

to deny it or not, he did not deny it, and if he intended to it is most unfortunate that he did not. In all fairness to him I think an opportunity should be given him even yet to deny in toto the allegations of the hon. member. There was no specific admission on his part, but within the four corners of his address he never disputed the allegation that he obtained information as a minister of the Crown and as a trustee of this nation, and that of this information he made use to his own advantage, made a use which others for whom he was trustee could not possibly make.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: How could my right hon. friend say that he made use of this information for his own advantage? I think he made it quite clear that the money he returned was his own money and that he paid \$150 odd in interest in addition to that.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not think the Prime Minister is quite fair or well-advised in thus interrupting me. I did not say that he had done it; I said such was the charge against him, namely, that he had used information so secured for his own advantage by withdrawing a large sum of money and thereby saving three-quarters of that money. Now, this is the allegation definitely made. That such conduct is wrong there can be no dispute, and I cannot appreciate the attitude of the Prime Minister—I hope he really does not persist in it—that conduct fundamentally wrong in itself is altered if subsequently the minister returns the money. Such a course does not alter the original conduct at all. I do not say it is not to the credit of the minister that he returns the money, but it does not alter the character of the initial conduct in the least; it does not change its colour in any sense at all. So that the minister stands now in the position of being charged with a grave impropriety and of leaving that charge unchallenged before his withdrawal from this House.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Assuming for the moment that what is alleged here were being considered there is, to my mind, a very great difference between doing a thing for the purpose of gain and taking a course which, "without injury or injustice to third parties," avoids loss in regard to one's own affairs.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I make no objection to that interruption, because the Prime Minister now is directly on the point. The allegation is that the information obtained as minister was used for his own advantage—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: And profit to himself.

Mr. MEIGHEN: The Prime Minister intimates that while it may be wrong for a minister to use information obtained as such to make a profit over and above the money he already has, it is quite right—at least he says it is a different thing—for him to use the same information to avoid a loss of the money he has. I do not think the Prime Minister on reflection will urge that contention; I do not think he can sustain it in his own mind. Where is the difference in the moral position? Not the slightest. It may be that some six months or a month before, this money was worth its whole weight. At the time the money was withdrawn, or just before, it was not; it was worth three-quarters, but it was raised to one hundred per cent of its par value by the action of the minister. But the authorities are all so clear. If the Prime Minister will read the expressions of Mr. Balfour, now Lord Balfour; of Mr. Cave, now Lord Cave; of Sir Rufus Isaacs, himself, the accused; of Mr. Lloyd George, himself, jointly accused; of Mr. Asquith, at the time Prime Minister; of Sir Edward Grey,—of every one who took any part in the debate on a question of alleged impropriety exactly similar to this, he will find that in every case they laid down the dictum that no minister for his own advantage, whatever it might be—and it is as much advantage to save what you have as to make more—may use information which he secured as a minister of the Crown.

No, there is no disputing what the rule is. There is no disputing that on all sides of all politics, in all times in the history of the British Parliament and wherever a question has arisen in our own, it has constantly been held that no minister can use information gained as such to gain any advantage for himself. Why, if this rule is to be looked upon lightly, or is to be shaded, as suggested by the Prime Minister, what is going to be the effect on, say, the rest of the servants of this Dominion? Constantly in the practice of departments, deputy ministers, heads of branches and others in positions of trust, necessarily receive information as such which they could use to their own advantage, but which if they did they would be held accountable to the head of the department, and if rightly held accountable, would find their positions gone. If ministers are to be permitted to do these things and their conduct go unchallenged by this House, how can we ever after hold accountable those who, under ministers are put in equal temptation and to whom the same conduct is open? No, as to the rule and its inexorable necessity there is no doubt.