

and on the other there would be great advantage to the mother country. But my right hon. friend stood on his dignity, and urged the question of Canadian sovereignty. Nero fiddled while Rome burned!

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not wish to interrupt my hon. friend, and if he would prefer I shall leave my explanation until later. However, he has asked a direct question, namely whether or not at this moment Canada would raise any objection to carrying out a proposal such as was made at that time by the British government. In answer I would ask my hon. friend to reflect upon what the position would be in Canada to-day had we in Canada an air force under the ministry in Great Britain, instead of under our own ministry as we now have it.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am afraid we shall have to agree to disagree on the subject. I have no doubt that arrangements should have been made in 1938, even if a breach of the sovereignty of Canada was involved. We would have been that much farther ahead in repelling the invasion of the Hun in the air. But instead of making that headway we have lost two or three precious years; that is the indictment of the people of Canada against this government. If the Prime Minister does not believe me I would recommend that he read the leading editorials which have appeared in the last three or four days in Canada's great national newspapers, irrespective of party. They speak more eloquently, more logically and more vividly than I can.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: But not more vividly than they did on the day of the election.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Oh, I know the Prime Minister takes great pride in the result of the election. I wonder if the Canadian people would vote to-day as they did on March 26. I doubt it very much, and I would tell the Prime Minister that to-day, so far as public opinion in Canada is concerned, his back is to the wall. He may not realize it, but that is so. I have no doubt that to-day the Canadian people lack much of that confidence in the administration which they had on March 26. I say that lack of confidence arises entirely out of the ineptness and complacency of the Prime Minister and his administration. I understand the point of view of the Prime Minister respecting the constitutional principle, but he ought to realize that public opinion in Canada values results much more highly than constitutional principles.

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

It was a recognition by the Prime Minister of that particular fact which prompted an announcement made in the dying days of the session of 1938 by the then Minister of National Defence to the effect that Canada herself would undertake the policy of air training. Unfortunately, in the light of subsequent events, very little if any money was voted for the purpose indicated, and nothing was done until war broke out.

Am I right in assuming it was intended that very little should be done? I have heard it stated, and I believe with some truth, that until the moment of the great German push of only a few days ago the contribution made by this government was to be a limited liability contribution. I have not before me extracts from speeches by different members of the administration, but I think one of the ministers was undoubtedly voicing the views of himself and his colleagues when he stated the theory that there were three points of view in Canada. There were those who were out to do their utmost; and at the very outset may I place myself with that group. Then there was a second group which did not want to do anything. The third group, with which the hon. gentleman in question associated himself, was the one which held the view that we should do a moderate amount, and should follow a middle-of-the-road course. I hope I am not misstating the idea which the hon. gentleman was endeavouring to set forth. I have no doubt that this point of view was one held by the administration, having regard to the personnel of their supporters in this country. I am making no reflection upon anyone. At the moment I am not criticizing those who may differ with me. This is a free democratic country and they are just as much entitled to their opinions as I am to mine. However, I hope their opinions will not prevail because I sense the danger that lurks behind any attempt at the application of these principles at this time. I am wondering if the member of the administration who adopted the middle-of-the-road course voiced the view of the administration. While that may have been the voice of the people of Canada during the early stages of the war, I venture to suggest that in the light of fast-changing events it is not their attitude to-day. I rather think the young gentleman, the hon. member for Vancouver North (Mr. Sinclair), voiced the real feelings of the people of this country with regard to what we should be doing.

The declaration of war was made in September, 1939. May I say at once that in having parliament make that declaration of war I think the Prime Minister conformed exactly