

# FIRST SPEECH BY NEW UNIONIST LEADER

The Leeds correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph thus deals with the great Unionist meeting on the evening of November 10:

The new leader of His Majesty's Opposition in the House of Commons made his first speech to the organizers of the party in the Coliseum, that fine hall, half church, half theatre, in which Mr. Chamberlain spoke at the end of one of his fiscal campaigns. The right hon. gentleman had an audience quite as interested as that which Mr. Chamberlain addressed, and it says a great deal for the progress of fiscal reform that the 5,000 people crammed into the building were much stronger adherents of the policy than those who attended to hear the member for West Birmingham make one of his greatest educational speeches.

Tonight's gathering was indeed a memorable one. In the double tiers of galleries 50 persons were packed almost uncomfortably together, and so anxious were they to be standing room that every available foot of space was occupied within five minutes of the opening of the doors. They stood a solid mass from the railings to the rise of the dark timbered roof, and waited with patience for more than an hour to greet their new chief. Practically every one of the 2,000 delegates to the National Union Conference was present, and nearly every Unionist of note in Leeds was a supporter of Mr. Bonar Law. Hardly less remarkable than the occasion was the composition and heartiness of the audience. There were sixty-five members of Parliament on the platform in addition to Lord Faber (the chairman), the Duke of Rutland, the Earl of Harewood, Lord Allerton, the Earl of Wharcliffe, the Earl of Denbigh, the Earl of Harrowby, Lord Mostyn, Lord Masham, and Lord St. Oswald.

Mr. Bonar Law entered the hall at eight o'clock and had a tremendous reception. The audience rose as one man and cheered the right hon. gentlemen for several minutes, waving handkerchiefs and papers, and at the end of a really wonderful ovation the multitude broke into musical honors. Then three cheers of extraordinary volume were given, and following came other cheers called for by members of the audience for Mr. Balfour and Mr. Walter Long.

### New Leader's Speech

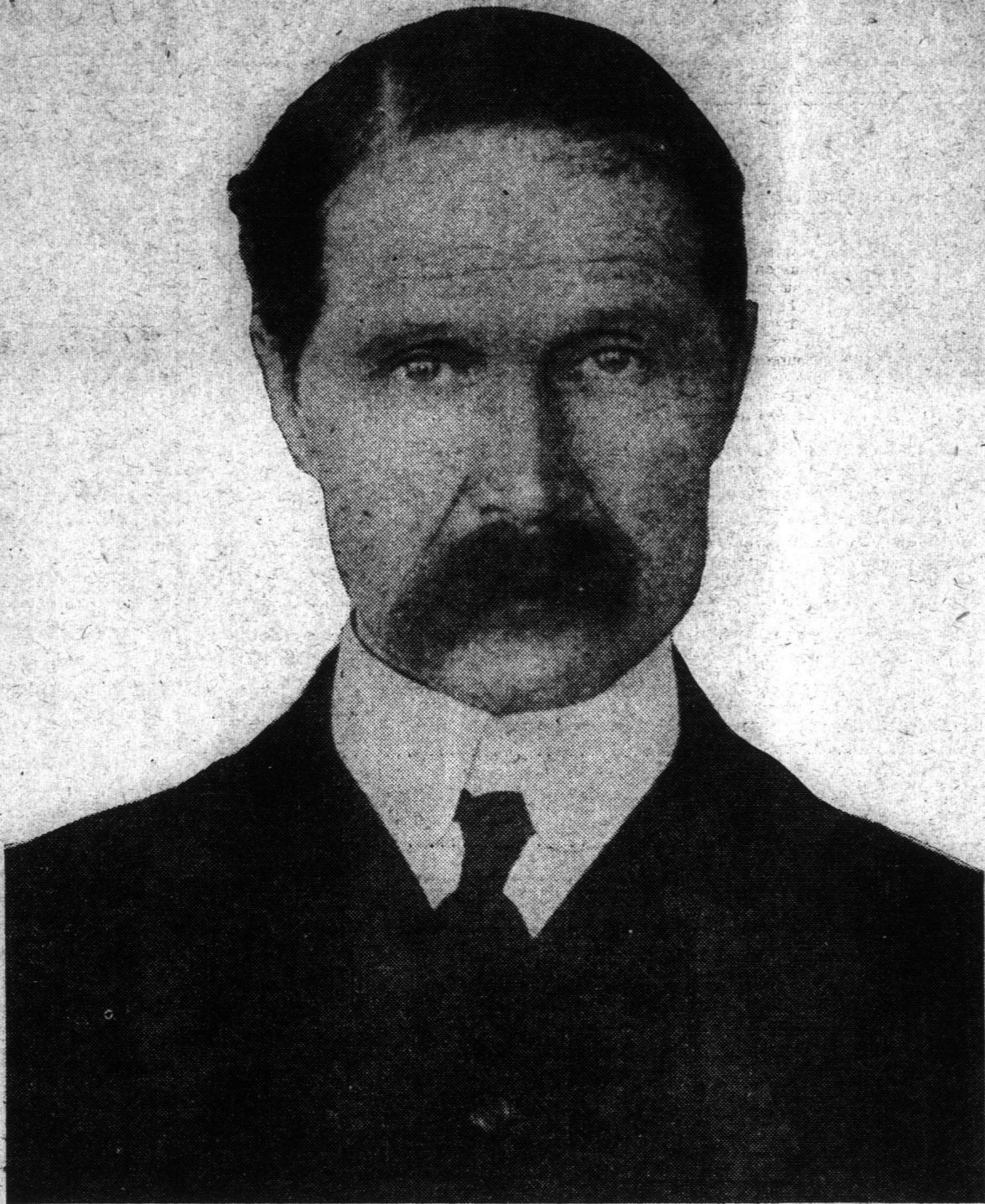
Mr. Bonar Law received a great ovation as he rose to address the meeting, the whole audience, including those on the platform, standing and cheering. He said: I thank you from my heart for the warmth of this reception, but if I am to proceed I shall not speak of it, and I shall try not to think of it. I have in my time made many political speeches, but never have I felt so much need of the indulgence of my audience, and never have I been so certain that I should receive it (Cheers.)

