

MEIGHEN'S INCOMPETENCE AND RECKLESS SPENDING BARED BY LIBERAL LEADER

West Middlesex Electors Hear of Mismanagement At Ottawa and Utter Disregard of People's Rights — Huge Deficits Piling Up and People Must Pay.

[By Staff Reporter.]

STRATHROY, Aug. 27.—The west riding of Middlesex this afternoon absolutely refuted the charge that Liberalism is obsolete in Western Ontario. Nearly 2,500 men and women listening attentively and uncompromisingly in a continuous downpour of rain to a stirring message from the Liberal chief, Hon. William Lyon Mackenzie King, is conclusive evidence that the rank and file of the people of the nation, irrespective of creed or politics, are clamoring for details as to the colossal expenditures of the Meighen administration at Ottawa.

Rousing Reception.

Equalled only in Windsor was the rousing reception which attended the arrival of the leader of the federal Opposition and his battery of brilliant speakers. With frequent and unbounded enthusiasm, the electors of this constituency registered unmistakable approval, as with telling emphasis Hon. Mr. King and his able colleagues hammered home their numerous charges of extravagance and incompetence against the Union Government.

Stayed in Rain.

Despite the fact that rain descended throughout the entire meeting not one



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people by increased prices in their commodities.

Vitality Important. "You will see the question of finances is vitally important. From the point of view of a government Canada is far from being in its position of eight years ago. You have a public debt that has reached the colossal figure of \$2,350,000,000. Like a mortgage, interest must be paid on this. This interest is now one hundred and forty millions for a year alone. This must certainly be attended to before Canada enters the next year.

Heavy Obligations. "Has it occurred to you that we have an important obligation for our men who went overseas and for the dependents of those who failed to return? The war has left such an obligation which every administration, of whatever politics, should seek to meet. (Applause.) This year we face an item of some \$135,000,000 for pensions, soldiers' civil re-establishment, etc. This is in addition to the one hundred and forty millions interest on the national debt.

Now Canada has certain possessions. Sometimes these are 'white elephants' and in the case of the National Railways I think we own a 'white elephant' that is costing the government more than it is worth. In 1911 the government was in possession of 2,200 miles of road. Today Canada owns and controls 22,000 miles. Yet there is this remarkable circumstance to note, that although the people have to meet these deficits they were never consulted as to whether they wanted these roads or not. (Applause.) I am not saying that government operation is always unwise, but do not use public money you must ask the people.

Huge Deficits. "Last year the deficit was 50 millions. This year it is 70 millions and next year our expert adviser, Sir Joseph Plaville, says it will probably be a hundred millions. These are the figures to show where your money is going. The national debt is between five and six hundred millions and Canada is a country of not over nine millions in population. It is very easy to see that if we intend to use public money you must ask the people.

Big Crowd at Park. Headed by the two bands, the 135th Strathroy and the Boy Scout Band, and the visiting local Liberals paraded from the Grand Trunk station to the park, where the big crowd was already in attendance eagerly awaiting, despite the rapid approach of rain, the commencement of the addresses. The meeting was rapidly under way ably directed by its chairman, Edgar Boue, one of the leading farmers of Adelaide Township. Amid prolonged cheering, he introduced the member for West Middlesex, Duncan Ross.

Predicts Victory. "We have been accustomed in the past," the latter declared "to be visited by rain just after they have gone into power. They usually come back then, but I venture to say that before the next summer is over we'll see here in Strathroy, 'Why we heard Premier King last summer.' We have him here today, the grandson of the late William Lyon Mackenzie, and you know well that it was through the efforts of the latter that we today enjoy the constitutional rights that make us a free people. Mackenzie King has demonstrated in public life that he possesses the same fine qualities that marked his ancestor, and he is dedicated to lead the common people.

Liberal Policy. "The Liberal policy today is pretty much the same as others. We believe in increased trade with the United States. It was Hon. W. S. Fielding that so ably defended the frontiers of free trade before anyone else, and I want to say to the Progressives of Canada, and they are not confined to our party alone, but are in the U. F. O., and in the good old Conservative party as well, that we lack unity of action. As the saying in the old book, 'Beware in your contentions with one another, lest ye destroy each other.' Get together. Rally around the men of 1911 who preached the everlasting doctrine of economy, efficiency, and honesty. In those days that old leader, the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier (cheers), was on the bridge, and we had the good old pilot Fielding with him. It is well to remember that Sir Wilfrid's pupil, Mackenzie King, is now on the bridge, but the old pilot is still on board. As it is not right to trust in 1921 who before 1911 steered the vessel out of the sea of stagnation into the harbor of financial safety?

