On Parliament Hill

By a Member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery

Ottawa May 19th, 1924.—If any peculiar make-up of six constituency thing more were needed to emphasize the Lee Constituency sentiment in respect to Canada's reception of the Budget, it was proferred on Friday last, when Parliament, after a full month's debate, adopted, by a majority of 112 the fiscal proposals of the acting Finance Minister, Hon. J. A. Robb.

The vote on the budget was significant in more ways than one. It was, perhaps, the largest ever given to a Budget in Canadian history. It confirmed what had been, from the date the budget was tabled, the opinion of all competent observers, namely that the moderation of Parliament would be definite and overwhelming. It proved beyond shadow of doubt that the House of Commons representing all sections and all classes of the Dominion reflected with fidelity the sober unbiased opinion of the country in respect to the reductions in living and production costs, and in respect to lowered federal expenditures and lowered federal taxes. Last, but not least, it drew a definite line of demarcation, within the Liberal group in the House, between the few Liberals who stand for a straight protective tariff and the great majority of their colleagues, to whom a tariff is an instrument for collecting revenues rather than a fortress of special privilege. Liberal "holtters" had been expected, in view of the speeches of several on the government benches, but in very small measure. Four Liberals stood for a reversal toward the protective policy—Messrs. Marler, McCrea and Raymond—as did one lone Progressive, Elliott, of South Waterloo. In each case, the attitude of the members was determined in a large part by the peculiar make-up of his constituency, the whole five parliamentarians being dependent for support upon the votes of highly industrialized urban or semi-urban areas.

Liberal Party House-Cleaning

Hon. T. A. Crerar pointed out that the agitation which has been worked up over the Budget in eastern Canada was very much like that created over reciprocity in 1911. Previous to that election, it may be recalled, there was a cleaning-out process in the Liberal party which resulted in a good many so-called Liberals allying themselves permanently with the Conservatives, where they undoubtedly belonged. It was to the advantage of the Liberal Party, and possibly of the country as a whole, that the same process is going on today. A certain wing of the Liberal party which has been decidedly protectionist in sentiment has been attempting to create a back-fire to the Budget. Mr. Marler, spoke and voted against it in the House; Sir Lomer Gouin, who was paired, withdrew his pair and while not appearing to vote himself, released the Conservative with whom he was paired, Mr. Walter Mitchell resigned his seat on the day the Budget vote was taken.

There is neither criticism nor objection in the Liberal party in the House to the action of these gentlemen. Now that they know the destination of the Liberal ship, and have decided that they are booked for some other port, it is eminently fitting that they should take their baggage and go ashore. That they do not represent the sentiment of Quebec is shown by this fact that there were only three defections among the sixty-five members from that province; and it is already very plain that the support which the Budget will win for the Liberal party vastly exceeds th small losses it has created. It is only too apparent that the few high protectionists within the party have been a drag upon it for the past two or three years, and their continuance within it would have been injurious to both the party and themselves.

The Premier at His Best

Members and newspapermen who are above prejudice in the matter, and who are competent by years of experience to express an opinion, were unanimous in declaring that the speech of Right Hon. MacKenzie King, on the evening of division, was the finest forensic effort of his life, thus far. Warmed up by the flashing sword-play of the Leader of the Opposition, feeling the effect of blood drawn by the taunts of the Conservative group, cheered by the thunderous applause of his own followers, Mr. King, aggressive, bold and eloquent, excelled anything he had done before, at least within the walls of Parliament and on his conclusion won for himself an ovation that felt an echo even in the crowded galleries of the Chamber.

A Tariff Text-Book

The Prime Minister had evidently put much study upon his review of the whole financial situation and the tariff issue which has been brought so sharply into relief by the present Budget proposals. The Premier's presentation of the financial betterments during the past two years was backed up by an illuminating mass of authoritative figures. His convincing reply to the efforts of the opposition to belittle the improvement in finance was the statement that the surplus of thirty-five million dollars in revenues during the past year over all expenditures was actually in the treasury in cash, and the result had been achieved, as Mr. King showed, through economies to upwards of sixty million dollars on controllable expenditures alone.

His review of the tariff issue constitutes a comprehensive and authoritative textbook of the whole tariff record of the Liberal Party covering the past three decades, a record which Mr. King showed, had been consistent and uniform throughout, based on one sure fundamental principle and precedes in power and out of power by every Liberal leader and reducing costs of the implements of production in the industries based on the natural resources of the Dominion. That is our policy today proceeding step by step towards the goal of greater freedom in matters of trade, never imposing a duty for protection's sake but always acting on the principle or the basis of a tariff for revenue and revenue only. "In a word, Mr. Speaker, we believe that in this Budget we have been able in a very large measure to implement the promises, the pledges and the professions which we made to the electorate in the general election of 1921. We believe that we have established a policy that is entitled to be called a real national policy, because it is so framed as to serve not only one class but all classes as well as all interests, manufacturing, to see that policy given a trial. We believe that if it is given a trial this country will witness a forward progressive movement such as it has not known for many years, and when the time does come that we appeal to the people again for their support, they will express their confidence in a government which has lived up to its convictions carried out the promises which it made to the electorate, and conducted the nation's affairs with the interests of the people ever at heart.'

The Issue in a Nutshell

The 'nigh-lights of the speeches of both the leader of the Opposition and of the Leader of the Government have already been reflected in the press and need not be reviewed here. Hon. T. A. Crerar's succinct summing of the main issue gives the case in a nutshell:—"If there is any meaning in the words of my right honourable friend (Mr. Meighen) they mean that if he is returned to power and the party he leads resumes the reins of office there is no further chances of reductions in the tariff but there is a certainty that the tariff will go up. But if the Government's policy, as elaborated by the Prime Minister, means anything it means that the fiscal policy of this country is to be shaped upon the principle of developing the great natural wealth of this Dominion."

THINKING ABOUT THE IRISH BOUNDARY DISPUTE!

Sir Robert Laird Borden, former Premier of Canada, snapped in as unconventional attitude in London, Ontario, a few days ago. He has been offered the position of Chairman of the Irish Boundary Commission but has not yet accepted.

AMBITIOUS PLANS BY THE MARITIMES

Among Aims and Object of New Association is to Bring Back People

St. John, N. B., May 17—Having endorsed by words the aims and objects of the Maritime Development Association as outlined by Colonel Robert Innes, about a dozen members of the Board of Trade, including some of the more prominent business men of city signed the application for incorporation at a meeting here yesterday.

The object of the association, it was explained, was to develop the Maritime Provinces through the coordinated efforts of the three parliaments. The Maritime members of the federal Government, the Canadian National Railways, and the business men of the Provinces. The first work of the association would be to make a survey of the natural resources of the provinces so that when the task of selling them was begun, it would be clear what there was to sell and what should not be sold.

The association plans colonization work and in this respect will try to bring back Maritime people who have migrated to the west and to the United States.

TRIRD FOREST RESERVE AREA COVERS GASPE

By an additional order-in-council signed this morning a third forestry reserve has been created by the Provincial Government. It is located in the counties of Gaspe and Bonaventure and extends over 2,500 square miles.

That reserve had been already created in 1905 as a temporary one as a national park.

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