My first duty is to express on my behalf after the resolution which has been read it is not necessary to express to you—my deep regret at the retirement of the chief who has led us so long. (Cheers.) I have always felt, and I feel now, an admiration not only for the towering intellect—the adjective is none too strong—(cheers)—but for the character of Mr. Balfour, which it is impossible for me to exaggerate. (Cheers.) No other words were ever said of any man than the words used the other day by Sir Oliver Lodge about him. "Every man," he said, "could lead a party, but not everyone could take the wide survey of human knowledge, or bring to profound questions the trained intelligence, the critical acumen, and the comprehensive grasp of Mr. Balfour." I see what has been suggested in the Radical Press that the messages sent to Mr. Balfour by the Unionist members, though sufficiently cordial contained no invitation to return. Let there be no misunderstanding. The leaders of the parties know with absolute certainty that he would not reconsider his decision, and that was the reason, and the sole reason, why we did not urge our old leader to return to his old position.

I see, also, that the kindly suggestion has been made that when Mr. Balfour returns to the House of Commons and asserts his old supremacy over the assembly which he has dominated so long, it will be awkward for me. (Loud laughter.) Do not imagine that such a thought ever entered my mind. Whatever my weaknesses, jealousy is not one of them—(cheers)—and jealousy on my part towards Mr. Balfour would be ridiculous. There is no one who rejoices more than I in the thought that in the coming struggle for the good of our country we shall have at our head the man who led us to victory in the last fight, and who will, I believe, play no small part in securing the victory which we shall again be ours.

