

SUBJECT

NAME AND DATE OF NEWSPAPER

*Toronto Mail and Empire April 8/30***ARE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS
NOT WORTH A NICKEL?**

Five of the provinces having cast off Grit rule since the present Ottawa Government came into office, it might well seem to Premier King that something should be done to check the drift from his party. Could he be expected to sit idly by while, one after another, the remaining four provinces should join the procession Torywards? In spite of his refusal to continue the policy of aiding the provinces to carry out their programmes of costly roadway construction and to assist the provinces in their plans for making education subserve production, the provinces have kept turning their backs on Premier King's party. Could he not understand that as a hint that his niggardliness towards the provinces would not warm them towards his party? They had excellent reason for rejecting Liberal Governments quite apart from his cutting them off the list of recipients of Government aid.

What a Bourbon Premier King must be to try to mend matters by making them worse! His declaration that he would not give a five-cent piece to any Tory Government on earth will not check the stampede away from his party banner. It will have the opposite effect. Not that the provinces are, or have been, currying favor with his Government, or appearing before it as suppliants for help, but that they are scandalized at the suggestion that they should make their Governments sections of his party machine. Nothing that has been uttered by a prime minister in this country, not even excepting the foolish "breaks" previously made by the premier himself, has so shocked and irritated the people of Canada as the deliberately uttered declaration of the premier that he would not give five cents to any Tory provincial Government. Of his bitter feeling against the Tories there never was any doubt. He had given many proofs of it. But a man who has been in politics as many years as Mr. King has been would be expected to dissemble his anti-Tory bigotry sufficiently to avoid saying that he would not give a five-cent piece to any Tory Government on earth.

Even the most extreme politicians of his own following were for the moment dumbfounded by this statement from the head of Canada's Government. But as the hours passed and there could be no possibility of the thing being explained away, some of the more foolish virgins of the party sought to defend it. The Liberal member for Elgin West, Mr. Mitchell F. Hepburn, excuses the premier's getting "a bit warm" on the ground that the Conservative members interrupted him. The Globe was apparently the first to blame the Conservatives for Mr. King's petulant and insolent utterance. And the mem-

ber for West Elgin went so far as to say: "If I had been in his position I think I might have said a lot worse. I don't blame him. He knew it was all propaganda." That remark is for the people of West Elgin to note and keep in mind on election day. A member of Parliament who would admit himself to be capable of saying what Mr. King said or "a lot worse" is not of the calibre required for the representation of a Canadian constituency in the House of Commons. Mr. King is in an awkward position. His supporters cannot, without stultifying themselves, defend his shameful utterance. And they cannot deny that he made it. Their least reprehensible course is to avoid mentioning it, and in what audience that any of them will be called upon to address will not the question be asked: "What do

"you think about Premier King's remark that he would not give a five-cent piece to any Tory Government on earth?"

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

Speeches-1922 - 1932

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