

The speech delivered by my hon. friend the member for Nipissing (Mr. Lapierre) in every way sustained the reputation he enjoys in this parliament as an effective speaker. His address to-day was delivered in the French language, but as those of us who have heard him before know, my hon. friend, like so many of his compatriots, speaks with equal readiness in the English as well as in the French tongue.

I regret that my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition is not in his seat at the moment. I should like to have addressed, more particularly to him what I have to say with reference to his own remarks. I must say after listening to my right hon. friend this afternoon that I was somewhat surprised at the comparatively mild tone of his discussion. My right hon. friend during the past six or eight months has been free to run at large throughout this country. He has been delivering addresses in different provinces—down by the sea, in the Maritime provinces; throughout Quebec and Ontario; he has been out through the West, I think almost as far as the mountains, if not beyond; and wherever he has gone, it has been with great difficulty that he has restrained himself in the use of adjectives sufficiently vituperative to describe from his point of view the conduct of this government and the degree to which in his opinion it had lost the confidence of the public. We have followed him across this continent in that pilgrimage of woe, in which he has played the role of chief mourner. We have listened to what he has said about the extent to which the business of the country was falling behind, the extent to which the government was burdening the nation with debt, and the extent to which taxes are being levied on the people of this country. One would have expected that after all my right hon. friend has said about the degree to which the government had lost public confidence, he would at least have had the courage this afternoon, to move, as he had the privilege of doing, a vote of want of confidence in the administration. But my right hon. friend did not take the method which parliament permits to test public feeling in a matter of this kind. He has left the extreme statements which he has made to the press of the country. He has not come into parliament and repeated here many of the things which he has been saying very loudly throughout all parts of this country.

In his peroration my right hon. friend dwelt at considerable length upon two recent by-elections, not the last one, but two recent ones. He seemed to think that because the government had not carried every seat that it contested, because it had lost two seats

in by-elections, therefore it had lost to a very great extent public confidence. Well, there have been by-elections before in the history of this country. My right hon. friend was the leader of a government that had by-elections, and I would ask this House to consider for a moment just how the record stands as between my right hon. friend in his criticism of the government, and his own position.

In the government that he was a member of, the Unionist administration, there were I think twelve by-elections in a period of two-and-one-half years, and during that time the government lost five seats. During the time that my right hon. friend was at the head of affairs himself, his own administration in one-and-a-half years, out of eight by-elections lost three seats. But the members of this House will also recall that my right hon. friend had not the courage in the majority of cases to bring on by-elections. He left seats vacant, and when we went to the country there were ever so many constituencies not represented in this House at all because my right hon. friend was afraid to bring on by-elections. He cannot bring a charge of that kind against this administration.

Mr. MEIGHEN: How many were there?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I have not the exact number, but there were a good many.

Mr. MEIGHEN: About one or two.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: A good many more than that, and I would call his attention to this fact: We meet to-day without a single vacancy in the House of Commons. As they have become vacant, we have contested every seat. May I point out that this government since it has been in office, has had thirty-four by-elections, and out of the thirty-four it has lost but two seats.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Did the government win in Lanark, did it win Halifax, or Kent or Moosejaw?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My right hon. friend understands what I mean. I mean seats formerly held by the government. In two years, out of thirty-four by-elections there were lost on this side of the House, of seats which the government formerly held, only two, and that at the end of two years. I think that is about as good a record as any government in this country has ever had. Though we did not have the large following which some administrations have had, we did not hesitate to go to the country immediately a vacancy occurred and during