### Self-Sacrificing Loyalty.

Besides Mr. Balfour, I should like to say I have seen Lord Lansdowne, the leader of the party in the House of Lords, and I can assure you that no one will work with him more heartily or more willingly for the success of the cause for which we are responsible than I shall in the future. (Cheers.) I am sure your attention has been called to this before, but I feel bound to call your attention to it again. In the whole inner history of the Conservative party, or, indeed, of any party, there is nothing which we have more reason to feel proud of than the self-



MR. ANDREW BONAR LAW

Chamberlain—(cheers)—who, as you know, from the letter which you have just heard, would have been with us tonight had he not been fighting our battles elsewhere—and of Mr. Walter Long—(loud cheers)—who is beside me now. As soon as the proposed solution of the leadership was mentioned to me, I at once saw both these gentlemen. They received me with a generosity which I shall never forget. I should never have undertaken the duties of my new position if I had not known, as I do know, that they had made the proposal, not only in the interest of the party, but with a feeling of goodwill and personal friendship towards myself—(cheers)—personal friendship which I am sure will last as long as we live. I have been received in the same way by all colleagues on the front bench. I cannot mention them all, but I should like to say that from no one have I received a more wholehearted promise of support than from Sir Edward Carson, and from no one do I value it more.

### No Change of Programme.

I said at the outset I needed your indulgence. In any case, under the circumstances in which we are met here tonight, I could not be expected to cover the whole field, or even any large part of the field of current political controversy. But I say more than that. If anyone supposes that because there has been a change in the leader in the House of Commons there is going to be a new programme he will be disappointed. (Cheers.) I do not believe in elaborate, still less in varying programmes. Our opponents have tried it during their period of opposition. They had a new programme for every session. (Laughter.) It was not very successful. Do not let us imitate them. (Cheers.)

If I can be of any service to the party it will be simply by urging that party to move straight forward, without haste, but without rest, to the goal which lies before it. (Cheers.) That goal is, in the first place, to get rid of the present Government—(cheers)—which, from the beginning, has been a danger to our country, and which is now tearing down the destructive path with ever increasing rapidity. When this is accomplished it will be our duty to face the new problems which the new conditions and a new age have brought us by new, but by conservative, methods. (Cheers.) No Government of which I or my colleagues on this platform are members will ever be a Government purely of reaction. (Cheers.)

It is quite possible, I think it is possible, that without any merits or demerits on our part, if we give the Government a little more rope, we may step into their shoes. In such circumstances there would be a temptation to form a Government simply of resistance. But what would be the result? It would be like building up a dam against a flood. Sooner or later that dam would burst, and the flood would burst with irresistible force, carrying ruin and destruction through the land. It was once said by Burke that a dis-

position to preserve and an ability to improve taken together would be his standard of a statesman. If our countrymen entrust us with power, it is in the spirit of those words that we should undertake that task.

### Nationalist Demonstration.

The first question to which I shall turn is the question of Home Rule, with which is connected the Constitutional question—for in so far as the present Government have dealt with the Constitutional question, they have dealt with it simply as a move in the Home Rule game. (Cheers.) The keynote of the policy of the present Government, since the January election of a year ago, has been merely that they are dependent upon, but that they are absolutely dominated by, a small faction in the House of Commons—a faction which, small as it is, is far larger than it ought to be. (Cheers.) It is due to that domination that the Insurance Bill, which affects the vital interests of almost every man woman and child in this country, is passing mechanically through the House of Commons, without discussion, without the possibility of those whose interests are affected, having the opportunity of their objections being even considered. (Hear, hear.)

The vital interests, the most direct and personal interests, of the whole population of these islands is being sacrificed today. And why? In order to clear the line to make room for Home Rule in the spring. (Cries of "Oh!" and "Shame!") It is also due to the necessity under which the Government feel of retaining the Irish vote at all costs—it is due to that, and in my belief to that alone, that the Conference last year was not carried to a successful issue. (Cheers.)

Now it may be said—it has been said to me in the House of Commons—"You are pretty Unionists to discriminate between members of the House because they come from different parts of the United Kingdom." That sounds plausible, but its plausibility disappears the moment you examine it. If Irish members judged British questions and voted on British questions on their merits, they would have as much right as anyone else to let their influence be felt on British questions. They do nothing of the kind; they do not pretend to do anything of the kind. (Hear, hear.) I myself heard the leader of the Nationalist Party say practically this—I have his exact words in my pocket if anybody wants to see them—that neither he nor his friends knew anything, or cared anything, about British political questions. Well, that is all very well for them, but what about us? (Cheers.) If they know nothing and care nothing about British politics, then it is utterly intolerable that they should dominate British politics.