A Big Reduction. "In 1911 after Fielding took charge the burden of taxation was reduced hundred millions. The charges hurled against the Liberal party are untrue. We tried to give the great policy of free trade. We did our best, and it isn't fair for anyone in the Liberal party to out of it to say that we did not attempt to redeem our promises or reduce taxation. History since 1911 has proven that the agriculturists would have derived great advantage, and part of our policy was subsequently adopted.

Rousing Reception. The Liberal leader, Mackenzie King, was greeted by a spontaneous outburst of cheering which continued for several minutes following his introduction. In his opening remarks he lauded the action of the ladies who comprised practically a half of his audience, complimenting them upon their undivided interest in the affairs of great moment. "There are many outstanding problems today," he declared, "among them the great railroad question and the tariff issue. The question of finances in Canada has become an important and significant for two reasons. First the money required to carry on the business of the country must come from the pockets of the people, and secondly, the more that is taken means that there will remain less for individual efforts. It matters little in the long run whether the people are taxed directly or indirectly. Suppose direct tax was imposed on the wealthy. To get it back the latter would pass the tax on to the

will use it presently with respect to the redistribution of wealth. (Applause.)

Up To Liberals. "I say to the farmers today: 'Who is going to look after you on the latter proposal? You have thirteen members in the House, and are they going to be able to make the fight in the event of the gerrymander? It will be the Liberal party who will stand beside the agriculturists in the interests of the people. This is not the time for us to enter into differences and put in the field two candidates for the enemy to run in between. There must be separation of the progressive forces. (Applause.) We want to face the enemy with men of knowledge, of expert training and capable of handling the finances of the country.' (Applause.)

Tribute to Member. At this juncture the leader paid a high tribute to Duncan C. Ross, the member for West Middlesex. "No man," he said, "was more faithful or better suited to represent the riding, and his name is honored wherever the word of Liberalism is spoken. Do not prejudice his chances by any division. It is the voice of the enemy who calls to you to break away. Keep in mind the service rendered in the past and regard the ability you have awaiting your disposal in the present."

Is Proud of It. Introduced as the man who was doing much to keep Liberalism to the fore in Essex, W. C. Kennedy, M.P., explained that he was one of the old Liberal school, with Mackenzie King and Duncan Ross, and was proud of it. "They tell me," he said, "that you have had a number of meetings the last few weeks, and there has been men of prominence hurrying up and down through the counties as though they were on the eve of an election. Personally, I don't believe we are. I am not in the confidence of Premier King, but I am convinced that he will carry on as long as he can."

Enormous Increase. "Then the national debt is to be considered. It has increased ten times over since 1911. The money must be met next year for Victory Bonds, and what are we to do? There is only one solution. Send to Ottawa the type of men who can iron out these difficulties. You need men with knowledge and judgment; not they who are bent on experiments. We can't afford to educate our public men in Ottawa."

King on his Liberal Policy. F. F. Pardee declared, "And he will shortly lead in Canadian politics. He has the courage of his convictions and hear, he can do no better in the troublesome times to come." The speaker was also warmly applauded as he asserted that Duncan Ross as a member of the House could not be bettered in any province in Canada.

Significant Suggestion. "We have a strange state of affairs," he continued, "and let me say to the good old Tories that we have in the House and in the provinces. We need men with knowledge and judgment; not they who are bent on experiments. We can't afford to educate our public men in Ottawa."

Request Refused. "There is one way to save money, and that is to know how it is being expended. We demanded full account on railway matters. How was our request met? We were told that a company had been formed to handle the railways, and it was no longer any business of the administration. The members here today were among the ones who tried to get information. They tried to learn the personnel of the railway board, and if they were directors of other companies. The answer was: 'There is no information.' Another question was: 'Has the Government placed any insurance on railway rolling stock, etc., and if so, how much and with what company?'

Strong Statements. "The minister of railways said: 'No information.' We asked had their been any contracts let, and received the same reply. Not to be evaded, we pressed for information in the committee-room and discovered that 108 millions insurance had been placed with the Great West Assurance Company, two of whose directors were on the railway board. We found that contracts had been let for eleven million dollars with the Canada Car Company, one of whose directors was on the railway board. Now I have had a number of strong statements, but I am aware of the facts. The country is in the hands of a few industrial plutocrats of great wealth, with an inside pull with the Government, and a handful of political autocrats—Right Hon. Arthur Meighen and his associates—who have usurped their power. These two are working together to retain their grip on the country. (Applause.)

