

Right Hon. J. L. Ilsley

dence if I may be permitted to do so. It helps to reveal my own feelings toward my colleague, as well as those of other members of the government and of the parliament of our country. May I say I think in Mr. Ilsley's resignation from the government our country is losing one of the greatest public servants any country has ever possessed. I do not think it is possible to pay the Minister of Justice too much in the way of praise for his fine integrity, indefatigable industry and great ability and for the splendid public service he has rendered our country in time of peace and of war.

The letter I received from Mr. Ilsley today is as follows:

Minister of Justice and
Attorney General of Canada

Ottawa, 30th June, 1948.

My dear Prime Minister,—

Pursuant to our conversations at the beginning of the session and to the statement which I made to the press a few weeks ago, I now beg to tender my resignation as a member of the government.

As I have already stated, my reason for taking this step is that it is necessary for me to give attention to my personal affairs. I need hardly say that it is with many regrets that I leave a government with which I have been associated for so long, whose members I like and respect so much and with whose policies I am so completely in accord.

I should like also to express my appreciation of the privilege of serving under your leadership for so many years of your long and distinguished career as Prime Minister.

With kind personal regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

J. L. Ilsley.

The Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King,
Prime Minister of Canada,
Ottawa.

To Mr. Ilsley's letter I replied as follows:

Office of the Prime Minister
Canada
Ottawa,

June 30, 1948.

The Right Hon. J. L. Ilsley, P.C., K.C., M.P.,
Minister of Justice,
Ottawa.

My dear Ilsley:

I have received your letter of today in which, in accordance with your intentions as intimated to me in personal conversations at the beginning of the session, and in a statement to the press a few weeks ago, you tender your resignation as a member of the government.

You know, without words, how profound is the regret repeatedly expressed by our colleagues and myself, that you should, for any reason, have felt it necessary to contemplate retiring from the ministry in which for almost thirteen years, you have held successively the portfolios of National Revenue, Finance and Justice. As, however, you state that it has

become necessary for you to take this step in order to give attention to your personal affairs, I feel I have no alternative but to submit your resignation to His Excellency, and to advise its acceptance.

The regret felt by our colleagues and myself at your retirement will, I know, be shared by the people of Canada whose interests you have served so honourably and with such exceptional ability and fidelity in times alike of peace and war. Indeed warm appreciation of the strength which your presence in its councils has brought to the government of our country has already been expressed in parliament by the people's representatives irrespective of party affiliation. The devoted service you have given Canada, as a minister of the crown, will be remembered with gratitude.

As one with whom I have been so closely associated in public life since your election to parliament twenty-two years ago, and the one who today is my senior colleague in the cabinet, I cannot begin to express to you how deeply, both on personal and public grounds, I regret your retirement. I can only thank you for all that your helpful counsel and close co-operation have meant to me in the discharge of the heavy responsibilities which together we have been called upon to share.

As you resume the practice of your chosen profession, may I extend to you every possible good wish on the part of all our colleagues in the government and myself.

With warm personal regards,

Yours very sincerely,

W. L. Mackenzie King.

May I express my very sincere thanks to the leader of the C.C.F. party and to the other hon. members who have so kindly made reference to my own approaching retirement from the leadership of my party and also from the leadership of the government, both of which, may I say without any reservation, will have taken place before another session of parliament. I thought I had made myself clear in that regard; I should be sorry if anyone thought there was any reservation. What I have sought to convey in regard to the time of tendering my resignation to His Excellency the Governor General is that this will not necessarily be at the same time I cease to be leader of my party; that it may be a matter of weeks or a month or two thereafter. But this is the last moment I expect to be present in this House of Commons in the position I have had the honour to occupy as Prime Minister and leader of the government for now in all over twenty-one years. I am happy indeed to think that after that length of time it is possible for me to feel that I am parting with members of all parties in the house with their good will. I thank one and all.