

savoury record of hon. gentlemen opposite in the matter of pre-election pledges, I would have thought that no hon. gentleman on the other side of the House would have dared to mention the subject. During the course of his admirable speech the hon. junior member for Halifax said:

They promised time and again by their leaders that if honoured with the confidence of the electorate, they would carry on the public services for a much less sum; and they professed much regard for the sanctity of public pledges given by political leaders. In their election handbook of 1911, I find this:

He then proceeded to read what I presume to be a paragraph from that handbook, as follows:

If there is one thing more clear than another in the government of a democratic country it is that political leaders should be held to a strict account for their pledges and platforms. These form the basis of the contract between them and the electorate. These undertakings are solemnly given. They are not actionable in Courts of Law, and therefore all the more should they be held cognizable in the great moot court of the people, and their terms rigidly exacted.

On the basis of that item the hon. gentleman attempted to build the argument that the leaders of the Conservative party had made the pledge that if they were returned to office they would reduce the expenditure of this country. Later he said:

Is not the conduct of the Government in the circumstances open to the gravest censure? Was not this a fitting season for the Government to practise economy and implement its pre-election pledges? The present Government party, when in Opposition, promised, if elected to power, a reduction in public expenditure. Let us see if they have observed faithfully their pledges in this respect.

I desire to say that the hon. gentleman cannot quote any statement contained in the platform laid down by the Conservative party previous to their return in 1911 asserting that if returned to office they would reduce the public expenditure.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Go to Hansard and you will find it.

Mr. BRADBURY: I have looked at Hansard. I do not think the hon. gentleman can find any such statement; I venture to say that it does not exist, because no such pledge was given. What the leaders of the Conservative party said was that if they were returned to power they would handle the revenues in such a manner as to avoid waste. They condemned in the strongest possible terms the extravagance of the late Administration and the manner

in which the public revenues were squandered under Liberal rule. But not a line was written or a word uttered by the leaders of the Conservative party pledging themselves to reduce expenditure. Why do I say that? Because the Conservative party realized that with the development and expansion of our growing country the expenditures were bound to increase. They realized that great public buildings would have to be erected in different parts of the country; that our waterways would have to be improved; that steps would have to be taken to develop the resources, commerce and industries of our country. The Conservative party complained not so much of the amount of money expended by the Liberal Government as they did about the manner in which the public funds of Canada were handled by them.

Mr. LAW: Did the hon. gentleman read all the manifestoes issued by the Conservative party during the election of 1911? There were several.

Mr. BRADBURY: I think I read all literature that could be rightly called part of the platform of the Conservative party. No hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House can produce a pamphlet issued under the authority of the Conservative party in which a pledge of that kind was given to the people.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Did the hon. gentleman read a certain manifesto in which the first paragraph was that the expenditure of \$74,000,000 by the Liberal Government was extravagant beyond all possible defence?

Mr. BRADBURY: No, but if I had read it I could readily have understood it.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I can show my hon. friend a copy of that manifesto, which is signed by his leader.

Mr. BRADBURY: I could well understand the leader of the Opposition at that time using such language, because every man who sat on the opposite side of the House previous to 1911 contended that the expenditures were extravagant and that the finances of the country were handled in an outrageous and wasteful manner.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: I can send you a library on that point.

Mr. BRADBURY: The hon. junior member for Halifax advocated that the expenditures on public works should be cut down.