

POOR
COPY

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

D11832
17

Subject.....

Date..... Publication.....

"Do you think the people of Canada expected us to return to power and to pay no attention to what we had told them? Were we to say one thing at election time and then pay no attention to it when elected? During the first and second year of our government we were taunted by Mr. Meighen for not reducing the tariff on the implements of production. He said we were false to our promises. We said, 'wait.' Time is needed. We had problems to face, and we had to wait and see if we were in a position to take off the tax. We in this manner carried out our pledge and promise to the people, and we hope that when we again come before the people as we may in a couple of years, they will have reason to know that when we say we intend to do a thing, we mean to stand by that pledge and promise.

NO ELECTION THIS FALL.

"When I said there will be no election this fall, I believed the people were well satisfied with the government and did not want a change. No announcement was so welcome as that one. Was it the same previous to the election of 1921. Everyone wanted a change. Today they say

they want no election, that they do not want industrial conditions disturbed. That means we have the confidence of the people, and we will continue to administer the affairs of the country in an honest, progressive and forward way.

"We cannot do all we want at once," said the premier. "The main thing is to be sure we are progressing along right lines and in the right way. People are fond of comparing the days of the Liberal party of years ago with the position of the Liberal party of the present time. Sir Wilfred Laurier came into power in 1896. He had to face depression. It took time, but he made the changes which seemed best in the tariff, and there were fifteen years of peace, progress and plenty which have been known as the golden era. The country prospered under years of Liberal rule. We hope we will long be able to continue to give you government similar to that recorded at that period.

DIFFERENT CONDITIONS.

Conditions today are very different from what they were with the

Laurier government in 1896. First of all, they had a large majority, of twenty, thirty or as high as seventy in the house. You know my position. I don't know whether I have a majority or a minority. With the speaker, I believe we break even in the house. There are as many on the opposition as on my own side. That does not make our position any easier. We cannot do as we would like to do with the same hand as we would if we had a strong majority. In Laurier's day the opposition sat opposite, and he knew they were his enemies, and he could fight them in open battle.

APPEAL TO PROGRESSIVES

"We have two groups opposing us. They oppose each other more than they oppose the government, for they hate each other. The country must realize that if it is to have strong, stable government, we must have one group composed of all those who stand for the interests of the whole people on the one side, and the other group which stands for the interests of the few who are specially privileged on the other side, and let us have an open battle. Let us seek to have banded together the many who are seeking to widen the bonds of freedom, as against those who are seeking to keep special privileges.

"Whatever the result, we have sought to carry out the will of the people as expressed by their representatives in the house, regardless of the labels they wear. We were told that this was weakness, that we should be autocratic. But we sought to find out the will of the people, even from the opposition, and got in return the strongest support of any government since confederation.

"I would ask you, when in any single parliament, were there two such majorities as we got last session, when on the first, on the address, we had a majority of 121, and on the budget a majority of 112—over one hundred on the two main divisions, while to all intents and purposes we were a government with a minority. We sought to give the people sound Liberal policies, and that course commended itself to the house of commons.

FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.

"When Fielding came in first as finance minister, he had to raise only forty million dollars in taxes. What were we called on to raise?

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

Speeches-1922 - 1932

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA