

*Thought then might amuse you.
No need to return. 144284
E. A. J.*

On by-elections:

Mackenzie King, March 1, 1920, in the debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne (Hansard, 1920, pp. 29-30):

"There is this to be remembered at all times, Sir, in regard to by-elections: They are a means of keeping the Administration in touch with the country and of giving it the views of the people on great public issues. . . . If we are to preserve the spirit of the constitution, which stands for the right of representation of the people in Parliament, we must seek to give to the people the right of representation as soon as possible after a vacancy in an electoral district occurs."

On March 29, 1921, Mr. King moved, as an amendment to the motion to go into Supply, the following: "That this House is of opinion that representation in Parliament being a fundamental right of the people, writs should be issued at once to fill the existing vacancies in the House of Commons, and that polls should be held at the earliest possible time so as to ensure representation of all constituencies during the present session of Parliament."

Speaking on this motion he said, among other things: The Government "is denying the people another of their fundamental rights, I should say the first of the political rights of the people under British parliamentary government, namely, the right to be represented in Parliament by members of their own choice." Failure to bring on the by-elections (the law then was just ~~what~~ ^{what} it is now; hence, the vacancies were of only a few months' standing) meant "taxation without representation". The Government's course "was, in cases where it was, primarily, a matter of consideration of the rights of the people, to ignore altogether the rights of the people, but in cases where the political, partisan ends of the Government might be served, to take ~~the~~ ^{the} as quick action as the Government could find it possible to take." (p. 1293).

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