

MR. R. L. BORDEN'S HALIFAX SPEECH

Conservative Leader Pledges the Party to Reform Administration of Canada--Bold Constructive Policy--Elaboration Will Follow in Later Campaign Speeches

At Halifax on Tuesday, Aug. 20th Mr. R. L. Borden, Conservative leader made the opening speech of his campaign which will extend from coast to coast. He outlined a comprehensive platform which he will elaborate at his later meetings. He said in part:

At this first meeting of a series which will embrace every province in Canada except the fair province of Prince Edward Island and which will extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific, it is fitting that I should give to you some statement of the attitude and policy of the Conservative party with respect to certain great questions. Time compels me to leave for future meetings any extended arguments in their favor. The same consideration obliges me to postpone tonight necessary criticism of the misgovernment which has stained the record of this administration during the past three years.

There are three essential features of good government upon which all men should unite and in respect of which they should feel themselves absolutely unshakable by the ties of any political allegiance. Honest appropriation and expenditure of public moneys in the public interest—the appointment of public officials upon a consideration of capacity and personal character and not of party service alone—elections unfettered by the corrupt influences of bribery and fraud. These essentials are not to be denied for they have the moral significance and they involve the future of democracy. We boast of our representative institutions but these cannot be enduring if they develop a debased public service or bring into existence legislatures representing not the will of the people but the degradation of electoral corruption.

At the opening of the last session the government pledged themselves in the speech from the throne to introduce a bill to amend the electoral laws. No such bill was introduced. I criticised their inaction and moved a resolution which was voted down by the usual government majority. The subject of that motion which I submit to you as an essential article of Conservative policy is as follows:

More effective provisions to punish bribery and fraud at elections to ensure through publicity as to expenditures by political organizations, to prevent the accumulation of campaign funds for corrupt purposes, and to prohibit contributions thereto by corporations, contractors and promoters, to expedite the hearing of election petitions and to prevent collusive arrangements for the withdrawal or compromise thereof, to provide for a thorough investigation of corrupt practices, and if necessary to appoint an independent prosecuting officer charged with that duty, to simplify the procedure therefor and to enforce the laws so amended.

What I have said concerning appointments to public offices leads me to submit to you another article which should find a place in the Conservative policy, and it is this:

A thorough and complete reformation of the laws relating to the civil service so that future appointments will be made by an independent commission acting upon the report of the examiners after a competitive examination.

I need not dwell upon the importance of this. Of necessity some appointments must be left to the responsibility of the executive, appointments to the judicial bench and certain other high public offices are of such character and the people have it in their power to compel an honorable and decent performance of this great public duty. There are also many minor appointments that could not for the present be brought within such a system. But for the rest I prefer a competitive system of appointment to the present partisan system. Three-fourths of the time of members supporting a government is spent in dealing with government patronage. Party pressure and party service have more weight than character or capacity. The public service is cumbered with useless officials. I am convinced that we will perform a great public duty by establishing in this country that system which prevails in Great Britain and under which a member of parliament has practically no voice in or control over any appointment to the civil service. Upon attaining power, we shall without delay enter upon and complete the necessary investigation to guide us as to details; and this investigation will be promptly followed by the necessary legislation.

Reform of the Senate

It may not become a member of the commons to criticise too severely the merits or performances of the other branch of the legislature; but those who have watched with any care the work of our senate in recent

years must be convinced that it is not playing the part which was intended by the framers of our constitution. There seems little sense of individual responsibility, little desire to grapple with public questions little disposition for effective work, but intense inclination and indeed determination to make its sittings as infrequent and as brief as the barest decency will permit. In saying this I do not overlook important individual exceptions. When one considers the problem to be solved he is met with a declaration not easily disproved, that the present method of appointment is sufficiently good if the power were properly exercised. It is beyond question that some appointments to the senate by the present administration have been excellent a very considerable number have been absolutely improper and even absurd, so that the character, status and tone of that house have been seriously deteriorated since the advent of the Laurier government. The senate if properly constituted under the present system should be greatly superior to the house of commons in the chief essentials of a legislative body, and should be one of the main safeguards of our constitution. It does not occupy that position either in fact or in public estimation. I realise certain possible danger of an elective



MR. R. L. BORDEN

senate, but conditions may force it upon us, and I shall stand for

Such reform in the mode of selecting members of the senate as will make that chamber a more useful and representative legislative body.

