

Supply—Formation of Ministry

to the estimates, in order to pass them if possible. To the extent of many thousand dollars the estimates went through, and the first objection we heard was from the ex-Minister of Customs (Mr. Boivin). His objection was not at all as to the constitutionality of this government seeking to pass money estimates, but only a natural curiosity on his part to ascertain if, providing it got supply, it would spend the money. It was after the ex-Minister of Customs was satisfied with regard to that inquiry that for the first time—after the attempts by side wind before spoken of to procure a vote censuring this government—this matter of constitutionality was brought up, and brought up, as I venture to suggest, not from any bona fide desire to test the constitutional question but as a last resort, a sort of third wave of attack, the other two having entirely failed. We had a strange spectacle when these motions were put. My hon. friends opposite burst out at once against their former friends in the Progressive party. One could imagine their thoughts and one could hear words uttered bitterly, but faintly, very faintly, representing these thoughts. They lost no time, one ex-minister after another, one member after another, came out with reproaches against the Progressive members who voted against the resolution.

Mr. GARLAND (Bow River): The Progressive group has become so accustomed to that attitude on the part of both parties that it makes no impression upon them whatever.

Mr. GEARY: Rolls like water off a duck's back. I am not concerned with the effect on my hon. friends. I have no doubt they can take care of themselves. I am only alluding to the state of mind of hon. gentlemen opposite on finding they had been beaten. One would have thought no friendship was possible henceforth between them, but the funeral bak'd meats were scarcely cold before they were flirting once again.

We have heard a great deal about the dissolution that was asked for and not granted. My hon. friend made a very long speech last night, a very vehement speech, but not good enough, so far as I could see, to be repeated as he repeated it this afternoon. I say that those who read that speech may judge for themselves upon what the right hon. gentleman is basing all the arguments that he has to offer. The people of Canada will find there his attitude in regard to the refusal of his request for dissolution and to any future request.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Do I understand my hon. friend to say that we might
[Mr. Geary.]

expect an announcement in a few moments that the House will be dissolved?

Mr. GEARY: Not that I am aware of.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: The wish is father to the thought.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes, I would like to see a dissolution.

Mr. GEARY: The right hon. gentleman has referred to that request for dissolution and has couched his thoughts in very careful language, but when he talks of what he hopes will soon come to pass, a request for dissolution, I shall quote his own language without putting an interpretation on it, leaving to those who read it to interpret it. What is moving the right hon. gentleman to use these words? :

I will wait and see what His Excellency does before I judge of the motive which governed with respect to the non-acceptance of the advice which I tendered and which motive up to this moment I have never questioned.

He leaves it open himself to question not only what may be said on a future occasion, but of saying what he pleases about non-acceptance of the advice which he tendered. He goes on to say further:

Until His Excellency has had that opportunity, and until I see what course His Excellency takes as a consequence of it, I for one do not intend to offer any criticism whatever of the constitutionality of the course taken up to the present time.

He is still withholding what right he may think he has to say whatever he chooses on some future occasion. It has been said—and I have no reason to doubt what my hon. friends have said—that for many years no dissolution asked for has been refused. That will go to show only one thing, namely, that in all likelihood no dissolution has been asked for under such circumstances as would make a refusal of it proper. That gets us no further on this particular request for dissolution, which, with all respect, I say was properly refused. Todd says:

A valuable security against the improper exercise of this prerogative is that, before a dissolution can take place, it must be clearly approved of by the sovereign, after all the circumstances shall have been explained to him, and he shall have duly considered them. Upon such an occasion, "the sovereign ought by no means to be a passive instrument in the hands of his ministers; it is not merely his right, but his duty, to exercise his Judgment in the advice they may tender to him. And though by refusing to act upon that advice he incurs a serious responsibility, if they should in the end prove to be supported by public opinion, there is perhaps no case in which this responsibility may be more safely and more usefully incurred than when the ministers ask to be allowed to appeal to the people from a decision pronounced against them by the House of Commons".