

on the question at issue. To me those differences are now a closed book. The future of our country lies with us who are marching together, forgetting the past, taking care of the present, and looking to the future. My hon. friend goes on to speak of the platform of 1919, and he used language that on reflection I do not think he would now repeat in this House. At any other time it might be excused, but not when the right hon. Minister of Finance is ill here in Ottawa after having given fourteen years of his life to the province of Nova Scotia, twelve as premier, and eighteen years to the Dominion as Minister of Finance, fifteen years under Sir Wilfrid Laurier and three years under our present leader. In view of his splendid record and his outstanding personality, I feel certain that my hon. friend would think a second time before he again uttered these words.

I ask were the commitments made in solemn convention in Ottawa in 1919 adhered to? Indeed, it is notorious that they were not. They have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and the breach has been repeatedly and cynically condoned by the Prime Minister himself and by the hon. Minister of Finance who, laughing in his sleeve at what he thinks is the gullibility of the electorate, advances his unworthy view that platforms are only useful to attain power. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a too low and debasing plane on which to conduct public business; it is unacceptable and repugnant to our people; it will not wash.

I could have understood my hon. friend uttering such words in the heat of political debate; but I find that he had his speech written. Therefore he knew what he wrote, if he did not then he did not write it. Next he speaks of the by-election down in Cape Breton and pays some attention to the hon. Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald). The hon. minister does not need any person to fight for him, he scarcely needs anybody to electioneer for him, for he is a whole political team in himself; he is a factor in this parliament and in this government; he is factor not only in Nova Scotia but in Canada, and is an outstanding public man whose word is listened to and believed. My hon. friend says that during the campaign in North Cape Breton in July last the press reported the same minister appealing to the electors of that riding at North Sydney on July 28th as follows:

A revision of freight rates on the Canadian National railways has been prepared and is now awaiting the return of Sir Henry Thornton from the West to put them into effect. It provides for a general reduction in rates affecting local traffic between Ontario and the Maritime provinces.

My hon. friend adds:

Polling day passed, and again the electors trusted the government.

The government had nothing to do with the revision of these rates. They were being put in effect by Mr. Dalrymple, vice-president and traffic manager of the Canadian National system, independent of the government and of parliament, and subject only to the provisions of the Railway Act. The hon. gentleman continues:

Have any of the members of this House seen the revision of freight rates? Seven months have passed and no one in Nova Scotia is conscious of any reduction. They continue to labour under rates which Hon. E. H. Armstrong, the Liberal premier of Nova Scotia, describes as "excessive freight rates choking our industrial life."

What the hon. Premier of Nova Scotia said was right. The fact that reductions in the rates to Montreal and west of Montreal to Port Arthur and Fort William were filed on the 14th of April is an answer to my hon. friend and a vindication of the statement made by the Minister of National Defence that these rates would be put into effect on the return of Sir Henry Thornton. So my hon. friend the junior member from Halifax was a little too previous in criticizing the Minister of National Defence. A little further on in his speech he said:

In order to get a proper setting for the picture of to-day one must recall those prosperous and self-contained conditions hinted at by the minister in those days. Ten banks were then operated and controlled in the province. To-day not one so remains. Fortunes were then being made by many different importers, exporters and shipping men, their varied activities affording generous employment to all who wished to work.

My hon. friend is right when he says ten; I cannot recall every one of the ten, but I can recall quite a few of them. First, there was the Union Bank of Halifax, which had been doing a very good business. Who was the president of that bank? Who was the dominating influence in that bank? The late John F. Stairs, who was a Tory representative in this parliament with T. E. Kenney, who was president of the Royal Bank of Canada. One handed it over to the Royal Bank and the other Tory, Mr. Kenney, took it. I ask my hon. friend, can he blame any gentleman on this side for that transfer of a local bank to the Royal Bank of Canada?

Now we come to the Merchants Bank of Halifax, which name was changed when it got its new charter to the Royal Bank of Canada. The late T. E. Kenney was president of that bank and later Wiley Smith, who never was in parliament but who was president of the Liberal Association—

An hon. MEMBER: Liberal-Conservative.

Mr. FINN: Liberal-Conservative Association, yes, of the city of Halifax—he would turn over in his grave if I called him a Liberal.