It is necessary to add that a constitutional change of such importance could not take place without the consent of every province of the Dominion.

Securing Settlers

Not only our great western heritage, but the eastern provinces as well offer splendid homes to the best class of settlers for whom the world has been directed to Canada through the world-wide industrial and commercial expansion of recent years for which the Laurier government has not failed to take entire credit. The watchword of the present administration in immigration has been quantity rather than quality. The splendid opportunities which we afford and the homes which we offer entitle us to the very best class of settlers from the British Islands, from the United States and from chosen and selected races of continental Europe. In future our watchword should be quality rather than quantity. Let us adopt as another article of our policy

A more useful selection of the sources from which immigration shall be sought, a more rigid inspection of immigrants and the abolition of the bonus system, except under very special circumstances, and for the purpose of obtaining a particularly desirable class of settlers

Partisan Speculators

The people of a great undeveloped country like Canada have within their possession and control an opportunity of solving many questions which have disturbed other countries where conditions have become so fixed as to admit little possibility of change. Canada has a vast public domain, and in that term we should include not only lands and minerals but great franchises, national in their character involving ownership, development and operation of public utilities, such as transportation, heat light and other necessary conveniences of the people. I will not do more than allude to the outrageous and scandalous transfer to partisan speculators of enormous areas of public lands, timber and minerals in the Pacific seems no less than the denial of our capacity for self-government. Shall all private enterprises be condemned because of business failure or corrupt methods? Are we to renounce our right of self-government be-

cause of repeated acts of maladministration, because of political graft, because of Saskatchewan valley land deals and grazing lease scandals? And last but not least are we to hand over our government's railways to private corporations because their management has been very greatly discredited? Speaking for myself, I believe that state ownership is no more to be condemned for errors of administration than is the general principle of self-government. The remedy is to amend the methods. Gross maladministration is the bane of many public departments in Canada. Outrageous election scandals have been disclosed during the past ten years, but we do not therefore propose to repeal our constitution, or to abandon altogether our system of responsible government. The Intercolonial railway has suffered from lack of business management, from lack of discipline from partisan use and partisan interference. The remedy seems an obvious one. Let us place our government railways under an

Independent Commission

and select for that purpose the best available person or persons with the requisite knowledge and experience. The commission should be accorded a status similar to that of the general railway commission of Canada. It would demonstrate to our satisfaction in a very few years whether or not operation of government railways can be carried out honestly, efficiently with proper discipline and by business methods. Personally I do not doubt the issue. A Canadian has made state ownership and operation successful in Australia. The Ontario government railway commission has a successful record of good business management and business results. I do not overlook the necessity of safeguarding the interests of the whole country by proper provision for the continuance of any existing rates which may be essential for the developing and progress of commerce between the maritime provinces and the other portion of Canada.

We stand, therefore, for the operation and management of our government railways by an independent commission, free from partisan control or interference.

Extension of Intercolonial

In 1903 and again in 1904 we advocated the extension of the Intercolonial railway to the shores of the Georgian Bay. We believed that policy sound, and that the government of Canada should have acquired and developed the Canada Atlantic railway as part of the Intercolonial instead of permitting it to pass into the hands of one of the great railway corporations. That opportunity having passed, I believe it better first to demonstrate the possibility of efficient and successful business management in the operation of the 1,700 miles of state railway which Canada now possesses. When that demonstration shall have been successfully made and when the interests of Canada and especially our great west shall redound to the construction of another great transcontinental railway, I do not doubt that the country shall be ready and the Conservative party then in power will be prepared to extend a successful system of government railways to the great provinces of the west.

