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Subject.....

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King Versus Byng

HON. HOWARD FERGUSON is a speaker whose words are never lost on his audience, the Mail and Empire tells its readers, editorially. "Whether his speech is long or short, delivered on the spur of the moment or after due notice," our contemporary asserts, "it always sets his hearers thinking and usually leaves in their minds a phrase that serves as a flashlight into the heart of the public question he is discussing." We are told also that "Mr. Ferguson is humorous and pithy," that "he has a happy way of putting the substance of the matter in a nutshell, a model of the brevity that is the soul of humor."

After reading this and similar gush, The Sun was beginning to think that possibly Mr. Ferguson had said something. But we were doomed to disappointment. It appears that Mr. Ferguson was discoursing on the subject of the constitutional issue and this is what he had to say that called forth the eulogistic comment of our contemporary; this is the bon mot which serves as a flashlight into the heart of the question and puts the substance of the matter in a nutshell. Please observe it closely: "If it is to be King versus Byng, compare their records during the war." There, dear reader, you have the whole flashlight in a nutshell, or the whole nutshell in a flashlight, whichever way you care to look at it.

"Baron Byng's record is one of imperishable honor at the head of Canada's glorious Corps," the Mail and Empire quite unnecessarily reminds us, whereas Mr. King was beaten at the polls in the general election of 1917, as an opponent of the Union Government. But what the Mail and Empire does not tell us is what the dickens that has to do with the constitutional issue of the general election of 1926.

Would Premier Ferguson be willing to settle the constitutional question by comparing war services if it were King who had commanded the Canadian troops instead of Byng?

Mr. Ferguson's brevity may, as the Mail and Empire points out, be a model of that which is the soul of "humor." It is assuredly not the same brand of brevity which the Bard of Avon described as the soul of "wit." There is a lot of humor about Mr. Ferguson's brevity in this instance, but precious little wit.

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