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CANADA AND THE WAR

Most of us would like to see, at all times, a political condition where

"none was for a party;"  
and "all were for the State."

Could any form of government effect such a transformation in human nature, I am sure that most of us would welcome it with enthusiasm. I, for one, would certainly not wish to discourage the idealism which longs for cessation of all forms of strife, and the permanence of good-will and understanding as the basis of human relations. But those who think that a union government will achieve these desirable ends are, I believe, grievously mistaken.

Men will always differ in opinion, and it is right that they should do so. There is, however, no reason why differences of opinion should be accompanied by bitterness. Men can differ, and still work together in good-will, without surrendering the right to independent thought, speech and action.

The words "national government" are deliberately used to suggest a sort of patriotic idealism. The phrase itself has a patriotic ring, even if it does not ring true.

**The True Meaning of National Government.**

But let us stop a moment to see what the words "national government" really mean. We must be careful not to be carried away by catch-words and slogans. They are often dangerous and frequently deceptive. Let us look beneath the label to see what is underneath. Let us see if the goods, when we inspect them, are in accordance with the advertisement. Let us look particularly to see whether the Leader of the Opposition, in his present appeal, is not misusing both the word "national" and the word "government".

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A national government, in the correct sense of the term, is the government which carries on the business of the nation. It represents the nation in accordance with parliamentary procedure and practice. Under the British system, it must be a representative and responsible government. It means a government which represents the majority in Parliament. It does not mean, as I said recently in the House of Commons, a government which is responsible to the official Opposition, or to any other minority group. It means a government which is responsible to the people. Representation of the people and responsibility to the people are the pillars of our parliamentary system. Since everyone cannot rule at one and the same time, the right to rule is given to those who command the confidence of the largest number. Government by majority rule is, under our system, the only true national government. Equally, it is the only true democratic government.

**Union Government—What it Means.**

The only government that can be called truly national is a government which reflects a practical unanimity of sentiment and belief held in common by a majority of the people's representatives. In Canada, such a government should also represent, in fair proportion, every section of the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific. A truly national government cannot be founded upon an unnatural attempt to harmonize conflicting views and opinions. A combination created as a result of bargaining between conflicting parties and groups is not a national government. I might add that a political leader who cannot command support in all parts of the country will have little chance of forming a government strong enough to be a unifying force in time of war.

When the Leader of the Opposition talks of national government what he really means is "union" government.

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