New Conditions

We do not depart from the best traditions of the past, but the National policy of today must take account of conditions which have arisen since 1878. In no part of the world is the question of transportation of more vital concern than in Canada and no where are the opportunities more favorable on the whole for its solution. The problem begins at the farm or the factory and ends with the market whether at home or abroad. Our natural advantages in a remarkable series of wonderful inland waterways, undeveloped water power of untold possibilities and great national ports on two oceans. The issues are provincial as well as federal, for the problem must take account not only of great railways and inland navigations, but of the trunkway and even the ordinary public highway.

The development of our unutilized natural resources for transportation and the equipment of great national ports on both oceans must be vigorously advanced if our producers are to compete on fair terms in the countries where we find our best markets. The substance of our resolution on this great question offered as another article of our political faith is as follows:

The development and improvement of our national waterways, the equipment of national ports, the improvement of transportation facilities and consequent reduction of freight rates between the place of production and the market whether at home or abroad, and the establishment of a thorough system of cold storage.

Railway Commission

When the present government in 1903 introduced the railway act providing for the establishment of a railway commission, I at once declared that I would support the act and give it my best assistance towards making the measure as perfect as possible. It received the consideration of the house of commons for many weeks and hundreds of amendments were made before it was finally passed. Since then it has been amended at various times and its powers and jurisdiction now extends to telephone and express companies. I see no reason why its jurisdiction cannot be further extended to telegraph com-

panies and indeed to all public utilities. It is true that the work of the commission has pressed severely upon its present members and especially on its able and indefatigable chairman. We believe that it should be recognised, that additional members should be appointed if necessary and that its powers and jurisdiction should be extended. It has outgrown its name and in future it should be called the public utilities commission of Canada. The railway commission of Canada is at present the most important judicial body in the country. Its work touches more closely the everyday life of our people than does that of any other court. It has powers, jurisdiction, semi-judicial and administrative. It should probably be reorganised in two divisions, one dealing with matters judicial or semi-judicial and the other concerned more especially with matters of administration. On this point, however,

Commission Safeguards

I would be very much guided by the advice of the chairman of that commission, for whose experience and ability I have every respect. A commission so constituted is at once a safeguard to the capitalist and the people. It safeguards the people against the oppression or greed of any corporation. It protects their lives, their property and their general interests. For the capitalist it affords a safeguard against hasty or unjust legislation based on impulsive or unreasonable demands. Let one cardinal principle of the Conservative party be never forgotten—the sanctity of public contracts must always be respected. Any legislative action which in effect amounts to confiscation of private property must be carefully avoided. Canada requires for the development of its resources a vast amount of money which can thus be profitably invested. I must therefore remain for many years a borrowing country. To sanction or enact legislation of a confiscatory character would be the worst possible service that any government or parliament could render. A commission such as I have outlined would constitute a sufficient safeguard of public rights and interest, and at the same time would stand as a bulwark against unjust or hasty legislative action. I submit as another article of our policy:

The reorganisation of the present railway commission as a public utilities commission with wider powers and more extended jurisdiction so as to establish thorough and more effective control over all corporations owning or operating public utilities or invested with franchises of a national character.

Telegraphs and Telephones

It has been demonstrated in Great Britain that telegraphs and telephones can be successfully operated in connection with the post office department. I see no reason why a similar system cannot be inaugurated and successfully carried out in Canada. Few people realise that at the present time Canada owns and operates 6,086 miles of telegraph line. These lines have not been remunerative for the reason that they have been established in thinly settled portions of the country where private enterprise could find no adequate return. If we are prepared to invest national capital in thinly populated and unremunerative localities why should we hesitate in those portions of the country where operations can be carried on at a profit. I do not forget the necessity that our great railways must be equipped with telegraph and telephone lines nor do I forget the principle of justice to invested capital which I have already invoked. Having regard to these considerations our policy includes:

