

various complaints—many of them. I overlook that at the moment, but I urge upon the Prime Minister—and I am sure he will accept the suggestion in the spirit in which it is offered—that he and his government see that politics are set aside by the government as well as by ourselves.

I say that for this reason. I shall give one illustration, and only one, although I could mention a number. I have in my hand a paper in which reference is made to a certain appointment. I shall not name the appointment or the man, but the appointee is one who is known to be outstandingly, openly and strongly a supporter of this government. I have not a word to say against that circumstance; for I have the utmost respect for a man who has strong political views, to whichever of the parties represented in this house he may happen to belong. But I pick up another paper and I find that another appointment is to be made, or so it is positively stated; it is an appointment in association with the first—and I understand they are the only two—and it is to come, according to the statement, which I hope will be corrected, from the organization office of the Liberal party. The Prime Minister shakes his head, and I hope he is right. Probably, and I say this with respect, he knows nothing about it; naturally he cannot know the details of all appointments to be made. But I draw to his attention and to the attention of the government that this would not be carrying out the spirit of the contract which we offered them. In attempting to cooperate in every way, my party and I are sincere. I want the government to give us every chance to cooperate, and I suggest this with no thought of reflecting on the government and no desire to offer any criticism. I repeat that I understand full well it takes time for the government to get down to handling affairs; and if a few errors are made, far be it from me to offer any criticism. I am not doing something which I did not do in my few remarks the other day. At that time I pointed out that patronage and favouritism must cease. I will read the sentence if I may, although in doing so I am breaking the rules of the house:

Another suggestion, and it is this: Let not the abuses of political patronage and favouritism interfere with our national efforts. Canada as a whole is fighting—not one party—and Canada demands that we do our duty fearlessly and fairly. Let service and quality and honesty rule in all our vast expenditures. We must not let any scandal destroy our efforts.

I have no reason for doubting that the Prime Minister is just as sincere as I am in desiring that anything of that sort be avoided. I am putting it before him only because I

[Mr. Manion.]

want to bring about national understanding and a united country at this very serious time, and we cannot have national understanding and unity if any one of the three or four parties in this house starts out to play politics. We of the opposition have a duty to perform which is second only to the duty which the government itself has to perform. According to our constitutional system a good opposition is just about as necessary as a good government; and we intend honestly and fairly to cooperate; but we do not intend to abdicate our right to criticize if we think the government is not playing fairly with the people of this country, as it would not be doing if it permitted politics to get into the administration and the affairs of a war. I say this merely for the purpose of urging the government to give us every opportunity to cooperate with them to the fullest extent, because we intend to do our duty, and while we have avoided anything in the way of criticism during this session, and shall so continue until the end of this session, naturally we cannot promise that in the future if criticism is deserved.

One other matter, which perhaps is not so important, and perhaps I should have notified the Prime Minister of my intention to mention this. I ask him if he will make a statement on it this evening. That is the question of an election. I was going to mention it to the Prime Minister; but it occurred to me only a few moments ago, and I thought that since I was rising in my place it might be an appropriate moment to mention the subject. If it is assured—and I believe that it is the intention of the Prime Minister—not to have an election until after another session of parliament, if the opposition and the country can be assured that such is the intention of the government, the opposition will be in a better position to cooperate with the government than if hon. members on all sides are to go home with the thought in their heads that possibly an election will be sprung upon them. I have no reason to think the Prime Minister will do any such thing; in justice to my right hon. friend I should say that from conversations with him I have reason to think there is no thought of an election. But I believe that for the good of the country and the empire it would be an appropriate statement for the Prime Minister to make, if he deems it advisable, that there will be no election until at least after another session of parliament.

My whole object in these observations is not in any way even to imply criticism, but to ensure that we can continue to cooperate in every way as we have done this session and to maintain a united front throughout Canada in these very serious times.