

city a few weeks ago. He said, "Yes, these young fellows that are going in now are very nattily dressed, they get good meals, they are provided for, they are heroes; but a whole lot of the fellows that went to the last war are eating in soup-kitchens." Yes, that is true. This government has been in office for years, and before it should be entrusted with another term of office it ought at least to give an account of its stewardship during the time the war has been in progress, and, indeed, for the last six months.

Free speech; the Prime Minister is urging that. Free parliament. I do not know what this order means to-day. I have been in the house for nearly twenty years, and for the life of me I do not know what is going to happen to-night, whether we are going to have a chance to debate an address in reply to the speech from the throne or not. We are all out of order. I do not know what is going to happen. There is an attempt to strangle free speech in this parliament, by shortening the session if not cutting it off absolutely. Having been called together we should remain here for a few weeks at least. What is the desperate need for hurrying this thing along? Is it in order that our people in the rural districts shall have to go out on the wintry roads in order to vote, an impossibility for many of them? Is it because there is a quarrel between the Prime Minister and the premier of Ontario? The latter gentleman sat in this house for some years. We all know he was quarrelling with the Prime Minister, but it is news to us that an election should be called and the whole country upset merely because Mr. Mitchell Hepburn says that the Prime Minister is not doing his duty. Surely the people of this country are not going to be hoodwinked by anything of that kind. If we have an election what freedom shall we have?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Why does my hon. friend confine it to Mr. Hepburn?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Well, the leader of the Ontario opposition also.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What about the legislature of a province?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: The Prime Minister is a good constitutionalist; let me ask him whether a provincial legislature has any right to interfere in matters like that?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not think it has, and that is one of the reasons why this government should make its authority clear.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: The people are not so concerned with niceties of that kind that they will be hoodwinked by such an excuse. As the leader of the opposition (Mr. Manion) pointed out, this defence of not calling an election before parliament was called together, and then claiming since it is called we can immediately have an election, makes me tired; and I think it will make the country tired. I do not mind facing an election, but do not let us resort to that kind of thing. Why does the government not come to this parliament, give an account of its stewardship, and then go to the country? It is here that the government ought to announce its policies for the coming election. The government ought to come out fairly in this parliament and say, We propose to do this, that and the other. Surely the government does not want a blank cheque. There ought to be a debate in this parliament on the government's proposals; when that is all over we can go to the country, having all spoken our minds, having all declared our several positions, and then the people will know what they are voting for. They do not now know.

The Prime Minister talks about free speech. Under the War Measures Act regulations to-day we are in a precarious position. How can I go to the country and say what I think about war; how can I discuss freely the shortcomings of the government without coming under those regulations? It cannot be done.

An hon. MEMBER: And they know it.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: It cannot be done; I am likely to be picked up by any local police officer, and if I were unfortunate enough to live in Ontario I would be prosecuted by the attorney general of that province. That might be an easy way of getting rid of people who do not agree with the government. Already the people of this country have been frightened. One of my own sons came back the other day from Scotland; he said to me: "You know it is astonishing, as soon as I landed on the shores of Canada I felt that in some way the people of Canada had been frightened, were afraid to speak out what they thought." He had come from Great Britain, where they are not afraid to speak what they think. As we all know, there is literature published in Great Britain and coming to this country that is banned in this dominion. It is a ridiculous situation. Does anyone think the mother of parliaments over there would stand for this kind of thing? We are told that Canada is fighting on the side of Great Britain to save democracy; fighting for liberty, free speech, free institutions. We