### Tariff Reform.

I should like to speak to you now on the social condition of the people of this country, with especial reference to Tariff Reform. Each kind of government had its own kind of friends in the old days of despotic rule.

One of the greatest enemies of the people was the king's friend, who preyed on the weaknesses of the Sovereign for his own advancement. Under the new conditions, the same evil exists in a new form. The King's flatterers have become the flatterers of the mob, for, under democratic institutions, in every country and in every age, the greatest enemy of the democracy has always been the demagogue.

How easy it is to make eloquent, or at least, rhetorical speeches, based on the glaring anomalies, the glaring contrasts, between the luxuries of the rich and the hardships of the poor. How easy it is, and how successfully it has been done, to represent the political conflict in which we have recently been engaged as a struggle between peers and people. How easy it is to represent us as a party of privilege and of class, as a party of the rich. We are not the party of privilege. It is our aim, as it was the aim of Disraeli throughout his long life—(cheers)—to be the party not of a class, but the party of the nation.

### Causes of Labor Unrest.

We realize as strongly as any man, that the greatness of a nation does not depend upon the number but upon the character of its people. (Cheers.) And we know that character cannot be formed except under good social conditions. There is a great feeling of labor unrest, as the chairman has reminded us. It is not confined to this country; it is to be found elsewhere. And to whatever extent it is widespread it means simply this—that the working classes think they are entitled to have, and want to try to obtain, a larger share of the profits of industry.

Well, in this country there are two special causes which have accentuated that feeling. One of these is the Budget campaign of two years ago. (Hear, hear.) That campaign stirred every constituency, almost every family, in the kingdom, and it undoubtedly induced the poor to believe that the passing of the Budget would be for them the beginning of the golden era. The Budget passed, and the outbreak of last August—an outbreak of a kind absolutely unprecedented in this country—is, in my belief, simply ripened fruit of the seed sown during the Budget campaign. (Cheers.) That is one cause.

But there is another. During the last ten years there has been a considerable increase in the total wealth of the country, but in that period the condition of the working classes has not improved. It has actually deteriorated. From information supplied to us by the Board of Trade we know that during that period the cost of living has gone up almost 20 per cent, and wages have remained stationary. That is a cause and sufficient explanation of a great deal of discontent. Now, I said a minute ago that the working classes were entitled to more. I go further and I say that in my belief all classes, including employers, would like the working classes to have as large a share of the industries as is compatible with the success of those industries.

### Government Methods.

Now how is that result to be obtained? There is one method, the method employed by the Government. It is to take away from the rich in taxes and hand it to the poor in doles. (Laughter.) That is a very simple way. (Laughter.) But it has its dangers. If you attack capital suddenly and unexpectedly it is apt to fly beyond your reach. The Prime Minister, whose economical views are at least original—(laughter)—has told us that the more capital flies from this country to be invested abroad the better for it. Well, if he is right, we never have had benefactors like the present Government. During the short time they have been in office the amount of capital that has gone abroad for investment, as shown even in the very imperfect returns of the Inland Revenue Commissioners, is greater, taking the average of five year periods than in the twenty years before they came into office. That is one fact, and there is another. We have been passing through what, so far as statistics can guide us, is a period of good trade, and in spite of the good trade there has been a steady and enormous emigration from our shores. Do you think there is any connection between these two facts? I think there is.

### Injuring the Capitalist.

If the men at the head of the Government speak of those who have accumulated wealth as if they were outcasts, to be treated as if they were beasts of prey, to be shot at sight, you will, indeed, injure the capitalist, but you will injure far more vitally the man whose only capital is his skill and his industry—(cheers)—and who, in order to invest that capital, requires not merely the wealth of the capitalist but the energy in directing industry which has created that wealth. That is one method; there is another. In my belief, the greatest of all social reforms would be to raise the standard of wages throughout this country, for in that way you would not so much help the working classes directly as put them in a position to help themselves. (Cheers.) For many years now I have advocated a change in our fiscal system, but in advocating that change however mistaken I may have been—(cries of "No, no")—I have never, and I hope I never shall, make any claim in which I do not in my heart believe.

