

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I should be the last member, Mr. Speaker, to desire to disregard any ruling of the Chair, and having discussed the subject at considerable length, I shall draw my remarks immediately to a close. I have only one further quotation to offer on the subject to which I have been referring, namely, the parallel between constitutional procedure in Canada and similar procedure in Great Britain. May I quote from a well known authority:

*The Constitution of Canada, an introduction to its development and law, by W. P. M. Kennedy, M.A., Litt. D., Trinity College, Dublin, Assistant Professor of Modern History in the University of Toronto, 1922.*

I refer hon. gentlemen to page 382:

The relations between the Governor General and the cabinet are now fairly clear. He does not attend cabinet meetings, but all communications which can be called official come to him through the cabinet, and all orders in council are submitted to him personally. He is entitled to receive the full confidence of his ministers when they ask him to act in any official capacity. If confidence does not exist, he can doubtless dismiss them; but he would do so with the full knowledge that he would be compelled to find successors who would be prepared to take constitutional responsibility for his action.

As a matter of fact no instance of dismissal exists in the history of federal government in Canada. Doubtless also he has the constitutional power to refuse a dissolution, but the sense of political responsibility has become so strong with Canada's new status in the empire that to do so would be an act of extreme danger. The tendency is to assimilate the constitutional conventions of Great Britain and to follow in this matter the completeness of political development.

Now I want to draw the attention of the House to the oath which a privy councillor takes, and which is the oath hon. gentlemen opposite say they have taken. Professor Kennedy says in reference to the relation of the cabinet to the Governor General:

He is entitled to receive the full confidence of his ministers when they ask him to act in any official capacity.

Now I say His Excellency at this moment is entitled to have the full confidence of his ministers, and I say they cannot extend to His Excellency their full confidence if they do not explain to him the whole situation as it exists in this parliament at this moment, and the subterfuge to which they are resorting in attempting to carry on the business of the country or rather in pretending to carry it on in any way. As privy councillors sworn by a solemn oath to protect the crown and its representative it is their business to prevent the crown and its representative in Canada from being placed in a false position before the people. If confidence does not exist he can doubtless dismiss them, and I say without hesitation that if these gentlemen continue longer in office after what has been

said with respect to their present position, His Excellency's duty is to dismiss this ministry and find someone who will take responsibility for the dismissal. I may say that as leader of His Majesty's loyal Opposition I am prepared to take responsibility for the dismissal of hon. gentlemen opposite. I am prepared to take that responsibility because hon. gentlemen know that the proceedings of this House cannot be brought to a close except by someone who has sufficiently the confidence of the House to be able to bring proceedings to a close in a proper and regular way. Let me read part of the oath taken by members of the Privy Council:

You will in all things to be moved, treated and debated in any such Privy Council, faithfully, honestly and truly declare your mind and opinion to the honour and benefit of the King's Majesty, and the good of his subjects without partiality or exceptin of persons, in no wise forbearing so to do from any manner of respect, favour, love, meed, displeasure, or dread of any person or persons whatsoever. In general you will be vigilant, diligent and circumspect in all your doings touching the King's Majesty's affairs;

There are two paragraphs to which I draw the attention of hon. gentlemen opposite. They are sworn to declare their minds and opinions to the honour and benefit of the King's Majesty and to be circumspect in all their doings touching the King's Majesty's affairs. I say, Mr. Speaker, that there is no single matter which so affects His Majesty the King as the exercise of the royal prerogative. The whole development of constitutional government has been to circumscribe little by little the absolute power of the crown, to cause the exercise of discretionary authority to rest upon ministerial responsibility. There was a time when the crown could perform almost any act pretty much of its own volition, but little by little one prerogative after another came to be exercised on the advice of the ministry. At one time it was the prerogative of summoning parliament; at another time it was the prerogative of pardon; at another time it was some other prerogative, and perhaps the last of all the prerogatives to be circumscribed was that of dissolution. I say hon. gentlemen opposite owe it to their oaths as privy councillors to advise His Excellency the Governor General of the present situation and to let His Excellency fully understand what may be the consequence to him as the representative of the crown itself if, through their advice, he should act in any unconstitutional manner at this time. I appeal to hon. gentlemen opposite, before it is too late, to remedy a great wrong and to see to it that His Excellency is advised that they are unable—