

He adds this further, broadening out the rule and seeing that it is not too much confined:

—or as^s to which from their position and their special means of early or confidential information, they have or may have an advantage over other people.

Now with those principles established on the authority to which I have referred, and which principles I invoke, I would like for a few moments to direct the attention of the House to the position that a minister of the Crown occupies, in his duty to the Crown, his duty to the public, and his personal interests. As a minister of the Crown I think it is apparent, and will at once be acknowledged, that he becomes a trustee for the Crown. His election to parliament makes him necessarily a trustee for the people, and his position as a minister makes him more so perhaps, if the obligation can be increased, than if he were an ordinary member of parliament. His personal interests are, at once upon his election to the honourable position of a minister of the Crown, subordinated to his obligations as such trustee. His obligations as a trustee for the Crown and as a trustee for all the people are far and away superior to any rights that he may personally enjoy. The general law of trusts, which is founded, as we all know, by centuries of practice on what is just and right, applies with all its force to a member or a minister who occupies the position of a trustee. I do not think it will require any elaboration or argument on my part to establish that point. May I add that if a trustee in any capacity uses his position as trustee to gain some advantage to himself or in his own personal right, that is a breach of the very first obligation, and the greatest obligation that a trustee can possibly assume.

Now may I ask the House to assume, and only for the moment to illustrate my argument, that the hon. Minister of Labour (Mr. Murdock) did receive as a minister of the Crown, information as to the financial condition of the Home Bank. Could he go out on the street and divulge to the public the information that he received? The very obligation of his office would prevent his doing that. If he could not do that and give the public, those for whom he is a trustee, the benefit of his knowledge, let me ask, in all decency, could a minister of the Crown use that knowledge that he was denying and was bound to deny to the public, for his own personal knowledge? I have only to state the case, I think, to convince hon. members of this House that such conduct would merit the condemnation not only of parliament but of the people as a whole.

I had occasion to read a synopsis of the evidence given by the right hon. the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) before the Home Bank Commission just a few days ago, and I was very glad to see that the right hon. gentleman himself took the very position that I am—I was going to say urging on the House to-day, but I do not need to urge it, I need only mention it—the Prime Minister himself took the position I have mentioned, for he stated that his obligations of office precluded him from making any statement to the Home Bank Commissioner as to what had taken place in cabinet meetings, and he even went so far as to say that he could not—and he did not—disclose the names of members of the government who were present at a meeting of the cabinet.

Now, when the minister (Mr. Murdock) became aware of the charges contained in newspaper reports, and that his honour was impugned, it seems to me the obligation devolved upon him at that time to rise in his place in the House and clear the matter up, and disavow if he could those charges. The course was open to him to rise in his place and deny the charges that had been made. He could then have furnished proper and sufficient evidence, if such was available, giving all the particulars in regard to his withdrawal of his funds from the Home Bank at that particular time. Had he done that, parliament and the public might have been satisfied and the matter might not have gone any further. But the hon. minister did not do that. He preferred to remain silent, preferred to make no answer to parliament at all; and the charges made stand to-day so far as parliament and the public are concerned.

Then the matter came up incidentally in this House on the 27th March. I say "incidentally" because the questions put at that time were not of a direct character. On the date referred to the hon. member for West York (Sir Henry Drayton) questioned the Prime Minister as follows:

Will the hon. Prime Minister give us now, if he has them, the representations made by the directors who were here begging government assistance? He has got them.

Mr. Mackenzie King: I do not know what representations my hon. friend has reference to, but any representations made to the government will be placed before the commission, whatever they are and wherever they are.

The Prime Minister has been before the commission, "whatever they are and wherever they are" and I fail to find in his evidence anywhere that that information was placed before them.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I may say to my hon. friend that as soon as the commission