

THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY, JULY 18, 1919

OTTAWA LETTER

Some of the Premier's Troubles in Re-construction

The Matter of the French-Canadian Representation in Cabinet—Likely Government to Assume More and More of Conservative Hue

Ottawa, July 16—Cabinet making has temporarily halted, because Sir Robert Borden has retired into the silence. He is trying to figure out how he can make his cabinet a really representative union one, including a French-Canadian element, when he has only one man of that race in the Unionist ranks to choose from; and that not a very eminent one. It is this lack of French-Canadian material which has given rise to the constant rumors that Premier Gouin will enter the cabinet. This is unlikely; although it is known that advances have been made to him.

It must be admitted that the cabinet needs some new Liberal blood, if it is to have any right to the name "Unionist"; because those Liberals who are now in it are generally considered to be either about to return to the Liberal party before another session of parliament or are looked on as lost to it forever. In the former class would be put Carvell and Maclean; in the latter, Guthrie, Calder and Rowell.

There are a few eminent French-Canadian not in parliament who might be looked on as cabinet possibilities; but they are very few. Probably the most eligible name is that of Sir Hermandus Lacombe, who has been chairman of the War Purchasing Commission, and may be presumed to be friendly to the government.

There are any amount of English members in the house who would answer the call and be glad to do so, but they are all former Conservatives. There has been a fierce competition in the house this session to catch the public eye between Nickle of Kingston, Stevens of Vancouver, and Nicholson of Algoma. While Stevens and Nicholson devoted a good deal of their time latterly to the cost of living committee, of which they were the most active members, Nickle remained in the house steadily pouring out speeches on every possible occasion. When occasion seemed to him, he created it by introducing resolutions and delivering interminable speeches on them, smacking of the midnight oil and the early legal fathers.

Nickle seemed to have considerable of a future when he entered parliament, but his weakness appears to be the not uncommon one of not knowing his own mind. This has given him the reputation of being independent, when he is really unstable. He made three distinct turns on the tiller abolition question, voting against the measure within a few minutes after sitting down from advocating it in a long and impassioned speech. He has plenty of ability, but more unstability.

Stevens and Nicholson have both worked hard this session; and the interest they have taken in public affairs would seem to justify some reward. Although a strong Conservative, the former seems to be of an independent turn of mind, and has had a considerable parliamentary experience. Both he and Nicholson are ready speakers and have a pretty wide knowledge of business affairs.

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