

I take exception to the fact that my right hon. friend has permitted this commission, appointed and paid for out of public moneys, dealing with great national public utilities, to carry on its inquiries from one end of Canada to the other, wholly in secret. The people of Canada have a right to know the information being given to the commission, and ought to be in a position to judge of its value. I shall not go into the question of what is or is not wise with respect to the Canadian National railways, the Canadian Pacific railway or any phase of the transportation question until the report of the commission is before the house. I think that the matter is to a certain extent sub judice, and for that reason we will wait until the report is brought down before we discuss the matter one way or the other.

I should like, however, to stress to the Prime Minister that we would like to have the report presented to parliament in plenty of time to consider the evidence and findings before being expected to discuss legislation based upon its recommendations, or otherwise. We do not wish to be kept waiting until the end of the session and then to have a report sprung upon this house and be told that conditions as shown in the report are such that immediate legislation or some action of a more drastic or dramatic character is necessary in order to save the country from a crisis, or something of the kind. We wish to have an opportunity fully to discuss the report, seeing any data there may be in the report, and having the benefit of the information from which the commissioners have arrived at their conclusion.

May I, in bringing my remarks to a close, draw attention to my right hon. friend's reference to my innocent comment which was in the nature of a criticism made in the public interest concerning this feature of secrecy in the deliberations of the transportation commission. I felt it a public duty to make clear what a very large percentage of the press of this country has been making clear, namely that it was in the public interest to have proceedings of this body made public, and I said so without fear or favour in any direction. My right hon. friend however came to the conclusion that this was a chance to score in his own peculiar fashion, and apparently with that in mind, addressing a body of Conservatives in Toronto recently he went out of his way, it seems to me, to create personal prejudice against myself.

I have in my hand a report contained in the *Mail and Empire* of January 20, 1932 of a

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

meeting which was held at the Royal York hotel at which about 1,200 Toronto Conservatives were present. Among the enlarged headings I see the following:

Ringing note of faith in banks and insurance fabric features speech.

Stigmatizes Mackenzie King as demagogue.

An hon. MEMBER: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My right hon. friend says "hear, hear"—at least I think it was he.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver): It was an hon. member.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: However, the "hear, hear" came from the benches opposite, and I am pleased it came from there. I should like to read the quotation and then examine the significance of the epithet which has been applied and where it may most appropriately apply. The article continues:

Before an enthusiastic audience of 1,200 Toronto Conservatives in the Royal York Hotel, as well as unnumbered radio listeners throughout Ontario and parts of Quebec and Manitoba, the Prime Minister, in his finest oratorical form, coupled this stirring declaration of hope with a searing attack on Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King and others who charge the Duff transportation commission with unwarranted secrecy in its procedure.

Talk of Demagogue

The Liberal leader's speech at Winnipeg denouncing the conduct of the inquiry was, to the prime minister, "the talk of a demagogue rather than a statesman, of one who prefers temporary cheers beyond the plaudits of history." A thunderous crescendo of applause swept the big banquet hall at this declaration.

Well, if there is one thing that Toronto Tories love it is a demagogue, and it is not to be wondered at that the mention of the word itself was sufficient to bring from them this crescendo of applause. I was anxious to know what my right hon. friend had in mind when he was referring to me as a demagogue, so I took the trouble to look up in one or two standard dictionaries the significance of the word. Demagogue, I found, has, according to all the authorities consulted, two significations, one ancient, the other modern; one more or less pleasing, the other sinister. I must confess, having regard to the nature of my remarks, that I am at a loss at even this moment to tell which meaning my right hon. friend really had in mind. I have seen some utterances of his at times which I have thought might merit the sinister meaning of the term he applied to me. I am quite prepared to leave it to the house and to the country to judge between our respective merits in that particular matter.