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A LIMITED INQUIRY.

"What circumstances are there to justify the Government in giving us light upon one part of the operations of the Shell Committee and leaving the rest in darkness? What circumstances justify more concealment and more secrecy?"

The question quoted is from the speech of Sir Wilfrid Laurier in the House of Commons on April 4th, the day that the full weight of the Government majority in the House was used to vote down the Opposition demand for a full Parliamentary investigation of all the business of the Canadian Shell Committee. The question was echoed by four members of Sir Robert Borden's following in the House when they voted with the Opposition for such an investigation. It has echoed and re-echoed throughout the Press of Canada since the day that Sir Robert Borden announced that a Royal Commission—not a Committee of Parliament—would investigate four specified American contracts which were among those mentioned by Mr. G. W. Kyte in his memorable speech of March 28th. The question has not been answered for the obvious reason that there cannot be a satisfactory answer.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier moved on March 7th for a Parliamentary investigation of the Shell Committee. This has been refused by Sir Robert Borden and his obedient majority. As to the very limited judicial inquiry announced by Premier Borden, Sir Wilfrid has spoken for the Opposition and made it clear that he is quite satisfied with the personnel of the Commission; that his stand against the appointment of the Commission is **because it is a judicial inquiry instead of an inquiry by a Parliamentary Committee.** His reason for this attitude can best be given in his own words, "Because experience has taught us that if you want to probe offences, if you want to go to the bottom of things, a Parliamentary Committee is always preferable to a judicial inquiry."

The Shell Committee, according to statements made in Parliament, awarded contracts amounting in all to over \$300,000,000. The four American contracts which are to be investigated aggregated less than one-tenth of that total. The case made out by the Opposition for an investigation of all the business of the Shell Committee was quite as strong as that regarding the contracts specified.

CONSERVATIVE WANTS FULL INVESTIGATION.

Hon. Andrew Broder, the veteran Conservative member for Dundas, Ont., and who but a few weeks ago was accorded the honor of being made a privy councillor, is one of the four followers of Sir Robert Borden who believe that there should be investigation of the Shell Committee, and who justified their belief by voting for the motion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier asking for full investigation of all the business of the Shell Committee. On March 29th, the day following the notable disclosures in the speech of Mr. G. W. Kyte in connection with contracts for fuses, Hon. Mr. Broder was quoted in the Ottawa Journal, the recognized organ of the Conservative party in the Capital, as follows:—

"I am getting too near the end of my life," he said, "to be expected to object to holding an investigation into the work of the Shell Committee.

"I went to the Premier and told him that if investigation were decided against I would have to vote against him. He said that if I voted against him it would do him more harm than if almost any other member of the party did so. I replied that I could not alter my view—at my time of life, that I would have to go straight to the end. I would have to vote for inquiry.

"I don't believe the Premier quite realizes what is going on. He doesn't seem to know the situation. The people know what is going on. These are not the days of the Marlborough wars. The people of Canada are on trial for their honesty.

"I told the Premier it was no use suggesting to the Imperial Government that they should ask for an investigation. They can't ask the Canadian Government for an investigation. We are the people to deal with this."

The three other Conservative members who voted with the Opposition in demand for full investigation were W. F. Maclean (south York, Ont.), Paul E. Lamarche (Nicolet, Que.) and A. A. Mondou, (Yamaska, Que.)

A LIBERAL PROPOSAL.

A favorite theme of Government speakers in the House of Commons and of editors who support the Borden Government through thick and thin is the argument that in criticising the ordinary expenditures of the Government and in urging economy in all public business, the Opposition seeks only to embarrass the Government and make political capital. A truer idea of the motives actuating the Opposition may be gathered from a statement made in the House of Commons on February 25th by Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, when he said:—

"I am going to appeal to the better instincts of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. I am appealing in this grave national crisis, not to the spoilsmen but to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I say, let us have a round table conference in the House of Commons. Let us form a committee, and let us apply the pruning knife to the scandalous expenditures of the various departments of the Government. When our sons are bleeding on the plains of Flanders; when our wives and sisters are straining every nerve on behalf of the Patriotic Fund, the Red Cross, the Serbian Fund, the Belgian Fund, the Polish Fund, it is a scandal for the Government to maintain such a high rate of expenditure."