

Then again at Halifax, on July 3, he said, according to the Halifax Herald of July 4:

If the Conservative party comes into power on July 28th I propose at the earliest moment to call parliament together so that we may find a speedy remedy for this situation and decide on means to provide work for Canadians. Work, I said, not doles. The Canadian workmen want work, not charity.

Then may I conclude with this last gem:

So will I, when the government is mine, continue to blast a way through all our troubles and difficulties.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to leave it to the house and to the country to say which of the two descriptions of a demagogue is the more appropriate to this one who sought to gain office by these particular phrases.

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my first duty, and a pleasant one it is, is to congratulate the mover and the seconder of the address in reply to the speech from the throne. The member for Three Rivers-St. Maurice (Mr. Bourgeois), who discharged his duty with such ability, gave prompt and adequate evidence of his scholarship and his legal training, as did indeed the seconder of the address, the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Stitt).

I was somewhat surprised that the right hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat (Mr. Mackenzie King) should have spoken in the terms he did regarding the time at which the address was taken up for consideration. He asserted that it would have been more courteous to His Excellency the Governor General if the motion which was adopted by the house this afternoon had been made after and not prior to this motion being considered.

In this house I have never done more than make a bald denial with respect to matters touching myself personally. The offender in this particular case has said many things which we will not discuss, but the matter that was under consideration was not one touching me personally; it was one in which the Prime Minister of this country was charged with having stolen from the public purse. It was so charged by a member of His Majesty's privy council, and my right hon. friend has often spoken of the desirability of maintaining the dignity of that privy council at a high level. My right hon. friend himself is a member of that council, and at any time might be called upon by His Excellency for advice. That being so, and the charge being levelled not against me personally but against the office which I hold, I felt that it was not fitting or meet that anyone occupying that office should ask this house to consider the address at least until such time as a committee was appointed

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

to determine whether or not the charges so made were well founded. For, sir, one thing is certain, and that is that no man, whoever he may be, is fit to be Prime Minister of this country who is guilty of the offence charged against me in this instance. I offer no apology for taking the course I have taken and which I think any high minded Canadian must have taken with respect to a charge levelled not against him personally but against his office, involving his fitness, as a matter of public honesty, to discharge the high duties of that office, especially when the charge is made by a member of the privy council.

When the right hon. gentleman saw fit to endeavour to criticize the position taken by myself with respect to the crown and the representatives of the crown, I think it would have come with better grace had some other person made that observation. For I recall—and I have in my hand a document that was kept without being made public in June, 1926—a great campaign in one of the provinces waged on the ground that Downing street was dominating Canada, and the only suggestion that Downing street should be consulted with respect to the matter then to be decided was made by the then Prime Minister, the present leader of the opposition, who asked Lord Byng to be pleased to have his resignation withheld pending the time it might be necessary for His Excellency to communicate with the Secretary of State for the Dominions.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Sit down.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: All I ask is that any document from which my right hon. friend quotes shall be laid on the table of the house in the usual way.

Mr. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the document is taken from the sessional papers of this house; I sent down and got it, anticipating that very objection. So the solicitude for the crown, in which the right hon. gentleman has been so considerate to-night, is one of the new-born faiths that come when one finds himself in opposition and not in power. My right hon. friend was willing to have the representative of the crown in this country attacked from platforms throughout Canada on the ground that Downing street was being permitted to govern Canada—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is talking about something about which he knows nothing whatever, and is saying things that are absolutely incorrect.