

Although technically there is said to be no decision as yet pronounced against the late government in the House of Commons, be that as it may, at all events Friday night showed plainly to the country at large that the government of the day had lost the confidence of the House when the Customs report came out. It had lost, too, what remained to it of the confidence of the people.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Just in connection with what my hon. friend is saying, does he not anticipate that unless a vote comes before dissolution is announced to-night, the present ministry will go out of office through a defeat?

Mr. GEARY: I am not a prophet.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Perhaps my hon. friend could tell us whether we are going to get the announcement of dissolution at midnight?

Mr. GEARY: I suppose the right hon. gentleman wants to hear himself say that. That is the only reason he is asking me about it. Todd also says:

No minister of the crown should advise a dissolution of parliament unless he has a reasonable prospect of securing thereby a majority of members in the new House of Commons, who will "honestly and cordially concur with him in great political principles".

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and members of this House, if the late Prime Minister could have thought he had any reasonable prospect, if he had faced the country on that Customs report, of getting a majority of members in this House to support him? What are we asked to do to-night on this matter which has now arisen? We are asked to say that there should be recalled to

12 m. the treasury benches a government which just two days ago suffered the deliberate censure of this House and made its exit from office in disgrace. That will be found upon the records of this House. It is clear to every hon. member that this House has without any equivocation set the stamp of disapproval upon the carrying on of the business of this country by the late government.

The hon. member for Bow River pointed to a section of the statute, and I may compliment him upon his interpretation of it, with which I have no fault to find. Section 13 states:

Whenever any person holding the office of President of the Privy Council, Minister of Finance, Minister of Justice, Minister of Militia and Defence, Secretary of State, Minister of the Interior, Minister of Railways and Canals, Minister of Public Works, Postmaster General, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Inland Revenue, Minister of Customs, Minister of Marine and

Fisheries, Minister of Trade and Commerce or Solicitor General, or any office which is hereafter created, entitling him to be a minister of the crown, and being at the same time a member of the House of Commons, resigns his office, and, within one month after his resignation, accepts any of the said offices, he shall not thereby vacate his seat, unless the administration of which he was a member has resigned and a new administration has been formed, and has occupied the said offices.

He may be sound in his interpretation of the law; but is there nothing to influence the mind of anyone to whom advice is given but the strict letter of some statute? Must he not consider the equities, and is it at all likely that when advice is given in a matter of this sort, equities will be left unconsidered and that the strict letter of the law will govern? Speaking of the general judgment of reasonable wayfaring men, can one conceive of these men saying that a short two days after a government is censured as the late government was censured, they could come back and occupy the treasury benches of this parliament as though such censure had never occurred? I think it is proper to say that this is the third device that has been tried in two days to prevent this government from functioning. The hon. member for Bow River has imagined the advice that was given by the Prime Minister. I know nothing about it whatever.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): May I suggest to the hon. member that the most sincere indication his party could have shown of a desire to govern would have been to solicit co-operation with those on whose support they must depend for government? They took no action in that regard.

Mr. GEARY: I do not know about that; but I know that when we were at an impasse, so to speak, the then leader of the opposition did ask across the floor of the House for some opportunity of discussion so that we could work out the business of this session, and he was curtly refused.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): Would the hon. member be kind enough to quote the reference? I would like very much to see it.

Mr. GEARY: I have not the reference at hand. What was the advice the hon. member for Bow River imagined was given by the Prime Minister? He imagined his going to the proper place and saying: I have a government that can carry on. If he said that, if that was the course the right hon. gentleman took, it certainly has been justified by events that have happened since then. The government has been able to carry on; the government wants simply to pass supply, close up the session's business and let some-