

The Herald

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At The Federal Capital

The proceedings in the House of Commons on Monday, March 7th, were somewhat out of the ordinary. After the usual routine, Sir Thomas White on behalf of the government side of the House rose and stated that since the House had last met, one of its members had been called away by death. Captain Joseph Reid, of Prince, P. E. I. who had died on Sunday evening. The Acting Prime Minister paid a tribute of respect to the memory of the departed member. He was followed by Mr. D. D. McKenzie, leader of the opposition, who thanked the leader of the government for the kindly words he had spoken regarding the departed member, and on behalf of the opposition members concurred in what the acting prime minister had said. It may be noted that this is the third death in the ranks of members of parliament since the opening of the present session, and that all three deaths were quite sudden. The first was that of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, then Senator Taylor, and now Captain Reid. In each case, the illness had lasted only a couple of days.

The balance of the afternoon sitting, as well as the evening was occupied discussing a matter somewhat out of the usual routine of parliamentary proceedings, namely, the resolution proposed by General Sir Sam Hughes, asking for a parliamentary committee to investigate the question of the raid on the Jesuit Novitiate at Guelph, Ont. during last June. Notice of Sir Sam's resolution had been on the order paper for a considerable time, and it was not unreasonable to anticipate there might be some Parliamentary pyrotechnics when the discussion would take place. To Sir Sam's credit it must be said that his speech in introducing the resolution was quite moderate, no great exception could be taken to it, but it could plainly be seen that there was a disposition of eagerness among those who never balk at an opportunity for adding a little fuel to parliamentary fire. Of course it is always true that where there is considerable smoke there is necessarily a little flame, but in this case the discussion passed off without any very serious excitement. This, perhaps, is not so much due to any disposition for peace and harmony on the part of some members who seem to have a penchant for anything that will create an undesirable condition of affairs in the house. The credit of a successful and orderly termination of the debate must be given to the members of the government.

On the conclusion of Sir Sam's speech, the Hon. S. C. Mewburn, Minister of Militia and Defence immediately rose, and laid before the house his view of the matter. To General Mewburn's everlasting credit, it must be said that he discharged his part of the programme in a most exemplary manner. He briefly detailed the military regulations bearing upon a case of this kind, and stated to the House the facts relative to the visit of Captain McAnlay to the Jesuit Novitiate on the date in question, at an unseasonable hour of the night. He read to the House the dignified letter of protest received by himself from

the reverend rector of the institutions, and his own (the General's) apology for the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the affair. General Mewburn said he felt at the time that this apology was due from him, and he had not changed his mind. He now stood by what he then did and said and wrote. He took a dignified stand and certainly impressed all unbiased members of the House most favorably by his admirable conduct in the debate.

Hon. Mr. Meighen acting Minister of Justice then took up the case on behalf of the Minister of Justice, in the absence of Hon. Mr. Doherty. Mr. Meighen measured and dignified terms detailed to the House the part taken in this affair by the Minister of Justice and his Department. He went on to say that the Minister acted admirably, in accordance with the regulations between the departments of Militia and Justice. To use his own words, he said that the Hon. Mr. Doherty had done in this case "only what became a Minister of the Crown, and a gentleman." He read to the House a cablegram he had received from the Minister of Justice, stating he would be most pleased with any action that his colleagues might take to investigate this case, if their judgment, it would be in the public interest. Hon. Mr. Meighen went on then to detail the opinions that had been given by the Deputy Minister of Justice had declared in a written opinion that there was not one man in the Novitiate liable to military service. Mr. Meighen next described the action taken by the ministerial association of Guelph and said that no specific charges had been presented, but the government are quite anxious to prove the matter and desirous in the public interest, that no possible opportunity hereafter may be available for bringing it before the public again. He therefore declared that in view of all the circumstances and for the public good everything should be cleared up. The government he said had decided to appoint a Royal commission to probe the matter to the bottom. In consequence of this determination of the government, he thought that the mover of the resolution would withdraw it from the House. The determination of the Government thus expressed by the Acting Minister of Justice took the wind out of the sails of those who looked forward to the end of the debate, it was a tame affair, the occupation of the extremists for the time being was gone. Several others spoke on the resolution during the afternoon and evening sittings of the House, and at the close of the debate, Sir Thomas White rose and said that he had been requested by Sir Sam Hughes, who had been obliged to leave the city, to withdraw the resolution. Thus ended in normal fashion what no doubt a great many had anticipated with bated breath.

