

*The Address—Mr. Mackenzie King*

of the west, and to plead with him, in the name of the party to which they are giving support, that he modify his view so that it will not work the harm that we believe it will.

Mr. IRVINE: Would the right hon. gentleman kindly indicate in what way he thinks a different approach to the British people would have resulted in their paying a higher price for Canadian wheat than that at which they could purchase wheat from any other country?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What I am interested in is that the people of Britain should feel it to be not only to their interest but a privilege to buy Canadian wheat in preference to any other, provided that the price is the same as can be obtained elsewhere. I believe that if the policies laid down in the Dunning budget had been accepted by the people of this country, the people of Great Britain would have so viewed their obligations, and that as a result of the last Imperial conference we would have had, either through a quota or in some other way, a means whereby Canadian wheat would to-day have a favoured position in Great Britain.

Let me give the Conservative position as I referred to it on the last night of the campaign:

Now in the closing days of the campaign, Mr. Bennett has announced his intention to summon a special session of parliament to bring about an all-round increase in the tariff, which means, so far as the Conservative party is concerned, they propose to reject this great movement towards empire trade, and deal with the mother country only as they deal with foreign countries, upon a basis of hard bargaining, and upon the condition that the people of Great Britain must change a fiscal policy which they have maintained for almost a century.

That was a pretty good forecast of what has since taken place. That was a statement made in July, 1930, to the electorate of Canada at large. I will say this in regard to my right hon. friend, that before the end of the campaign he made it plain that he intended to introduce higher tariff policies, and to ask Great Britain to change her fiscal policy. I would not for a moment say that my right hon. friend has been inconsistent. He has been consistent, but his very consistency is leading him nearer and nearer to destruction.

Mr. SPENCE: Surely my right hon. friend is not worrying about him?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am worrying about the condition of this country. I wish to state to my right hon. friend that I do not in the least distrust his sincerity, but I do distrust his policy. I do distrust his methods,

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because I do not believe in them. I think he makes a mistake when he relies too exclusively upon his own judgment and is not prepared to accept the judgment even of his own ministers. I say, Mr. Speaker, that cabinet government as it applies in British parliamentary institutions was devised to prevent the will of any one person dominating an entire situation. Cabinet government has come into being through the belief that out of collective wisdom the best judgment may be formed. There is no collective wisdom in the formation of judgment in the government of my right hon. friend. Ask any minister of the crown how far his opinion goes when it is in conflict with that expressed by my right hon. friend.

Mr. RYCKMAN: Where does my right hon. friend get that information?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I get it on every side, and from the look in the face of my right hon. friend (Mr. Ryckman) when he comes out of the council chamber. May I say to my right hon. friend (Mr. Bennett) that I do not believe he is acting fairly either by his colleagues or the country when he takes to himself all the responsibility. It was never intended that there should not be a Minister of Finance other than the Prime Minister; it was never intended that the Prime Minister should function in that office. Surely there must be somewhere in the Conservative party at least one member whose abilities could be usefully employed at the head of the Department of Finance. Under present circumstances when a difference of opinion arises between the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, how is it settled? If I am not mistaken my right hon. friend told us at the last session that the reason he did not appoint a Minister of Finance was that he did not want any minister to have the burden of the measures he intended for the session. He did not think it would be fair to any other man to ask him to put through all those important financial measures. I ask my right hon. friend if that is not correct.

Mr. BENNETT: No, my right hon. friend is not quite correct, but it is as near correct as he can get.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: We have passed the special session and we have now reached the general session. I say that my right hon. friend is not fair to himself or to others and is not doing what is right when he attempts to fill so many offices himself; I say that he should without delay bring into his ministry, if he can be found, someone well qualified to serve as Minister of Finance.