

my right hon. friend the Prime Minister had any cognizance of that literature, or that he ever dreamt of a general election. I decline to believe it. How could I believe it in the presence of such an address as we had from him this afternoon, breathing the highest patriotism, the utmost sympathy with the men at the front?

And I have another reason for not believing that. For my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Rogers) went up to Toronto about that time, and in an interview on this question stated, if the papers correctly reported him, that the idea of a general election had never entered the head of the Prime Minister. So that in declining to believe this of the Prime Minister I am well supported by the declaration of the Minister of Public Works. I notice that, with that rugged honesty which we all admire in him, he did not say anything about what had entered his own mind. He went bond for the Prime Minister, but he did not go bond for himself, and it was just himself that we should have liked to hear from. For I want to point out to him in perfect good nature that he is a little suspect in these matters, and naturally he is suspect since his confession in the House that however humble his gifts might be, it would certainly be admitted that he knew something about winning an election. I do not want to probe the matter any further, or to ask whether the idea of a general election ever entered his own mind. I think a great deal of that talk existed purely in the yellow journals of his party. Perhaps they respected my hon. friend on account of this reputation, and perhaps they had regard to the fact that that reputation received a little bit of a shock in Manitoba last summer. I do not know, but I am clear in my own mind that all that talk is mischievous and detrimental to the best interests of the country and of the Empire, and I trust we shall hear no more of it. The very talk of an election is a distraction from the single duty that ought to present itself to every citizen of the British Empire. My hon. friend the Minister of Finance knows that the business interests of this country do not require an election at the present time, and he ought to have curbed any tendency to issue such literature. I know he knows, because there was a period about a year and a half ago when he read a lecture to my right hon. friend the leader of the Opposition for mentioning the very word gen-

[Mr. M. Clark.]

eral election at a time when the business of the country was in such a state that it could not stand a general election. With his long parliamentary experience the Minister of Finance chided my erring and youthful right hon. friend for mentioning such a matter. Are the affairs of this country better now than they were then? Would the Minister of Finance say so? I think not, and if he would not there is all the more need to repeat the lecture to the people who are responsible for his party's literature last autumn. The fact is that all this talk was most distracting and most hurtful to the common interest. The whole question of defence and of our Imperial connection, the whole question of Canada's future in regard to these questions of peace and war, is necessarily put in the melting pot by the war itself. We shall all of us be wiser to deal with these questions when we have the events of the war fully before us. For this reason alone, all partisan political strife should be laid on one side. Just think of a man talking of a general election who has any common sense of responsibility, and knows anything about our western country, who knows what a number of Germans have just come from Germany and settled in the West. The canvassing which would be done among these people in the event of a general election would be most hurtful to this nation and to the interests of the great Empire to which we belong.

I want to quote a single sentence from a speech of the very highest ability which was made by my hon. friend the Solicitor General before the Canadian Club of Winnipeg the other day, and I think I may leave it as a text not only for every member of this House, but for the thought of every citizen of Canada at this time. In a speech in which the whole question of the war was dealt with in a masterly fashion, and which it was my pleasure to read and to reread, this sentence occurred:

For the balance of our lives the best measure of our worth will be how we behaved in this war.

That is an admirable sentiment, admirably expressed. I could conceive no greater duty than for my young friend, for whom I have the profoundest respect, to take that as a text for his speeches wherever he goes, and as a text for repetition. It is just to the extent we live up to that doctrine that we shall discharge our duties as citizens of the greatest Empire the world has even seen. The people of Canada today know they are living in an Empire of