

I want now to refer, and very briefly, to some special circumstances which make the offence of the present assumed administration still more culpable. In what circumstances was the late appeal made? Hon. gentlemen will remember that Mr. King as head of the government of the time declared in a speech he made at Richmond Hill in the constituency of North York, that an appeal was necessary. Before I proceed to quote his words, I want to emphasize again, by way of precaution, that for the soundness of my constitutional position I do not depend a particle on any assertion whatever made by the Prime Minister at Richmond Hill or anywhere else. No matter what he says, no matter upon what ground he appealed to the people, having appealed and finding himself not only defeated but the head of only a minority group, no government would have the right, with him still the assumed Prime Minister, to attempt to function in parliament. But the character of the offence, not from its constitutional aspect but from other aspects, is the more incomprehensible when we recall just the circumstances under which he made his appeal. Speaking at Richmond Hill on the 6th of September last, he spoke as follows:

As I have already said, I have not the least doubt we shall be able to command such support as we all along have had in the House of Commons at another session; but shall we be able to do more than that? That is the question I have put to every one of my colleagues in the government, and to not a few of the members. It is a question I now put to you who have honoured me with your representation in the House of Commons. It is a question I put to the electorate of this country. Is it sufficient that as a government we should continue in office, drawing our indemnities and salaries as members and ministers, and enjoying the other fruits of office, when great national questions press for solution, with which for want of an adequate majority in parliament we are unable satisfactorily to cope?

Then he used this further language—and the speech from which I quote was given to the press dictated in advance, and is no doubt the matured production of the then Prime Minister's mind:

I refer now to all important national problems that are pressing for solution, and which cannot be solved in a parliament constituted after the manner of the parliament elected in 1921, or by any government which does not command a substantial majority in the House of Commons. Let me recall what I said a moment or two ago. As a government we can continue to hold office. We could, I believe, so arrange our sessional programme as to command in the House of Commons a support equal to that we have had during the last four years, but I doubt if we could do more than that. I doubt if, on the eve of a general election, we could introduce in parliament any great measure of reform without its whole aim and purpose being completely misconstrued and the legislation itself being thwarted. At most we would be reduced to marking time. This is not a moment in our country's

affairs at which to mark time; it is a time to march forward.

Then he proceeded to recite some of the questions which imperatively demand solution, and he used this language:

May I say further, I believe each of the problems mentioned is a pressing one, I do not believe that any one of the four can be dealt with effectively at a last session of parliament. They can only be satisfactorily dealt with by a House of Commons fresh from the people and with a mandate from the people to carry out their will. I would say further, I do not believe that any one of the four can be dealt with effectively by a government which is not supported by a substantial majority in the House of Commons. Group government and minority government may be inevitable in transitional phases of our political history, but neither is the kind of government wherewith to achieve great reforms.

The opening speech of the campaign was not the only one in which these sentiments were outlined. Speaking at Regina on September 29, just one month before the elections, the Prime Minister is reported to have used the following language:

He was convinced that a government without a large majority in the Commons could not govern Canada, with all its problems. If the government had possessed a large majority it would not have been necessary to appeal to the country and the election would not have been held until 1927.

But all hon. members of the House are fully familiar with this language used on many successive occasions by the Prime Minister of that time. I do not need to quote any further. The Prime Minister on many occasions said: This election is held for one reason and one only. We have but a majority of one in parliament—as he termed it, a “visible” majority of one. We have to depend for such support as we can get upon the Progressive party—they, I suppose were the “invisible” majority. We cannot attack the problems of Canada depending on their support. We cannot adequately conduct the business of this country as a government when we have to depend upon the support of the Progressives under circumstances which, he said, bore down upon them, hobbled them and prevented the realization of his policy. Because of these circumstances and these circumstances alone, he appealed for a decisive majority. Now, what is his position? Under what circumstances does he ask to be allowed to conduct public affairs still? Where is his majority of one? Where is the “visible” majority? It has turned into a minority of over forty. Where is now the “invisible” majority? Even if all support him—in order to carry his measures he would have to get the whole of them—it would only give a majority varying from one to ten, whereas in the last House he had a majority of something