Merchant Marine. "Then we encounter another venture of the present Government—the merchant marine. During the closing days of the war Sir Robert Borden told Parliament that 25 million had been spent for this purpose for war-time only. When the war was over there were only three of these boats had been constructed. But this Government carried on awarding contracts and 50 more were turned out. Seventy millions have been spent, and what good are they? The Government knew that once the war was over there would be ships for sale in every port in the world. But, as usual, without consulting the taxpayers, they go ahead, and what do we find? In the past fortnight four of these boats have gone to the bottom, or else are lying in pieces on some rocky reef."

Improper and Expensive. "We warned the Government that this expenditure was improper and expensive. We said we should be saving, and not spending. Certain kinds of expenditure are just at one time, and not another. There is certainly no justification, especially in this period of reckless spending on new adventures without the full support of the people. The press was told last week that the Government said: 'It doesn't matter, no need to worry, as these boats were insured.' But, however, the insurance companies are repaying at current values. Experts show these boats were constructed at \$190 a ton, and the cost is \$40 to \$50. There is your insurance. The vessels were built when prices were at their height."

"Gag" introduced. "Of all the rights of free parliament, there is one of free discussion. Premier Meighen came in with his estimates late, and asked us to vote 70 millions without looking at the account. What did Meighen do when we protested? He said: 'He didn't care what we thought, and he would take it in any event. He was as good as his word. He introduced the "gag," the closure bill, and took the millions.' "A word about the closure proceeding. The Meighen administration has utilized it time and again when we were trying to protect the public purse. It was the same with the merchant marine question. This is the truth, and not fancy stories. They can do anything they desire with the closure act, and if they are true to their past they

Call in a commission of businessmen to show the Government what to do. What do you think of such a state of affairs? (Voices, 'Not much.') "There never was a time in our history that we have been so far from the truth. Simply this. The Meighen administration is done. It's dead, and doesn't know enough to lie down. Look at its record. Regard its performance. What have they undertaken that has been successful? They were elected for one purpose, and that is over. By its solemn promise they had no right to hang on to office the last three years.

People Had No Chance. "There has been no expression by the people since 1911, and wouldn't it be the people of a manly straightforward government to go to the country? When the election does come eventually one thing will happen. The Liberals will be the strong prevailing group. (Applause.)

What some persons cannot understand is that two parties, each Progressive should be striving separately. For time immemorial the Progressives have been united. There is no U. F. O. and the Liberals are not the Progressives of the country. "What has happened? Each has been busy fighting the other, allowing the party of retrogression to slip in. What will happen then? You will have the old party of reaction in power, and it will be worse than the last. There is only one alternative. Grid for the fray. Entertain Liberal thoughts and ideas. Put them into effect, and Hon. Wm. Mackenzie King will carry on the task laid down by that peerless leader, the late downy-faced Premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, whose very name spoke 'government by and for the people.' (Applause and cheers.)

Wants Harmony. Referring to the fact that he had attended recently in Quebec the speaker said: "I took it upon myself to tell them down in Quebec that it was the desire of the people of the two provinces to live in peace and harmony along with each other. During my 24 years in public life I have taken every opportunity to study my compatriots, their customs, their traditions, their usages, and even their prejudices, and have reached the conclusion that the average Canadian possesses that nobility of purpose and character which alone should lead us to all join together in peace and harmony. (Applause.)

Like Tower of Babel. "The public debt makes me think of the tower of Babel which kept going up until there was such a confusion at the top that it was abandoned. There is one difference. Although the national debt keeps mounting upward, and there exists considerable confusion there is no apparent deterioration as yet." Discussing the reply of the Government to the war was to blame, the speaker asked, "do you want an example of how some of the debt has been accounted for, not from the war alone, but for plished, not from the war alone, but for enrichment of friends of the Government? When the British authorities had condemned the Ross Rifle, and when the Canadian military authorities had condemned the Ross Rifle, and when Sir Robert Borden do? He spent another three million dollars for these rifles to enrich his friends. Is that a legitimate debt?"

A Bad Move. "What about Rumania and Greece? It was the climax of imprudence when the present Government advanced \$25,000,000 to each of these countries whose instability is well known throughout the world. These little countries of the Balkans who have been at war since they were born and will be until the end. Would you call that a legitimate war debt? (Voices, 'No.') When we asked Premier Borden he said it was the interest of Canada, and what is the situation today? Why we have lost fifty millions for all time, and the people were never consulted one way or the other."

Asking More Money. "The war is over three years, but still they are asking for us to vote money for demobilization. The first year the war was terminated they asked us to vote two hundred million for demobilization. When the year was up there was not one cent left. The next appropriation asked was for a hundred and thirty-five million. I asked what for. They answered there were still soldiers in England, and if they did not demobilize now, the Government would be returned. I only ask you, nevertheless, to be on hand April 1 next when they make their report."

Magnificent bouquets were presented to both the Liberal leader and Dr. Beland. The presentations were made by little Emily Bikel and Patricia McCabe.

