

HON. J. D. HAZEN'S MASTERLY REPLY TO REMARKS OF MR. PUGSLEY ON QUESTION OF NAVAL AID

Continued from page twelve.

cent. at least of them would be constructed in the port of Montreal? I ask that question of my hon. friend. There is no answer to it.

Mr. Pugsley: I presume my hon. friend refers to the Vickers-Maxim Co.?

Mr. Hazen: I do.

Mr. Pugsley: I would say that I never heard anything more than what I have already stated.

Mr. Hazen: That is a very safe statement for my hon. friend to make. But was my hon. friend taken into the confidence of the Prime Minister and his colleagues in the government in regard to this matter? I am not asking about a statement made by my hon. friend, I am asking about a statement made by the government of Canada and I ask again, is it not true that assurances were given to Vickers-Maxim Limited that if they went on with the plant at Montreal a large proportion, seventy per cent. at least, of that contract would be awarded to them for constructing those ships at Montreal?

A Contrast.

My hon. friend asks why, when I came into office, I did not induce my colleagues to go on and sign that contract with Cammell, Laird and Company. Let us review the circumstances in connection with this matter. I have already pointed out to the House that the government of which my hon. friend was a member without any ex-

cuse or reason that can be regarded as valid or as a strong reason, put off for more than four months either the consideration or the awarding of these contracts. My own idea would be that they had considered it but felt it would not be good politics to do anything before the election.

I came into the Department of the Naval Service on the 10th day of October, 1911. One of the first things placed before me for my consideration was a memorandum from the technical head of the naval service and one from Commander Roper, one of the technical officers of the department, neither of whom was appointed by this government, both of whom had served in the navy and both of whom had been appointed to their position because of their expert knowledge. And what were the contents of the memorandum placed before me? The one from Admiral Kingsmill pointed out that the vessels would be obsolete in a period before they could be completed within the terms of the contract.

Will Allow People to Judge.

These memoranda were not made on my request at all or because I had asked their opinion on the subject. In fact the memorandum of Commander Roper bears date the 20th of September, the day before the general elections were held and nearly two weeks before I became Minister of the Naval Service. Commander Roper states

that these vessels would be in a state of obsolescence before the contract could be completed. Under those circumstances, I would ask anyone, I do not care what political party, if I, a Minister of the Crown, having taken the solemn oath which a minister of the Crown has to take, would have been justified, if I had had the persuasive power to do it, in inducing my colleagues to sign a contract for the construction of ten vessels which the highest authority we had in Canada said would be obsolete by the time that contract was completed and thereby spend the amount of over \$15,000,000 of the money of the people of Canada for accomplishing no good results whatever.

I shall have much pleasure in placing this case before the people and let me tell my hon. friend that I have no fear or doubt whatever of what the result will be. The people of my constituency did not want the construction of vessels that by the time they were completed would not be fit to be in the firing line, would be in a state of obsolescence and could not possibly be of any real service either in maintaining the Empire on the seas or defending the coasts of Canada if our coasts should be, unfortunately, attacked.

Mr. Pugsley:—Was the effect of their statement that the vessels would become obsolete in a period before they were completed owing to

the character of the vessels or is that common to all war vessels?

Would Be Old When Finished.

Mr. Hazen:—Not at all. Under the contract some of these vessels were not to be completed for six years from the time the contract was signed, and the hon. gentleman will remember that, when the tenders were called for, the shipbuilding concerns of this country were not in a position to take a contract and build a vessel in as short a time as it could be built in the Old Country, therefore a longer time had to be given for the construction of these vessels, a period so long that by the time the last of them was finished it would be unfit for service and really of no use in modern warfare.

I must apologize for taking up so much time of the House, I think that the fault is not mine. I have had to reply to the statement made by my hon. friend, whose absolute inaccuracy in regard to the facts he has laid before the House is to be regretted in a man of his parliamentary experience.

It is also to be regretted in a man of his parliamentary experience that he should take up hours of the time of this House simply to fight out a local question. He wants to make it appear an important question for the sake of party advantage in the con-

Parliamentary Procedure or Anarchy?

(Ottawa Citizen.)

The situation that has arisen in parliament by reason of the deadlock between the parties strongly suggests that steps will have to be taken by the government to put an end to it. The debate has been on for three months.

After accepting the principle of spending the thirty-five million dollars, as was clearly set forth in their speeches and the literature they have sent broadcast, the opposition on Monday, headed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, denounced the very action for which they had voted and declared that Canada should take no steps at present to increase the naval forces of the Empire.

Thus they affirmed that their previous assent to appropriate the amount in question was entirely insincere and meaningless.

The Liberals have apparently accepted the advice of a certain irresponsible portion of the press which supports them, and are evidently determined to embark upon a policy of indefinite and unjustifiable obstruction. The government must consider whether it will permit parliamentary procedure to degenerate into anarchy, and whether it will allow a disreputable minority to engage in discreditable tactics which, if persisted in at each session, would bring about a general election every year.

The whole machinery of parliament would break down and become use-

less if this were permitted. There is every reason to believe that it will not be permitted. For many years there has been a growing feeling throughout the country that parliament should work more and talk less. Speeches of three and a half to four hours full of petty and trivial matter do not contribute either to the dignity of parliament or to the efficiency of parliamentary government. If the opposition find themselves in an unfortunate position as a result of their tactics they will only have themselves to blame and no responsible man in Canada will waste much sympathy upon them.

Reasonable Request.

The request of the government is moderate and just. They ask first that a reasonable date shall be set when discussion of the bill in committee shall be brought to a conclusion; they ask in the second place that a reasonable date shall be set for the vote upon the third reading of the bill; they ask in the third place that the usual vote on account of supply, in order to carry on the business of the country shall pass.

This is necessary as the fiscal year will end on the 31st March and after that date no payment can be made to civil servants who are dependent for their daily existence upon their salaries, no public works can be carried on and no part of the business of the country can proceed unless such a vote on account is granted. Up to the present year it has never been refused. During the reciprocity debate in 1911 the Conservative party granted a vote of one-sixth of the main estimates on the 31st March and on the

17th May they granted one-quarter of the estimates, or in all five-twelfths, a little less than one-half. This vote was given by the Conservatives without discussion and in order that the business of the country might not be delayed or impeded.

Up to the present time Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his supporters have formulated the following policies upon the Naval Aid Bill:

Liberal Policies.

(a) They voted on February 13th that the question should be submitted to the people at a general election.

(b) On the same day they voted that the question should not be submitted to the people but that immediate action should be taken to increase the effective naval forces of the Empire.

(c) They voted on the 27th February that the question should be referred to the people by a plebiscite.

(d) They voted on the 13th February that thirty-five millions should immediately be appropriated to increase the effective naval forces of the Empire.

(e) They have now moved an amendment that not one dollar shall be appropriated to increase the effective naval forces of the Empire. Upon this last motion they are now actively occupied in obstructing the business of the country. What further varied and inconsistent policies they will yet evolve remains to be seen. Thus far their policies closely resemble the antics of a dog engaged in chasing its own tail. It will be observed that they voted against a plebiscite but for a general election. This makes plain their desire. They want no submission of the question to the people unless it gives them a chance to return to office. Like many male factors they are exceedingly anxious for a new trial which, however, would only bring to them a severe condemnation.

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