

What lies at the back of everything else is the absence of any collective cabinet responsibility. How is that to be remedied? Why is there no Government policy to-day? Hon. gentlemen know the reason very well. The Government is composed of two factions, two groups of men of different attitudes of mind, and their job for the last year or two has been, not to find a policy, but to see how they can get along without a policy so they can hold together. If there is any doubt on that question let the ministry answer.

When the war was over one would have supposed that the Prime Minister would have made some statement to the House as to what his post-war policy was to be. The ministry was elected as a war ministry, and when the war was over its purpose was gone. It had no policy at any time other than to carry on the war. If it had I should like any member of the ministry to state what it was. I say it had no policy except to "win the war," and when the war was won it had nothing further to say as to what it represented in the country. One would have supposed that under these conditions the Prime Minister would have stated to the people of this country that the Government would carry on a little longer until demobilization had been completed and that he would then issue a statement of the Government's policies for post-war conditions and would appeal to the people and give them an opportunity of approving those policies. That would have been the proper constitutional method, but was that done? No, that chance was lost, and from the moment that chance went by, the Government began to lose the confidence of the people; it began to lose its ministers one by one, it began to lose by-elections one by one. It became a crumbling edifice until to-day there is only left a remnant of what one could call a united cabinet.

What is the position as stated by the Government itself? The people of this country were prepared to allow the ministry to carry on for a session or two for the purpose of demobilization. That would have brought the situation up to the beginning of last session. Then the job for the Government would have been limited to getting through that session.

My hon. friend the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Rowell) will recall that he and some of those who came into the Government as Unionist Liberals held a meeting and discussed how they could stay longer in touch with those who represented the other element of which the

[Mr. King.]

Cabinet was composed. When that meeting was over, my hon. friend gave out a statement as to its result, which appeared in the press throughout the country on October 1. I shall read only one paragraph of that statement:

The meeting expressed unqualified approval of the war policy of the Union Government, and the Government is congratulated on its success.

That was self-congratulation.

The consensus of opinion was, as the members were elected to support Union Government, it is their intention to continue to do so, and the hope was strongly expressed that the Government would be able at an early date to evolve a progressive policy satisfactory to the country to meet the after the war conditions.

Note that. Here is one section of the ministry saying to the other section of the ministry and to the country that they strongly hope that in some way or another the ministry will be able to frame a policy to deal with post-war conditions. Was there ever such an exhibition of cabinet incompetency as is expressed in those words? Well, that was sufficient to keep the Government together through last session. Then we came to the Christmas recess, when the job was to hang on until another session came. That became pretty difficult. Matters grew more and more tense in the Cabinet, as my hon. friends know, and finally there was pretty nearly an explosion. The papers came out on December 15 with headlines such as these: "Sir R. L. Borden to retire from public life—Will make announcement to gathering of supporters—Heeds Medical advice—Parliament will meet in February with new Premier and leader of Unionists." We all remember what consternation there was when it was said that the Prime Minister was to resign. Why did he not resign? The answer is to be found in the newspaper headlines of the following day "Couldn't find successor, so Premier sticks." They have been looking for a successor ever since, but have not found one. Then came the statement which the Prime Minister issued himself before he went away on leave. It appeared in all the papers and is well known to every hon. member of this House. I shall read only one paragraph. It is a sort of political last will and testament by the Prime Minister. To quote:

Sir Robert Borden desires that the situation as here outlined—

He had been outlining what took place in the Cabinet.

—shall be placed before his supporters in Parliament, and he considers it essential that they