

obligation. We propose to leave it to the people of Canada to say whom they wish to carry on the government of Canada in this period of world war.

I move, Mr. Speaker, that the house do now adjourn.

Hon. R. J. MANION (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The motion is not before the house.

Mr. MANION: Do I understand that no one is to be allowed to say anything in reply to the Prime Minister's prepared speech? Is it the intention to gag this house, in addition to everything else? Is the Prime Minister to come before this house and make a prepared speech, of which no hint was given to anyone, and then attempt to close the mouths of the rest of us? I ask him if he dares do that.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The parliamentary procedure of this house is for the Speaker to put a motion first. Then, if hon. gentlemen wish to speak, they may do so.

Some hon. MEMBERS: The motion is not debatable.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The motion is not debatable, but the Speaker can put the motion just the same. If my hon. friend wishes to speak, I should be quite pleased to have him do so.

Mr. MANION: I certainly wish to speak.

In the first place, Mr. Speaker, I should like it distinctly pointed out that there is no particular courtesy in permitting me to speak, any more than there was courtesy in permitting the Prime Minister to speak on a motion which is not debatable. I should like that distinctly understood. I should like to point out also that the custom in the parliament of Canada has always been for the government to give a copy of the speech from the throne to the leader of the opposition an hour or so in advance, and up to the present session that has always been done by this government. No such courtesy was extended to-day, not even up to the time when you, Mr. Speaker, had the copy of the speech in your hands. So far as I know, no copy has been in the hands of anyone in this house except the Prime Minister and the Speaker. I merely point this out, sir, because it is a discourtesy which not only offends all the parliamentary traditions of this and the British house, but also shows an unfair decision on the part of the Prime Minister to try to catch everyone in this house without preparation, by the unprecedented step he has taken to-day. Until I went into the senate chamber I had absolutely no

hint that there was any thought of anything like this. The Prime Minister called the parliament of Canada together to-day in the usual way. He brought members here from the four corners of Canada apparently, so far as one can judge—we do not yet know the intention—to dissolve the house to-night. That is what I understand; that is the only conclusion I can draw, although in one part of his speech the right hon. gentleman said we understood what was in his mind. Well, I doubt if when he spoke last session he thoroughly understood what was in his mind, because usually when the right hon. gentleman speaks as he did at that time he leaves himself an opportunity to back out one of the rear doors or slip out a window. That was what he did then.

The only reason why I mention this particularly, sir, is that it is so unprecedented to treat an opposition in this manner. Not only does the right hon. gentleman suggest, in the speech from the throne at a supposedly regular session of parliament, that he is going to have an immediate election, but he prepares a political speech to be delivered here this afternoon and gives no one else any opportunity of preparing any remarks in advance. As the Prime Minister was speaking I had to sit here and try to outline a few points I desired to make as a result of this unprecedented act. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I ask you and hon. members of the house to bear with me if my remarks are rather disjointed.

It would have been so easy, once the right hon. gentleman and his government decided on a step like this, to follow the usual courteous practice of a prime minister and a government. However, I must say this is not the first time that the right hon. gentleman has shown this type of discourtesy towards me since I became leader of the opposition. I regret that very much, because many times in the past I have said that whatever faults the right hon. gentleman might have—and I suppose I have pointed out his faults as often as anyone—that was one fault he did not have; he was usually courteous in social life and elsewhere. But he has not shown any of that courtesy in this instance. What he has done from a political point of view is to carry on what I consider unscrupulous politics at this time, by calling for an immediate election without any hint to the people, in order to gag discussion in this house and throughout the country—at all events any prepared discussion—and to attempt to get a snap decision of the people of Canada on this great question.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Will my hon. friend allow me to say one word in regard to