words uttered by his predecessor in Strathroy in 1908, during the course of a political campaign. Sir Wilfrid Laurier said:

It is now twenty years since I assumed the leadership of the Liberal party. When my friends chose me to be their standard-bearer I swore to myself that I would give the task the whole of my life, my soul and my body, and that I have done. My days cannot be very long now.—

I hope the days of the present Prime Minister will be very long.

But whether they are long or short, I shall ever treasure as the most holy thing in my life the confidence which has been placed in me by men who were not of my own kith and kin. I have endeavoured to maintain the principle that the Liberal party is broad enough, that Liberal principles are large enough, to give an equal share of justice and liberality to all men, no matter what may be their race or religion. This is the feeling that has animated me, and this is the feeling which shall animate me to the end. If I am to be remembered after I have gone to my grave I would rather it should be because my name has been attached to the great work of advancing the unification of the races forming the Canadian nation. When my life comes to the end, if my eyes close upon a Canada more united than I found it twenty years ago, when I assumed the leadership of the Liberal party, I shall not have lived in vain, and I shall die in peace.