

*Dissolution of Parliament*

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: And he would have done that if he had not promised my hon. friend that he would not have an election before another session.

Mr. MANION: He promised that he would not have an election until another session of the house. Did he mean by that to hoodwink the members of this parliament? Was that his trickery? I say that if the Prime Minister meant to do what he is doing today he meant to hoodwink us and he was guilty of a despicable political trick.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My words were very clear and were made clear because of my responsibility in the matter. I pointed out that parliament would be called. What it was advisable to do when parliament was called would depend upon what had happened in the interval. It is because of what has happened in the interval—

Mr. MANION: What has happened in the interval? The right hon. gentleman has been violently attacked by the premier of Ontario. Is there anything new about that? So far as I am concerned I think Mr. Hepburn is right. I think he has been right all along, and never was I so sure that he is right as I am now made sure by this piece of political trickery of the Prime Minister to-day. It is running away from parliament; it is not facing the people.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. leader of the opposition has repeatedly used the word "trickery". I do not think that is parliamentary.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): It would be all right in the legislature of Ontario.

Mr. MANION: I will withdraw the word, but I do not quite know what other word to substitute that will express my opinion. Perhaps your honour will help me out. I do not wish to be unparliamentary and will withdraw the word. I will say this, that never in the history of our country was there a more unparliamentary act than what the Prime Minister is doing here this afternoon.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Never was there a more responsible act.

Mr. MANION: Than what the right hon. gentleman is doing?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes.

Mr. MANION: If the right hon. gentleman will change the first syllable and make the word "irresponsible", I will agree.

I shall not take up any more of the time of the house. I am willing to let the people

[Mr. Manion.]

decide. But I still think that in decency—I do not say that offensively—and as a matter of fair dealing with the House of Commons and the parliamentary system in Great Britain and Canada the Prime Minister and his government should come back here, carry on the session and bring in legislation for taking the soldiers' votes overseas. Of course I shall be told: What did the other party do about the soldiers' votes? Because it is already implied that something unfair was done. I was not a member of any government prior to 1921, and had nothing to do with what was done at that time, but even if I had been a member of that government, is it any justification for doing something wrong now to say that something was done wrongly then? The whole defence of this government in nearly everything has been: But you people from 1914 to 1918 did worse—the old *tu quoque* argument. Have we not gone ahead at all; have we made no progress in democracy and decency in this country in the last twenty-five years? If there were mistakes or crookedness in those days—I am not denying that there may have been because I do not know much about it—surely that is all the more reason that such things should not be repeated now. That is my argument. This is a time to fight for democracy here at home. What is it going to profit us if we fight for democracy in Europe and lose it here in Canada? And that is what we are doing by such an act as the Prime Minister is pulling off today. He is endangering the whole democratic principle for which we are fighting along with Britain and France. The whole difference between Hitlerian dictatorship and our system is the difference between free speech and no free speech. The place for free speech is in the parliament of Canada.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: It is in the country.

Mr. MANION: It is in parliament since parliament has been called. We shall have it on the hustings too. But the place to have questions answered is here in parliament. With the parliament of Canada dissolved how can I get information, without any returns, without any questions being answered? I do not expect that any of the ministers will give me much help. The place to give that information is here in the House of Commons. The place to discuss these matters is here in the House of Commons. I submit that this government has been extravagant; it has been careless; not only has it been unprepared but it has been deplorably weak in carrying on the war activities of this country. I say that;