

Sidelights on Parliament

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lenced colleague that it would not be wise or judicious for a new member to incur the displeasure of the party leaders by making rash declarations. Then the professional lobbyist gets hold of him—one of those urbane and pleasant gentlemen who have a room in the parliament buildings where they keep a choice assortment of hard and soft drinks with which to enforce their arguments—and after a while, being unable to answer the arguments that are brought before him he usually gives up the fight, attends to his daily routine of duties, carefully avoids saying anything in the house that one of his leaders has not already said, and votes with his party every time the division bell rings to call him from the smoking room.

Favors to C. P. R.

The C. P. R. already has about all the favors which the Canadian government ever had the power to bestow, and consequently the representatives of that road seldom appear upon the scene at Ottawa except to prevent the passage of bills which would embarrass the company and make it less easy for them to collect their large profits. The Canadian Northern, being a younger road, however, is constantly needing something from the government, and almost invariably gets it. Sir William Mackenzie and Sir Donald Daniel Mann, the president and vice-president of the road, are both frequently in Ottawa interviewing members of the government with reference to their schemes, and Sir William maintains a suite of apartments for his own use in one of the fashionable blocks in Ottawa. The heads of the road do not, of course, deal with the ordinary common members; they are handled by the secretary of the company, affectionately known as "Billy" Moore, who frequently spends a couple of hundred dollars at one crack in buying champagne for members in the parliamentary restaurant. A friend of Mr. Moore stated recently that that gentleman was allowed \$100,000 a year for "expenses." In addition to being a generous buyer of champagne, Mr. Moore is the proprietor of The Canadian Courier, which may possibly account for some of the opinions expressed in that magazine. A number of the leading manufacturing concerns have representatives in the parliament in their own presidents and managing directors.

F. T. Frost, head of the Frost and Wood Co., and L. Melvin Jones, president of the Massey-Harris Co. and a director of the Verity Plow Co. and Bain Waggon Co., are in the senate, and in the house of commons to mention only a few, are John Stanfield, of Stanfield's underwear; Wm. Hart, president of the Kingston locomotive works; and Lloyd Harris, of Brantford, who is president or director of eight different manufacturing companies.

Influence Depends on Calibre

The influence which a member of parliament can exert in the formation of the policy of the government or of the opposition, depends, to a very great extent, upon the calibre of the man himself, and also upon his persistence in pressing his views upon the leaders of the party and his ability to get other members to back him up. As a matter of fact, no question of any importance is ever decided either in the house of commons or in the senate, the manner in which it will be settled is always cut and dried before the debate begins. The policy of the two parties is first discussed in caucus, a private meeting of the members on that side of the house, where everyone may express his own views, and where, it is said, there is often the greatest disagreement. After this, the cabinet ministers talk the matter over among themselves at a meeting of the privy council, and there the policy of the government is decided upon. It may be in accord with the views of the majority of the members of the party or it may not, but whatever the cabinet says goes, and no member on the government side may oppose it on pain of being expelled from the party. Canada is governed by the cabinet, consisting at the present time of thirteen men, and government members who disagree with the policy decided upon by the cabinet must, under these circumstances, either swallow their own convictions or leave their party and join the opposition. Thus it will be seen that the average rank and file member of parliament in reality has a very small voice, indeed, in the affairs of the country, even be he on the government side. If he happens to be a member of the opposition he has even less influence, for though he may say what he likes in the house his best arguments will have no weight with the government and will not deter any government supporter from voting with his party. The opposition, though it can never beat the government on a vote, nevertheless has considerable power and can defeat almost any bill if it really wishes to do so. This power, however, is usually reserved for occasions when party advantage is at stake. When the Aylesworth bill was before the house, for instance, and the liberals wanted to make a new voters' list for use in Manitoba in the last general election, the conservatives determined that it should not pass. They talked, and talked and talked. Then they moved an amendment and talked some more, and they kept this up day after day and week after week until at last the government backed down and withdrew the bill.

Few Independent Members

There are at present in the house of commons but four members who declare themselves to be independent of the two big parties, viz., W. F. Maclean, of York South, Toronto; J. Russell, of Toronto East; A. Verville, Maisonneuve, the labor member; and Arthur Gilbert, the newly elected nationalist member for Drummond and Arthabaska. The liberal party has 131 members in the house, and the conservatives number 86. Classified by occupations, the legal profession heads the list with 81 members; there are 28 merchants and retired merchants, 11 lumbermen, 7 journalists, 4 army officers, 4 wholesalers, 4 professional politicians, 3 company directors, 3 lecturers and writers on agricultural subjects, 2 millers, 2 general agents, a plumber, a miners' agent, a shipbuilder and shipowner, a financier, a veterinary surgeon, a real estate agent, a ranner, a surveyor, a manufacturers' agent, a contractor, a stockbroker, an educationalist, and a druggist. Many of the members have more than one business, and in addition to the eighteen whose chief occupation is farming or ranching, there are twelve members of the house of commons who while following some other profession, own farms and are more or less actively engaged in their supervision.

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