

Const 26

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

038535

Subject.....

Date.. (Aug 9/26) Publication Winnipeg Tribune

MR. MEIGHEN'S RESPONSIBILITY

In contending that the status of our Governors-General was changed by the declarations of the Imperial Conference of 1921, and that the change must be defined by the Imperial Conference of this year, Hon. N. W. Rowell insists further that Mr. Meighen meanwhile must assume responsibility for the Governor-General's act regarding dissolution—its refusal to Mr. King, its bestowal upon Mr. Meighen.

Such as it is, and in all its aspects, Mr. Meighen has accepted the responsibility for the Governor's act. Mr. Meighen's acceptance of the responsibility was ratified and approved by the House of Commons on being put to three separate votes.

One of these votes was an express condemnation of the King government's administration of the customs.

The defeat of Mr. Meighen's government was brought about by the House's declaration, in the face of the opposite opinion of the legal officers of the crown of Mr. King's appointment, that the ministry was not satisfactory in any sense.

There have been in Great Britain within the last 100 years some 25 dissolutions, 13 of which were granted the governments which had come into power through the defeat of their predecessors in control of the House.

Under these conditions Mr. Meighen's acceptance of responsibility is obvious and evident. He does not shirk this issue in the campaign.

But he does take sharp issue with the claim of Mr. King that a Prime Minister faced with defeat in Parliament is entitled to a dissolution. Mr. Meighen claims that dissolution under such circumstances would end responsible government, would make the will of the House of Commons a thing of no importance.

Mr. Rowell persists that the Meighen government was not formed according to the law and constitution, that its formation should not have been attempted. The law officers at Ottawa have declared otherwise.

As between the proposals for dissolution of Mr. King and the actual dissolution brought about by Mr. Meighen the public will judge as to the respective merits. But there can be no question that Mr. Meighen accepts full responsibility for his acts, nor that his course was otherwise than in pursuance of sound judgment regarding circumstances which had brought confusion and disorder upon Parliament, for which Mr. King was altogether responsible.

MEIGHEN PAPERS, Series 3 (H.C. 2, I, Volume 18)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA