

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SUBJECT

D 16502

NAME AND DATE OF NEWSPAPER

Toronto Mail and Empire, April 7, 1930.

THE PREMIER CANNOT SHOCK HIS PARTY ORGAN.

"Premier King's statement to the effect that he would not give a five-cent piece to any Tory Government to aid the unemployment situation was apparently a by-product of the attempt of the Conservative Opposition to make political capital out of the issue. It would be inexcusable on any other ground." Thus The Globe chides its party leader, who has been taking it to his bosom of late. He will surely be hurt to learn that the organ thinks that his statement came within an ace of being inexcusable. Had not The Globe satisfied itself that he was goaded into the statement by the bad Conservative Opposition, it might have gone the length of wounding him with the comment that his statement was not quite judicious. Readers of The Globe will be inclined to form the same opinion of it as they do of the premier's brutal remark. The exclamation "Shame!" which burst from many members and for a moment checked the speech of the premier is not unlikely to express the feeling that will be roused in many Globe readers by the mean attempt to excuse the premier's outrageous utterance.

Will The Globe explain to its readers what it means by its blaming of the Conservative Opposition for an attempt to make capital out of the unemployment issue? The resolution that was being discussed was moved by Mr. Heaps, the Labor representative of North Winnipeg. It was as follows: "That in the opinion of this House, the Government should take immediate action to deal with the question of unemployment." It did not originate with the Opposition. The member of the House who made the strongest speech in support of it, Mr. Woodsworth, is a member of the Independent Labor party. Neither of these men belongs to the Conservative Opposition. In his speech Mr. Woodsworth said he had read the Hansard only recently, "and, for the life of me, I cannot see anything else than that, after mature deliberation, the prime minister believes that the granting of old age pensions was based on a vicious principle." Premier King rose to deny that those words could be found in Hansard. Mr. Woodsworth quoted, from The Globe of March 15th, a report of a statement made by the minister of labor in an address he delivered in London, the statement in part being as follows: "As far as I am concerned, I will utilize my every effort, and the premier will back me up, to see that the laboring man who is out of work for any period of the year will have a right to expect and to receive a share of the profits he helped to make." The minister of labor was further quoted by The Globe as saying that: "The workers who are unemployed for perhaps two or three months of the year constituted an essential unit in the industrial life of the nation for the remaining periods, and the country should recognize their rights." Mr. Woodsworth added that the minister of labor amplified his proposal to say that he believed that the worker, the employer and the Governments, provincial and federal, should each bear a part of the cost of such unemployment insurance. But Mr. Woodsworth could not draw either the minister of labor or the premier into an admission

that this was a true version of what the minister of labor said in London in the middle of last month. Mr. Woodsworth went on to say: "I should like to take advantage of this opportunity to ask the prime minister and the minister of labor to place very clearly before this House and the people of this country what their policy really is. I do not think it is fair that dispatches of the kind I have read should go out through the press to the people of this country from coast to coast, and then when we try to pin the speakers down to declare what they really mean to do, we get an evasive reply." The premier interrupted to say that he had made a frank reply in the House in answer to the question Mr. Woodsworth had put to him. Mr. Woodsworth met this by saying: "The prime minister's statement was clear, but it was not the same type of statement that he made the day before in the room where the deputation was being heard." To the premier's repeated denial, Mr. Woodsworth said: "I was present and heard the prime minister. We had no official Hansard there, but a great many people came out from the meeting under the impression that something would be done." Out of the exchange on the floor of the House the prime minister came very poorly, leaving the minister of labor to make his own statement and denying that his own attitude was as Mr. Woodsworth showed it to have been understood by the deputation. Mr. Woodsworth quoted an editorial from The Manitoba Free Press which is certainly not a Conservative newspaper, the article having appeared after the unemployment conference in Winnipeg last January. One statement in that article was that the Dominion Government could not divest itself of a measure of permanent responsibility for the case of the unemployed. Another sentence from The Free Press is the following: "It may be a bit principle, as Premier King says, for the Dominion to make grants to the provinces and lose control of the spending of the money, but it is a practical expedient which is necessary to meet serious unemployment situations."

Nothing could be more dishonest than the pretence that the Conservative Opposition sought to make political capital out of the unemployment situation. What warrant has The Globe for saying that "there is some justification for the impression that demands from the Opposition are examples of political opportunism and attempts to raid the federal treasury that credit for the expenditure may be given elsewhere"? What Conservative Government of a Canadian province endeavored to have entrusted to it a grant of the federal Government in behalf of the unemployed? Nothing could be more contemptible than The Globe's attempt to saddle on the Conservative Opposition blame for the

amazing outbreak of the premier to the effect that he would not give a five-cent piece to any Conservative Government on earth. Such a remark may well lead people to ask if the premier was quite himself at the time of utterance. And a newspaper that will defend that remark or try to make the Conservative Opposition accountable for it is in need of a moral toning up.

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

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