

always found him to make the very best possible case out of the material at his disposal. But yesterday I was disappointed in his speech. I did not expect to like it, but I do not like it even as much as I expected. I thought that he did not answer the arguments put forward by the leader of the Opposition. It was possibly because they were unanswerable. I will do the Prime Minister the full justice of saying that if anybody at all on that side of the House or in his party could have answered the arguments put forward for their own disappearance from this House by my leader yesterday, he himself would be the man. Yesterday, however, he did not display his usual masterly ability, and certainly he fell short of answering the arguments put forward. It is perhaps natural for a man to desire to hold on to power and to the high office in which he might find himself, and natural also for a party to be desirous of holding on to power; but let me say to the Prime Minister and to the Government that it is not in accord with democratic principles. We in this country are proud of saying that we are democrats to the hilt, that our Government is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, and that the voice of the people must prevail. The moment there are indications that we have lost the confidence of the people and no longer truly represent them, all the satisfaction and pride which goes with being in power vanishes, and if we still persist in holding office, then office brings no honour to ourselves or to those whom we once represented. When that stage is reached, I think it is the duty of the Government and of an individual to place himself in the hands of the country and say: I am at your disposal; if you want me continued in office, say so; but if you do not want me and my colleagues continued in office you have also the right to say so, and we shall bow to your verdict. That, in my judgment, should be the conduct of public men in this country, but I am sorry to find that it is not the disposition of the present Prime Minister or his Government so far as their attitude was indicated in the speech of the right hon. gentleman here yesterday.

A good many arguments were put forward by the right hon. gentleman in support of his retention of office. He particularly referred to the difficulty of going to the country before the census was taken and a redistribution Bill had been put

through the House, and before the general housekeeping arrangements, so to speak, had been made. He laid stress upon the fact that the press of the Northwest cried aloud against anything tending towards a general election before these preliminaries had been settled. He mentioned one paper, the Calgary Morning Albertan, as will appear in the Hansard report of his speech, and invited us particularly to see what that paper said about the impropriety of going to the country before the census was taken and the provinces of the West had received their proper quota of representation. Now, I have in my hand the Morning Albertan, to which no doubt the right hon. gentleman has made reference, and I particularly invite my right hon. friend the Minister of Justice to listen to the quotation I shall give from that paper. From his experience on the bench he knows very well that when a lawyer stands up in court and quotes an authority, if it should turn out that that authority is directly against him, it is usually a bad knock-out for his case, and the judge usually tells him that his case is directly opposed to what he wishes to make out of it, and that if that authority is to be followed, he will have to decide against him. Well, the Prime Minister yesterday rested his case largely upon what the Morning Albertan said about an election. Now, this is what that paper says in its editorial of February 9, two days after the famous election in Peterborough.

Mr. LEMIEUX: Famous and fatal.

Mr. D. D. McKENZIE: Both famous and fatal. This is what it says:

What about an early December election? If the Meighen Government believes that it has any chance of winning, then it will go to the country at once. Then, and no sooner. Unless it is convinced that it has a fair chance of success, it will not risk an election.

A Government which without any mandate of any kind has kept control for two years after all excuse for continued existence has been exhausted, will not act from sentiment even if West Peterborough and East Elgin have called so loudly. The Government will continue in office as long as the law allows, or until it is defeated in the House, or until it believes that it has some advantage in an appeal to the country.

The people of Western Canada have some objection to an early election, because it would mean the old representation. Our number would be enlarged if an election were postponed until after the census of the present year. However, it would be better for Western Canada to go under-represented for three or four years than that all of Canada should be under control of a