Postal Deficiencies

In its desire to make an annual announcement of surplus in the post office department the government has failed to keep up with legitimate demands for increased postal facilities especially in the newly developed portions of our country. Postal facilities in the west have not kept pace with the railway development in that country and ground for complaint, and that complaint should be remedied as rapidly as possible. We must not forget that in the more progressive countries of the world the system of free rural delivery has been adopted. In the United States one sees before every farm house on each delivery route, a mail box which is visited daily by a government carrier who delivers and collects mail, gives receipt for registered letters, takes money for postal orders and sells stamps, post cards and stamped envelopes. The system has been adopted with considerable outlay in the United States. I have not examined any report later than 1904 and in that year the postal routes numbered 25,000 and the expenses of maintaining them was no less than twelve million dollars. Since then I believe there has been considerable increase. There is no course some compensation in the reduction of the number of postoffices and in ordinary stage routes. The cost of a system of rural mail delivery depends altogether on the standard. In the United States each route must comprise at least one hundred families and the length must not exceed twenty-five miles. The time has arrived when we should make a beginning in Canada, inquiry as to cost and as to the standard which must be adopted. I

submit therefore as another article:

The improvement of existing postal facilities, especially in newly developed portions of the country, and the inauguration after proper inquiry as to cost of a system of free rural mail delivery.

Fiscal Policy

The fiscal policy of the Conservative party has been announced on many occasions since 1878, and while consistently adhering to the principles then laid down it necessarily has given consideration to new conditions arising out of the developments and progress of the country. While recognising the prime importance of agriculture in a country like Canada, whose natural resources comprise vast and diversified areas of richly fertile soils, suitable for the cultivation of every product of the farm, we realise also the boundless and undeveloped wealth of our forests, our mines and our fisheries, and we do not forget that Providence has endowed this country with every resource necessary for the development and support of great manufacturing industries. Our policy is based upon considerations of advantage not to any particular class or section, but to the people and the country as a whole, thus it necessarily takes account of the interest of the consumer but it also aims at the maintenance within our borders of a large industrial population, who shall receive a fair living wage shall not be reduced to the low standard of living, to the hard fierce struggle for existence, which prevails in many countries. In short, our policy firmly endeavors to secure for our producers the advantage of the home market and strongly maintains that the labor necessary to convert our natural resources into products suitable for the use and convenience of the people should, as far as possible, be performed in Canada and not in foreign countries, so that our own workmen, not those of other countries, may find employment in that work. We, therefore stand for a fiscal policy which will promote the production within Canada of all useful articles and commodities that can be advantageously produced or manufactured from or by means of our natural resources, having due regard to the interests of the consumer as well as to the just claims of our wage-earning population.

Preferential Trade

The Conservative party has always stood and still stands for a policy of preferential trade within the empire. The attitude government has been a half-hearted reaffirmation of desire for better trade relations with the mother country based on preferences given and received; but the prime minister and minister of agriculture have repeatedly assured the public that the people of Canada have no desire for a preference in the markets of Great Britain. It is not by such means nor by such attitude that we expect to attain success. The recent change of government in the British islands has been regarded as the postponement of all hope that this great imperial scheme propounded by a far-seeing and patriotic imperial statesman can be consummated in the early future. It is nevertheless true that the British government was returned to power not upon that issue but upon a dozen issues which had various effects in different constituencies throughout the British Islands.

A Great Stimulus

The cause of mutual preferential trade received a great stimulus not from the prime minister of Canada, but by the efforts of Australian, New Zealand and South African representatives at the recent colonial conference. The Canadian representatives adopted a policy of comparative indifference. Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, with one exception the Transvaal, urged upon the British people the infinite importance of cementing Great Britain and the great dependencies of the empire by a system of mutual trade preferences. Our prime minister is quite ready to interfere in the domestic affairs of Great Britain when he considers that his political interests call upon him to take that course. On this great question, however, his action, or rather inaction seems to have resulted from a singular reluctance to advocate that which he admits to be for the advantage not only of Canada, but of the empire. I submit to you as another article of Conservative policy:

Provincial Rights

The promotion by negotiation, legislation and other constitutional means of a system of mutual preferential trade within the empire.

In 1905 the Conservatives took the position that under our constitution the public domain within each province ought to be committed to the management and administration of the people of that province through their provincial government. That was the basis of arrangement between the four provinces originally constituting the Dominion. At the present time every province in Canada controls and administers its public lands except the three provinces of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan. In Manitoba very little public domain now remains, except the swamp lands, a considerable portion of which has already been transferred to the provincial government.