The greater part of the afternoon and evening sittings of the House on Tuesday was devoted to supply. The House went into committee of supply after routine proceedings, and continued almost uninterruptedly until late in the evening. In the afternoon some Public works appropriations were considered, and the Minister, Hon. M. Carvell, was subjected to considerable hot shot, which came from both sides of the House. He scarcely preserved the equanimity that is generally expected from a minister under fire. He lost his temper to a considerable extent, and rather showed a disposition for fight. This condition of affairs was brought about by criticisms of his administration presented by Mr. Butts, member for Cape Breton. The fight was pretty lively up to six o'clock, when recess was taken. In the

evening, estimates for the Trade and Commerce Department under consideration in committee. They pertained mostly to steamship subsidies. Very considerable progress was made before the House adjourned at eleven o'clock.

Sir Sam Hughes certainly possesses the faculty of precipitating lively scenes in the House of Commons, while he himself does not unduly participate in the affair. For the second time during the week he was the cause of a hot debate in the House on Wednesday. It was brought about by his motion, for the adoption of a resolution, which he had some time previously placed on the order paper. The resolution in itself looked quite innocent and possibly would have passed over without any unusual scene, had it not been for a few hot spirits who took advantage of the occasion to engage in philippics of a very pronounced character. The resolution asked for a uniform system of administering the law with regard to defaulters, deserters, slackers or any of those who had in any way failed to do their duty under the Military Service Act. The General introduced his motion in a few words. He was followed by the Solicitor General, the Minister of Militia and the Minister of Justice, who explained the law and its manner of administration in the different province of the Dominion. Hon. Mr. Meighen pointed out that while it was the duty of the Justice Department to see that correct laws found their way on to the statute books, the administration of the laws was in the hands of the officials of indifferent provincial governments. Mr. Meighen's contribution to the debate was, as is usual in his case, of a serious and didactic character. Everything up to this point went along quite smoothly. The leader of the opposition spoke briefly. He was followed by Dr. Clark, who made, as he always does, a most interesting and entertaining speech. It was then thought that possibly the motion would pass without further discussion, but at this point a cannon exploded. It was none other than Lucien Cannon, member for Dorchester, Quebec. "Dear Lucien" hurled invectives across the floor in the fiercest of philippics. He arraigned the members of the government and all members of the government and all members of the Union party. The conduct of the government in the war and during the election campaign was all held up to execration by the member for Dorchester.

Sir Thomas White then moved the House into committee on a resolution for the expenditure of \$350,000,000 for the defence and security of Canada; the conduct of naval and military operations in or beyond Canada and the demobilization of the Canadian forces, as well as the promotion of trade and industry, transportation facilities, and several other matters of public importance, connected with or consequent upon the war period and the period of reconstruction. Sir Thomas explained at length the different features of this very large anticipated appropriation. It was for war purposes, to meet some of the expenditures already called for, and provide for what would be necessary in this connection during the present fiscal year. He went on to lay before the House the necessity that existed for the government anticipating an expansion of export trade, to take the place of trade and business that in this direction had been destroyed or very largely minimized by the war, if nothing was done now to anticipate trade of this kind and to go out and seek such trade, matters would come to a stand still and in consequence, the energies and the enterprises of the country would be paralyzed, and it would only be a very short time until we would be face to face with chaos in our business relations. Allied countries engaged in the war had suffered in the particulars to which he referred, but he was happy to say that none of them had come out of the struggle in as good a position as Canada except the United States, and he was not sure that he should even make that exception. This was encouraging, and now was the time to enter with an optimistic spirit into the promotion expansion and development our export trade. This could not be done without a large expenditure of money, but money expended for this development would come back with interest in a few years when, after the conclusion of peace normal conditions would come about. The object was, in the present and uncertain period

to enter energetically and enthusiastically and optimistically into the encouragement and development of these enterprises, so that when normal conditions would eventually in a few years, we would be on a basis equally stable and progressive as that which existed at the beginning of the war.

During the evening sitting of the House nearly all the time was occupied in discussing the committee stage of the federal health bill. Some amendments to clauses, here and there, were incorporated, and shortly after ten o'clock the bill was reported for third reading. The House then adjourned.

