

We must, of course, have vision and courage to develop our resources. For many years one hon. member on this side of the house, the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Mac-Nicol), has been preaching that, and I am sure all must agree with him. Again, we must have vision and courage to improve our trans-continental railways and to develop our canals, harbours and ports. My attitude with respect to spending is dictated largely by one consideration. I believe in wise spending on useful projects when that is advisable and in cutting out all unnecessary extravagance and waste.

The public accounts committee should be set up at once. It has not been doing its duty in recent years, and just criticism is made against hon. members that they have not had it meet. The disposal of war assets should be further investigated, as well as surplus war materials which have not yet been turned over to War Assets Corporation.

We must not deceive ourselves by our present inflated income. Our foreign trade which, the minister says, is at an all-time high, is wholly artificial, partly because we are selling largely on credit while we are buying for cash.

I have tried to reveal something of the record of the government since parliament last met, as I have seen that record from the outside. It is a record of expediency triumphing over principle, of disorder and mismanagement substituted for progress, of political manoeuvring replacing true statescraft. In three by-elections the government experienced the wrath of the electorate. The strictures of the press and public against the government mount in volume daily. The government has forfeited the confidence of the people of Canada, as expressed at the polls.

Taxation remains at almost war-time peaks. Waste, extravagance and inefficiency abound. Disorder is the order of the day. Decontrol is being clumsily handled. A partial system of controls is still limiting production and increasing the hardships experienced by our people. Agriculture has been badgered to the point of desperation. Labour has lost confidence in the government's integrity of purpose. The old principle of the Prime Minister—"Divide and conquer"—has been exploited to the limit in dominion-provincial relations.

In these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Peel (Mr. Graydon):

That the following be added to the motion: "We respectfully submit to Your Excellency that Your Excellency's present advisers do not possess the confidence of the country."

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is now 5.45 p.m., but I believe it is the desire of the house that the debate should proceed as rapidly as possible, and for that reason I shall continue to speak until six o'clock, though I should have preferred to have the opportunity of addressing my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) earlier in the afternoon. I do not forget that the hon. gentleman began his speech on Friday last, and that what we have had this afternoon has been a continuation of what we heard at that time.

At the conclusion of his speech today my hon. friend moved an amendment, which I shall repeat to the house—

We respectfully submit to Your Excellency that Your Excellency's present advisers do not possess the confidence of the country.

May I thank my hon. friend for that amendment. If that is the feeling of the house, then it cannot be made known too quickly. And I say to the house that, at the present time, there is nothing I desire more than that, at the earliest possible moment this house should express its feeling of confidence or non-confidence in the government. If there is any doubt on that point let it be removed at once. Either the government will carry on with the confidence of the house, which I believe it has, or, if it has not the confidence of the house, then the country should have an opportunity to say who is to govern the country for the next few years.

This afternoon my hon. friend seemed to have on his mind questions of elections and leadership. He made some reference to the possibility of the present leader of the government dropping out. I say to him that, during the time I have sat in the house as leader of the Liberal party, I have been faced by no less than ten leaders of the party opposite. And may I say further that, after the speech to which we have listened this afternoon, I should not be surprised if it were not long before another leader takes his place. I have heard nothing to cause me to believe that my hon. friend is any too secure in the seat he holds at the present time, far from it.

If my hon. friend had been sitting where I sat this afternoon, and had been able to gaze at the faces of his followers, and to note the expressions on those faces as they were trying to make out what he was saying, where he was going, or what he was driving at, perhaps he would share some of the feeling I have heard rumoured from time to time respecting uncertainty in the leadership of the party opposite.