A Lame Excuse

Carelessly enough the Dominion government thoroughly admits the justice of the claims of the two provinces by providing in their constitution for an annual payment to each province as compensation for the lands which have been withheld. There

was no substantial argument against committing the lands to the administration of the provinces. The principle objection raised was that immigration might be checked by an unwise provincial policy. Let it be remembered that the new provinces are more deeply interested in continuing the volume of immigration than are the people of Eastern Canada. The future of those provinces, the value of the holdings of every inhabitant therein will depend in some considerable measure upon the advent from year to year of additional population. Evidently the true reason which caused the Dominion government to withhold the lands is the desire to retain them for the purpose of influencing votes of new settlers and in order to provide vast fortunes for favored friends. This reason cannot commend itself to sound public opinion. We have not receded from the policy which we announced two years ago and therefore we are prepared

To restore their public lands to the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan upon fair terms.

An Improper Alliance

The tendency of the present administration has been to disregard and override provincial rights. This has made itself manifest in several ways. There has been a standing alliance between the Dominion government and certain Liberal provincial governments. The prime minister of Canada declared that the Ontario government was his right arm. It has been amputated with happy results to the Dominion as a whole and Ontario in particular. There has been undue interference in the affairs of various provinces, notably in those of Quebec and Saskatchewan. The prime minister of Canada has practically admitted in parliament, and his friend Mr. Walter Scott has openly stated in a letter which was read on the floor of the House, that not the Neuenan governor of Saskatchewan but Sir Wilfrid Laurier made the selection of the first prime minister of that province. Promoters not only from Ontario but Quebec have come to the Dominion parliament for charters which should have been granted only by the provincial legislatures. One charter obtained nearly twenty years ago from the Ontario legislature when under Liberal control was brought before the Dominion parliament upon some flimsy pretext and was renewed by the Dominion in defiance of provincial rights simply for the reason that no further renewal could be obtained from Ontario. So far has this disregard for provincial rights extended that the Dominion government has attempted to possess itself of valuable timber lands in the province of Ontario without regard to the rights of the province or its leasees. We shall advocate and maintain

The unimpaired maintenance of all powers of self-government which have been conferred upon the provinces of Canada under the constitution.

All-Red Route

George IV. became firmly convinced that he commanded the British forces at Waterloo and a similar mental aberration has fastened itself upon our prime minister, who stoutly maintains, notwithstanding the most convincing evidence to the contrary, that he is the author of the All-Red line project. Sir Charles Tupper hardly needs to remind us that the proposal was his own, that it was defeated by the action of Lord Aberdeen and Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Our prime minister conveniently forgets his bottle-necked proposals of 1898, and the shout of triumph from his party friends at the supposed establishment of a "fast Atlantic service" apparently forgets what the Allans have accomplished on the Atlantic, and what the Canadian Pacific Railway has achieved on the Atlantic and Pacific as well since his famous scheme broke down. Upon his return from the colonial conference he said from the colonial conference he said at Quebec: "During the last days of the conference I announced a new idea which has become almost historic, the All-Red line." His motion was moved before the colonial conference on the 14th of May, but the proposal which he claims as a new idea and as his own was that of Sir Charles Tupper in 1896. And more than a month before Sir Wilfrid's resolution was moved certain capitalists had addressed to each member of the conference a proposal to "link together the different parts of the empire by a service of fast steamers and fast trains working in conjunction and forming through routes through British territory. Yet this is the new and original idea which Sir Wilfrid announced a month afterwards. We have no details of the government's proposal and we cannot profitably consider it until these are made known. The best possible passenger service is desirable, but we must not sacrifice the interests of our producer for spectacular effects. Condition has changed since 1896. The necessity of a thorough and efficient freight service with a complete system of cold storage at the lowest possible rate is more apparent now than ten years ago. Eighty per cent of our population are directly interested in low freight rates and a cold storage system. Less than one per cent are interested in a faster passenger service.

Tired of Liberal Rule

The Toronto Globe has courteously expressed its approval of my proposal, as well as the hope that after the next election I may lead a steadier, more responsible and more

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