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Thursday's proceedings in the House were in decided contrast to the lively scenes of Wednesday. After routine proceedings Sir Thomas White, Acting Prime Minister, paid a feeling tribute to the memory of Dr. Thomas Flit, late Clerk of the House of Commons, who had died at his home at Yarmouth, N. S. a day or two before. The Acting Prime Minister briefly passed in review the life and labours of the late incumbent of the clerk's office, and showed the great qualities of mind and administration possessed by the deceased. He pointed out that his long years, both as a member of the House, and subsequently as clerk, for about thirteen years, afforded him rare opportunities for the display of his talents. He said Dr. Flit was a rare authority on Parliamentary procedure, and had edited several editions of Bournet's great work in this connection. Mr. McKenzie, leader of the opposition, followed and thanked Sir Thomas for his tribute to the departed clerk, and added his own mead of praise.

Mr. J. J. Johnston was the next speaker. It being within a few minutes of six he made some references to the speeches of Hon. Mr. McEwen and Hon. Mr. Dalton and moved the adjournment of the debate.

The House resumed at 8:20. Mr. Johnston took up the discussion on the draft address. He said that during the past year no great public works had been undertaken by the government, although they had a revenue of \$100,000 more than the Liberals and consequently there should be a big surplus.

After paying tribute to the memory of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Capt. Joseph Reid and Mr. Howett went on to say that the Conservative platform had not been carried out. It promised that the entire debt of the province would be discharged. Though the subsidy has been increased \$100,000 and over \$30,000 annually has been received for agriculture the debt of the province has not been discharged.

Referring to the Dominion grant for permanent highways he said that this province is in a peculiar position as regards its roads and soil; that there is not the necessary material here for permanent road building. He did not think that the province should be controlled in the expenditure of money in the same way as the other provinces where there are large arteries leading from ocean to ocean.

Mr. Johnson also touched on the question of our claims at Ottawa, the ending of the war, and the rehabilitation of our returned soldiers.

He commended the Government for the interest it was tak-

ing in this matter and said it would always find the opposition ready to join hands in anything that could be done to settle our soldiers in this Province.

Mr. Johnston concluded by complimenting the Premier on the tact ability and dignity with which he has conducted the affairs of his important office. Mr. J. A. Dewar spoke next. He thought the session should not be called so late. He paid eloquent tribute to late Sergeant-at-arms, Mr. Dugald Currie, Mr. Howett, Capt. Joseph Reid and Sir Wilfrid Laurier. He then made some explanations in reference to the recent political convention in the Cardigan district claiming that the nomination made was the result of a hotbed of intrigue, but that he would be elected next time with a larger vote.

He spoke eloquently on the war and the heroism of the Canadians. He spoke of the transportation and claimed that when standardization of our railways was complete prosperity of the province would be greater than ever.

Mr. A. E. McLean followed, with a lengthy address in which he stated that the views of the last speaker were largely the same as his own. He referred to the land settlement scheme education, the grant for roads, etc., concluding with a strong eulogy of the late Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

The Legislature

Wednesday April 9. p. m.

Hon. Charles Dalton eulogized the soldiers from this province who had left their homes to fight for freedom and democracy. These men had done their duty nobly many of them had laid down their lives, and for their dependants and for those who returned we could not do enough. He hoped that many returned soldiers would take up agriculture in this province.

The present government had increased the teachers' salaries but further increase is necessary. He claimed that this government had provided better roads than their predecessors. The Car Ferry for which the Conservative party deserves credit had revolutionized transportation in this province and added to our wealth, many times the provincial debt.

He believed in the roads of the province being still further improved and thought the assistance offered from Ottawa should be taken advantage of. Practically all that had been done by the government to help the fishermen had been done by the present government.

Scientists claim that the disease that has invaded some of our oyster beds is but a temporary thing and would pass away. Under the regulations made by the government the industry would soon become profitable and a source of much wealth. The Government deserved much credit for having mud fertilizer supplied to farmers at cost of transportation only, still greater supplies would be distributed in future.

He was pleased to see that the opposition no longer criticized the Dalton Sanatorium. That policy should be adopted in other matters. Honorable members should not even in opposition make statements that they could not substantiate, if it should happen as it is not likely in this case, that they would succeed in receiving the reins of Government.

Mr. J. J. Johnston was the next speaker. It being within a few minutes of six he made some references to the speeches of Hon. Mr. McEwen and Hon. Mr. Dalton and moved the adjournment of the debate.

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