

France suffered in the war, and she has her post-war problems to deal with. She had a general election in November, 1919. Italy had a general election in November, 1919; Belgium had a general election in November, 1919; The United States had a general election in November, 1920. Japan had a general election in November, 1920. Every one of the countries that comprise the allied and associated powers has given to its people rights which have been denied the people of this country by the present administration.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Even Mexico has given the people that right.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Even Mexico, as my honourable friend states. But we may go further and say even China. China in 1917 had a general election; Argentina in 1918; Denmark in 1918 and 1920; and Greece and Germany in 1920. Yet my right hon. friend denies the citizens of this country rights which even enemy countries have granted their peoples.

In addition to that, there is not a single province in this Dominion—with the exception of Alberta and Saskatchewan which provinces had their elections a little prior to the signing of the Armistice—that has not had an election since the signing of the Armistice. The electors throughout the country are the same people, for Federal purposes, and if the Provincial Governments have found it possible to appeal to the people, on what ground does my right hon. friend presume to say that the electorate of Canada, taken collectively, are not to be accorded the same right.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Will the hon. gentleman be good enough to tell me when the elections took place in Saskatchewan and Alberta?

Mr. KING: I stated, but the Prime Minister apparently did not hear me, that all the provinces had held their elections shortly after the Armistice, with the exception of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I did not hear the hon. gentleman state the exception.

Mr. KING: The elections in Alberta and Saskatchewan, I believe, were held in July 1917.

Mr. MEIGHEN: This House was elected in December, 1917.

Mr. KING: Yes, but I am speaking now of the period subsequent to the signing of the Armistice. It was a short time before the signing of the Armistice when these particular provinces had their elections.

Does my right hon friend think that the people of the different provinces are so inferior that they are not to be entitled to a general election? The Government of which he is the head is denying to the people of Canada rights which every Government that has a real appreciation of its duty to the people, has long since conceded. May I say to my right hon. friend that I think he will find that the only Governments which have not allowed their people a general election are those of Canada and Russia.

My right hon. friend, in his public addresses, has had a good deal to say about Bolshevism. He seems to regard all those who are not of his way of thinking as Bolshevik. Let me ask him what is Bolshevism other than the usurpation of government by a group, through some act of violence which defies the laws, usages, and customs which constitutional procedure has devised to preserve representative institutions. So long as the consequences, in robbing the people of their rights, are the same, it matters but little what the method employed may be. The only fundamental difference between the usurpation of the powers of popular government in Russia and its usurpation by the present administration in Canada, is that in Russia physical violence has been the instrument used by the usurpers to effect their purpose, while in Canada it has been legislative violence.

When a comparison of this kind is even remotely possible, it is evidence, Mr. Speaker, of the lengths we have drifted away from the spirit of our constitution, from the responsible self-government which is the very foundation of our political freedom.

It was not alone our Parliament buildings which suffered partial destruction during the period of the war; our parliamentary institutions suffered destruction in large measure along with the rest. Customs usages and practices, intended to preserve the free, representative, self-governing character of our Parliament and the responsible character of its ministry, were one by one temporarily set aside, one by one ignored, until to-day we are witnessing open defiance of the most fundamental of all principles of free government, namely: the right of the people to control their own Parliament.

What matters it if we preserve the form and letter of the law and of the constitution if the spirit is lacking? "for the letter killeth but the Spirit giveth life".