

827075 C 270170

CANADA AND THE WAR

The Choice That Lies Before The Electors

A FINAL WORD TO THE CANADIAN PEOPLE

The fifth of a series of radio addresses delivered by Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King from Ottawa, 21st March, 1940.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is the last of the nation-wide broadcasts which I shall make to you before you go to the polls on Tuesday next. I feel sure you all realize that on that day you will be discharging a most important and serious duty. By your individual vote, you will be helping to determine what government is to manage the affairs of Canada during the next five fateful years. It will affect your own well-being and the well-being of all your fellow citizens. Of all elections, this, of course, is true. But your individual vote in the present elections will have an effect far beyond that which it would have in ordinary times. This year it will be immediately related to all that pertains to war and peace.

The national and international significance of the elections.

You know what Canada's war effort has been. You have heard from British and French statesmen what it has

66

827075 C 270171

CANADA AND THE WAR

meant to the allied powers since the outbreak of war. Your decision respecting the government which has carried it on is being awaited with deep concern not by our country only but by the allied powers and by the enemy. You know how anxious they were, across the seas, in October last, when the war effort of Canada's federal government was challenged in the province of Quebec. Nothing since the outbreak of war gave so much heart to the British and the French, or so disappointed the desires and hopes of the enemy, as the evidence that election afforded of a united war effort of a united Canada. Canada's voice as expressed by your votes on election day will carry an even greater measure of elation or despair to the contending forces in Europe. It will be full of meaning as well, to the small nations that are seeking to protect their freedom. It will be significant for all democracies. For it will be the first vote of a free democracy cast in the present war where democracy is fighting for its existence.

The importance of looking to the future.

On Monday next, before you mark your ballots, it will be your duty to look as far ahead as you can. Remember that the present war may last for years. No one can say how long it may last, nor to what dimensions it may grow. When it ends there will come the making of peace. Should that be within the lifetime of the new parliament, the government that you choose to administer your affairs on Tuesday next will be the government to voice your views at the peace-table. When you cast your ballots consider also that momentous fact.

For most people, it is always a little difficult to look into the future. At all times, our feelings and prejudices are apt to blind our vision. Too frequently they control our judgment.

67

W.L.M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1940-1950,
MG 26 J 4, Volume 385, pages C269841-C270648

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA