

"There is only one issue in this campaign, whether we shall keep our pledge, etc."

The *Mail and Empire*, referring to the same speech, quotes the right hon. gentleman in these terms:

There is only one issue in this campaign—only one that I can see to-day—

Observe, Mr. Speaker, my right hon. friend repeated the statement—only one.

—whether Canada shall maintain her effort in the war and support the men who have gone forth on the pledge of her honour, or whether Canada shall relax her effort, withdraw from the war, and practically leave these men to consider themselves abandoned and betrayed.

I submit that when the people of this country were told by the then Prime Minister that there was only one issue—only one—in such plain terms that every man, woman and child in this country could understand the nature and meaning of it, the services of the administration elected on that issue were at an end when the issue ceased to exist; and when a Government comes along two years after the war is over and attempts to carry on the affairs of this country without appealing to the electorate for any vindication of its position, it is usurping the authority of the people. I ask my right hon. friend what becomes of the theory that government is carried on in virtue of the consent of the governed? The governed gave their consent on one issue, an issue which has long since passed. Yet the hon. gentleman presumes to carry on to-day without even consulting the electorate. He ignores them in the most flagrant manner.

The Prime Minister of that day, however, was not the only one who described to the people of this country what the issue was. My right hon. friend himself made a good many speeches during that campaign. He and two of his colleagues at the time were, I think, the first to address a large public meeting in Canada, the one that was supposed, to use his own words, "to sound the appeal of the new government." That meeting, as he may recall, was held in the City of Winnipeg. It was largely attended, and an account of it is given in the *Manitoba Free Press* of October 23, 1917. A three-page report appears in that issue of the *Manitoba Free Press*, and it was quoted all over this country. The hon. member for Marquette (Hon. Mr. Crerar) was one of those who spoke along with my right hon. friend, and the Hon. Minister of Immigration and Colonization, who is also President of the Privy Council at the present time (Hon. J. A. Calder). They were all present, and these are the words

of my right hon. friend. He said that his purpose, and that of the colleagues appearing with him on the platform was to present the principle and to show forth the spirit that had brought them together, and "to sound the appeal of the new government." He was dealing both with the principle and with the spirit of the new Government. As he listens to his own words, I want to ask him whether he thinks that principle and that spirit apply to his administration at the present time. I will not quote the whole of his speech; I shall merely give extracts:

"Our Government, for which we stand to-night, is founded on the rock of compulsory service, and on that rock we will still build it.

Will he stand up in this Parliament and say at the present time that his Government is founded on the rock of compulsory service? and that on that rock he is still building?"

Mr. BUREAU: It is merely an aggregation.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: To continue:

I want to make it as clear as I can that the only way Canada can give the verdict of "carry on" is to vote for the Union Government. We can only vote for or against the Government.

In other words, he describes the issue as being that of "carrying on". I admit that the phrase to carry on might be used as a cry for his present administration, but I think he had a different purpose in mind at that time. I do not think my right hon. friend intended to have that cry serve a double purpose. Then he said further:

We can only vote for Borden and Union administration, or vote for a man who, no matter under what flag he may be running will be a follower of an administration headed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier. This vote for Borden or Laurier is a vote to carry on the war or to quit.

Now, may I ask my right hon. friend when he tells the country that the whole question at that time was between Borden and Laurier, whether that is the question before the country at the present time? Between Borden and Laurier? Where, may I ask my right hon. friend, does he come in? My right hon. friend was modest at that time. He was careful to exclude himself. He did not presume to stand along side of those distinguished gentlemen as being equal to them in political stature. But he has changed his attitude since. Here is another sentence from the speech he delivered then, and I would call his attention particularly to it. He said: