

to the conduct of the war which calls for the extreme steps involved in the building of an emergency union of existing political groupings.

The Prime Minister has no mandate to form such a government as is suggested. Indeed, he has a definite mandate against forming such a government; and if the opposition was pressing this request, I know of only one way of meeting it: Let the people decide. Do the people want it? Surely a new election would be unthinkable. Then why try to divide Canada by pretending to unite it? Why throw this apple of discord into our national arena?

My province is unanimously opposed to the proposal. The mere mention of the name "union government" brings forth painful memories which it is almost a crime to resurrect at this time. I speak very frankly. I do not feel that I could sit in such a government if I were asked to do so and represent my province. Frankly I say and I believe, and I think others will believe, that I cannot do it and no other man can either. Do you not think, Mr. Speaker, that anything which would destroy the unity of our country could be called an act of sabotage? In a democracy the designation of the rulers of those who are to be governed is and must be made by the vote of the people. I beseech the promoters of this scheme—and I know they are anxious that Canada should give its best war effort—to let well enough alone. I implore them not to undermine the confidence of the people in their duly and freely elected rulers.

We are being told that in other nations of the commonwealth, national governments have been formed. Yes, in two of them, Great Britain and New Zealand.

Mr. COLDWELL: Not New Zealand—Australia.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Not Australia—New Zealand. In Australia the Labour opposition were invited to come into the government and they declined. They accepted to act as a sort of advisory committee. That is what they are in Australia. But in Great Britain and New Zealand, when the war came, there were in power pre-war governments, and instead of the government going to the people and having them ratify the government's war policy, the government formed what was called a union government and dispensed with a general election. In south Africa, far from forming a national government, they dissolved the union that existed between General Smuts and General Hertzog.

I have here something which comes from a part of the commonwealth whose loyalty will certainly not be challenged—Northern Ireland. There on the 25th of June, 1940—and I take

[Mr. E. Lapointe.]

this from the Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire, Mr. Beattie moved in the House of Commons the following motion:

That this house views with alarm the continued refusal of the government to cooperate with all parties in the house for the formation of an all-party government for the duration of the war.

Speaking on the motion Lord Craigavon said:

The thought of including members from the other side of the house has occupied my mind for some time, but I believe the government are in a stronger position as they are; and, therefore, if the hon. member who has moved the resolution will accept my word that I have nothing at the back of my mind but the desire to have as strong a government as possible in the present crisis, it covers the whole ground of the motion.

The question was put and negatived.

Later, on the 29th of September, Mr. Warnock moved the following motion:

That in the opinion of this house the government of Northern Ireland as at present constituted is not the most effective instrument for the prosecution of the business of the state, either in relation to the war effort of the country or the ordinary business of good government, and that the welfare and prosperity of Northern Ireland, present and future, would be better secured by a reorganization of the cabinet.

Those are almost the words which we have heard in this country. The Prime Minister, Lord Craigavon, in reply said:

—that if he thought that any other man could step in with the knowledge he had of the complications across the channel and the difficulties that confronted them, if he thought he could serve Ulster by stepping down he would do so immediately. Mr. Warnock would like to have a general election, because that was tantamount to what his motion came to. It was a very inappropriate time and he doubted very much whether one of those loyalist members who had backed them up for so long would lose his seat.

I, too, doubt very much whether a single one of our members on this side of the house would lose his seat if there were a general election now, as might be compelled by the government acceding to this proposal.

The country has given a mandate to the Prime Minister—not to the editors of some newspapers, important as they may be—to form a government. Public opinion is not opinion that is expressed most loudly by a few. Public opinion is opinion which is socially accepted, reflecting the private views and opinions of the members of the community. Newspapers put forward opinions which are their own, those of the proprietors or editors. They have a perfect right to do so if they are frank about it. But if they say, as some editors are tempted to do, that the opinion of the editor is the public opinion of the country, or of the province, or of the race