

see it, our country, in common with Great Britain and the United States, is facing as appalling a situation as these countries have faced at any time. I do not wish to exaggerate the difficulty of invading Europe, but I do wish to draw attention to the fact that invasion means not merely a successful landing of troops on the continent of Europe and the combined action of different armed forces, but also that once men are on the soil of Europe they have to be maintained there. And they will have to be maintained with supplies brought, in large part, from this continent, across the Atlantic. I need not go into details, because I think hon. members have a pretty clear conception of what the facts of the situation will be. But I do say at once to the House of Commons and to the people of Canada that I am far from believing there is going to be an early conclusion to this war. For that reason I believe parliament must continue to make the winning of the war its first and main objective.

Listening to my hon. friend this afternoon I must say I was surprised, particularly when he dwelt at such length upon matters pertaining to general elections compared with the time he devoted to the present situation in Europe.

Mr. GRAYDON: I was going by the speech from the throne.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Well, my hon. friend has his own responsibility.

Mr. GRAYDON: So does the Prime Minister.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: He has his own responsibility.

Mr. GRAYDON: The speech from the throne was filled with everything except the war.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend spoke on his own responsibility, and it was for him to do what I am seeking to do now, namely, to impress the house with the importance of winning the war, before all else.

My hon. friend has just said that he was following the speech from the throne. May I repeat to the house the paragraph which I believe to be the most important appearing in the speech from the throne. It is in these words:

The winning of the war clearly remains the first of all objectives. My ministers believe it is their duty to see that Canada's war effort is firmly maintained until the enemy is defeated in Europe and in Asia. They believe the government's primary task, and the primary duty of the Canadian people, is to concentrate on the prosecution of the war. Our fighting men must be assured that there will be no

diversion from this vital task and no relaxation of Canada's war effort. Till the war is won, the policies of my government will continue to be shaped to that end.

That is the policy of the present administration. In so far as it lies within our power, we intend, in the house, to endeavour to concentrate on measures relating to the winning of the war, until the war is won—and not, I pray, to devote our time to too great consideration of matters which may be more concerned with the winning of elections than with the winning of the war.

Before proceeding further, may I say, so that hon. members may know exactly where the government stands in relation to elections, that I have already made clear to the people of Canada, in an address last September, at a time when members of different parties were saying that we were going to have a general election before the end of the year, that so far as I was concerned, and so far as the government was concerned, we hoped to carry through to the end the trust which had been given to us by the Canadian people, when they returned us to power, a trust that we would put forth the utmost effort in the winning of the war, and direct the affairs of Canada to that end. We intend to do that. Unless prevented, in some way which it would be impossible to control, from carrying on the affairs of government as they must be carried on if we are to win the war, we intend to continue with that work, and not to interrupt it by any general election until the war is won. The people of Canada do not want a general election at this time of war. Our men fighting overseas do not want an election, if it can be avoided, until after victory is achieved, and we are in a position to welcome them and all our armed forces home as a victorious army.

A prime minister is placed in a very difficult position when he is asked to give any undertaking to the country that he will not, in any circumstance, have a general election. It is running counter to the spirit of British institutions, when as regards the time of an appeal to the people any government binds itself in any final way. For that reason I have found it necessary, as I do to-day, to say that situations may arise in which it will be impossible for the government to carry on, with the authority it should have in a time of war. Some questions might arise which would make it necessary that an appeal to the people be made to settle an issue, and get on with the work of winning the war. I see no reason for either at the present time. I have no desire for and no thought of seeking to find an issue of the kind. What I am determined to do, if