We do not pretend that a change in our fiscal system would cure all the evils, but we

do contend that such a change would do much to help what is the greatest of all our social evils—chronic unemployment. (Cheers.) In making this claim we have something at least to justify it—the rise in the cost of living without any corresponding rise in wages, which is found in this country and not elsewhere. In Germany, for instance, there has been a rise perhaps as great, certainly not greater, but as we know, from the authoritative report of our own Consul to this Government, there has been a rise in wages which more than compensates for the increased cost of living. I do believe Tariff Reform would tend to raise the level of wages; but I am sure of this, that without some change in our fiscal system a general rise in the level of wages is absolutely impossible. (Hear, hear.) In proof of this take the Insurance Bill. That Bill, whatever its merits—and I hope it has something greater than fourpence for ninepence—(loud laughter)—whatever the merits of the Bill, it adds a new burden to the industry of this country.

### Prince Bismarck.

It was Prince Bismarck who passed the insurance scheme for Germany, and it was Prince Bismarck who gave to the German workman security in the German market, and it was that change in the German fiscal system, and not the insurance scheme, which came first. He first stopped the leak which was sinking the ship, and afterwards it was easy to improve her sailing qualities. (Cheers.) We must do the same. (Cheers.) If we do not then most certainly bills introduced with the best intentions, perhaps, for helping the poor, for helping unemployment, will inevitably turn out to be bills to increase the number of the poor and to create unemployment. (Cheers.)

The last subject on which I should like to speak to you tonight is the general election which has just taken place in Canada. (Cheers.) That election was described by Mr. Balfour as the great event of the year in the history of the British Empire. It may prove to be, and I believe it will prove to be a landmark in the history of the world. While the result was in suspense I never said a word in criticism of Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Government. To have done so would have been the height of folly, for however much the question concerned us it concerned the Canadians more, and it was for them and not for us to decide.

It would have been not only the height of folly, it would have been the height of impertinence, for we must never forget that it was the Government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier which gave to the work of our people at home preference on the Canadian market. We are grateful to him for that, but we are grateful to him again for the example which was set by him has been followed by every one of the self-governing Dominions. Let us remember also that while the British Government defended that treaty on the ground that it would destroy preference, Sir Wilfrid Laurier defended it because it would not, in his belief, destroy preference.

### Canada's Decision

I differ from him, but that difference does not weaken my respect for him, and has not lessened my admiration for his great intellect and eloquence, but now the Canadian people have decided we have a right to rejoice in their decision. If you wish to understand what these elections really mean you must not look at what Radical speakers or Radical newspapers say about it. Look at what they said about it when they thought the result was going to be different. We were told then that this treaty was a great step towards Free Trade. If that were true, then its rejection is not a step, it is a leap backward from what they call Free Trade. We were told it was the deathblow—not the first by many—(laughter)—to the cause of preference. If that were true then the rejection of the treaty gives new life to the cause of preference. (Cheers.)

We were told that the treaty was just another proof that trade must be governed by natural laws and controlled by natural forces. That is true, but the rejection of the treaty proves what our opponents always forget—that the greatest of all natural forces is human character and sentiment. (Cheers.) The real meaning of the rejection of that treaty was simply this: The Canadian people believed—and I agree with them—that President Taft was right when he said that it was a case of now or never; because they believed that the election would decide, and perhaps finally decide, whether Canada was to continue as a great autonomous nation, more and more closely bound to the British Empire, or whether she was to become more closely united, socially and economically, and ultimately politically, with the great nation lying to the south.

### The Mother Country's Turn.

A more ignorant claim was never made. For many years, on every opportunity, the Colonial Prime Minister of every self-governing Colony has urged upon the Mother Country the policy of reciprocal preference—max each part of the Empire should give to every other part different and better terms than are given to the rest of the world, and the Canadian election is merely an emphatic reminder to us that this is still the policy of the self-governing Dominions. (Cheers.)

"Mrs. Jollaby treats her husband like a dog." "Lucky fellow, I wish my wife would treat me as she treats her dog."