BOMB EXPLODES IN CHICAGO THEATRE

CHICAGO, Aug. 28.—A bomb explosion in the Columbia Theatre, a burlesque house, shortly after midnight Saturday, shook the entire business district. The theatre was empty at the time, not yet having been reopened for the season. Several persons were reported, however, to have been injured by flying glass. According to the police, the explosion took place at 1:20 a.m. The bomb had been placed in an alley, the force of the blast shattered the heavy steel door and broke hundreds of surrounding windows. The interior of the theatre itself was not damaged.

WILL SUCCEED FIDDES. LONDON, Aug. 28.—(By Canadian Press.) Sir Masterman Smith has been appointed permanent under-secretary of the state for the colonies, in succession to Sir George Vandeleur Fiddes, who has occupied the position since 1919.

NORTHCLIFFE AT AUCKLAND. LONDON, Aug. 27.—(Canadian Press.)—A Reuters' dispatch from Auckland, New Zealand, says that Lord Northcliffe arrived there today and was officially welcomed.

HARD WORK MIDDLE NAME OF PREMIER

State Burdens Are Great Worries, Declares Lloyd George.

LONDON, Aug. 28.—(By Canadian Press.)—Premier Lloyd George, while at Barmley after attending the wedding of his principal secretary, Sir William Sutherland, at Darton, said there never had been a time when ministers of the crown were as hard worked. Other countries solved the problem by working them in shifts, which they changed pretty frequently.

"Since I became premier," he said, "there have been seven premiers in France, six in Italy and nine in Germany. That is one way of getting through your work, but in no country is the minister's lot happy. State burdens are great worries, especially in time of excitement at home and abroad."

Constant Excitement. "Some people," concluded the premier, "did not have enough fighting in the war. For two years we have had constant excitement and a larger number of industrial disputes than ever previously. We have settled the greatest industrial dispute we ever had and in a way which I think is a precedent, giving all parties a share in the prosperity of the industry itself. Although there is not much to share yet, it will come. I am a hopeful sort of person, because in the long run, I think, we adopt the right course. I want the people in this dark hour of industrial depression to remember that England has passed through worse times. We shall pull through, and I want to proceed in that confidence."

Hard to Understand. "When I went to France recently foreign ministers said: 'You are an extraordinary people; the queerest in the world. You never do quite what we expect you to do, and never the sort of thing that we do. We don't understand you.' That is the thing that is giving us confidence in Great Britain. It is a calm courage I want British people to keep. Then they shall get through all our troubles and keep on a steady path of commonsense and experience. Keep up your courage, and the world will come right."

LIEUT. GOV. CLARKE MEAKER. TORONTO, Aug. 28.—Bulletins issued from Government House this morning state that Lieutenant-Governor Clarke had a very comfortable night, but is considerably weaker this morning.

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CANADIAN IMPORTER MAY HAVE GONE DOWN

Canadian Government Merchant Marine Hope To Salvage Vessel.

VANCOUVER, B. C., Aug. 28.—Local officials of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine hope by no means given up hope of salvaging the Canadian Importer, which has been leaking and in distress of the Oregon coast for nearly two weeks. Today's dispatches from the Canadian Importer, which is searching the seas in the neighborhood in which the Importer was last seen, report the finding of drifting lumber, but up to 3 o'clock this afternoon no trace of the Importer. From this fact United States shipping authorities concluded that the drifting vessel had gone down. Local opinion is not so pessimistic. It is pointed out that the lumber found drifting about the seas may have been cast adrift to lighten the vessel, and from the fact that the lumber was found in spots 23 miles apart it is also thought that it may have been cast off the Importer's decks many days ago. The derelict vessel was last seen by the steamer Cordova on Friday last, when she was regarded as likely to remain afloat for weeks. The Importer's wireless equipment was disabled by the flooding of her engine room.

REFUSES TO COMMENT ON STATE INSURANCE

Minister of Labor Says He Wants More Information.

OTTAWA, Aug. 27.—Canadian Press.—Senator D. Robertson, minister of labor, said today that he could not comment on the proposals of the Trades and Labor Congress for a system of state unemployment insurance. He would need to have more detailed information.

The matter of a housing loan of \$50,000,000 approved by the congress, said the minister, was a matter rather for the department of finance. He pointed out, however, that the housing loans already provided by Parliament had not yet been fully taken advantage of.

As to the demand for money grant to alleviate the need, Senator Robertson said that the Federal Government had expended since January 1 of this year \$1,650,000 towards remedying the unemployment situation, which amount represented more than double the expenditure from all other public sources for this purpose. The policy of federal aid, he said, had not been withdrawn and is still in force.

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