

*War Effort—Government Policy*

Has it changed suddenly overnight? Does the government mean to convince us that one thing has been changed in a few moments? The policy is the same. The government cannot take it out and ask us to approve or disapprove and play on the feelings of the hon. members in this house.

I have said and I repeat that I have confidence in the present Prime Minister, and I cannot express my sentiments in any better way than when I spoke previously. I respect the Prime Minister; I am sure his mind is a thousand times superior to mine; but I have to judge the issue with my own mind and, as things stand now, I cannot approve the motion. The Prime Minister definitely said in 1942 that if at any time he applied bill 80 he would come before the house and by means of a vote of confidence ask for approval. Are we to be given another chance, Mr. Speaker? If this is just a literary effort, are we to be given another chance at another moment in this session to approve or disapprove the government's action on bill 80, or is this the motion of confidence that the Prime Minister meant? Has anything changed in the policy of the government? The government had one policy at six o'clock to-night. Has it changed since? I know that things change quickly. On Wednesday, the opening day of this part of the session, we had one policy. The second afternoon the government had another policy. To-night is it the third policy? The house should not be played with. The feelings and the intelligence of the hon. members should not be mocked in such a way. We are here as citizens of a free country to use our minds in a free way. Mine is vastly inferior to that of the Prime Minister, but I have to judge the issue with the powers that have been given to me, and I cannot find any sense in the motion as it is, deprived of the intention it contained when it was first put before the house, and, Mr. Speaker, I contend that the application of the ruling you gave on my subamendment, namely, that:

The object of the house is to suggest, approve or disapprove of the government's policy . . . applies to the motion as it is now. Therefore I say that it should be ruled out of order.

Mr. JEAN-FRANCOIS POULIOT (Temiscouata): After the quick about-turn of November 22, we had the quick about-turn of December 7. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) should teach quick about-turn to the people; he would be a past master at such a performance. We have the leader of the government putting on the order paper a motion of confidence after consultation with

[Mr. Picard.]

all his ministers, but to-night we have witnessed a spectacle that could not have been foreseen by any of us; we have seen the Prime Minister mediating to the point of accepting the suggestion of the leader of the C.C.F. group without consulting with his colleagues in the cabinet, unless there was an understanding between the leader of the C.C.F. group and the Prime Minister before the amendment was moved.

Mr. COLDWELL: I can assure you that there was not.

Mr. POULIOT: I thank the hon. gentleman. It is even worse than I thought. I remember a time in another parliament when I was asked by the Chair to withdraw a statement I made that Lord Bennett was acting without consulting his colleagues of the cabinet. What happened to-night? In the sight of all of us there has happened what I blamed Bennett for doing and what I had to withdraw to my great humiliation. But to-night I did not have to do that. The Prime Minister did not pass any paper around the treasury benches and I am sure no minister thought he would accept a suggestion or an amendment made by the leader of the C.C.F. group.

Is the leader of the C.C.F. group the new spiritual adviser of the Prime Minister after the Tory party was declared dead yesterday? What a performance! We are told about the supremacy of parliament. We are told about the great principles of the Prime Minister who wants to consult parliament. It is all a farce. He does not consult his own colleagues in the cabinet before subjecting himself to the dictates of the leader of an opposite group.

Would Sir Wilfrid Laurier have done that? Would Sir Robert Borden, with whom the Prime Minister, according to Sir Robert, thought to join in a union cabinet, have done that? That has never been denied by the Prime Minister himself. Would either Sir Wilfrid Laurier or Sir Robert Borden have done that?

When I went to my constituency after the quick about-turn of the Prime Minister on November 22 I found my people in consternation and humiliation. To-night I do not belong to the party led by the Prime Minister, and I am proud of that. However, as a member of the House of Commons I feel greatly humiliated that on a motion of confidence which presumably has been put on the order paper by the Prime Minister after consultation with his colleagues, he should then choose to appease the leader of the C.C.F. group, appease in the Munich sense. What humiliation! What consternation! What