

assumed that their zeal had been similarly stimulated or rewarded; that their silence would be interpreted as the silence of guilt, and that they should share the fate of the financial group. However disastrous was repudiation, silence had also its dangers, neither few nor inconsiderable. It was a case of "Speak up, gentlemen, now or never."

Thus did party exigency triumph over scruple. Borden and Foster must be saved, or the Opposition would be divided and discredited, without leaders, without power of concerted action, and without standing in the House or the country. To whitewash the financiers was manifestly impossible; there remained only the course of protesting that their opponents were as bad as themselves. In this task, the opposition members joined with a fury which showed how desperate was their plight, and with zealous ingenuity worthy a more honourable cause. Hence it was that we had a "scandal" session, and that practically nothing else came from the Opposition benches.

The point to be kept in mind is that had every "scandal" been uncoloured and unprejudiced truth instead of unadulterated slander, the whole array was raised, not in the hope or expectation of bringing about a better condition of things, but forged in malice and launched in frenzy, their purpose was to divert attention from Foster's Frenzied Finance to alleged misdeeds of Liberals.

PURELY HIS OWN AFFAIR

Foster's Frenzied Finance has destroyed the public character of the federal opposition, robbed it of its political significance and dwarfed it into a semi-private association of men whose chief purpose in life is to defend Mr. Foster and his friends from the consequence of their own misdeeds.

The sittings of the Royal Commission on Life Insurance and the evidence given before that body made Mr. Foster, his associates and their doings the one outstanding thought in the public mind regarding the party to which these gentlemen belonged; it placed before the country in a new light the principles these members of the opposition adopted in the handling of other people's money, and suggested the course they might be expected to pursue should the management of the finances of Canada ever fall into their hands.

Since that time, the party representatives in the House have been deliberately, systematically and skillfully manoeuvred, jockeyed and dragooned into position, until they stand an unbroken phalanx of defenders-in-ordinary and apologists-extraordinary for the brand of politico-speculators who occupy their front benches and dominate the party caucuses. True, some display a measured lack of enthusiasm in the cause, but the crucial hour always finds them voting solid.

The net result is that whatever may be the opinions and wishes of the private in the ranks, his leader, his parliamentary mis-representatives, and the chief newspaper exponents of his political faith stand hand in hand for the defence of the Foster group; however public-spirited may be his political activity, he has been made part of a machine for whitewashing reputations such as he would neither covet nor tolerate for himself; however disinterested and high-minded may be his political ideals, he is represented by those who speak for him as the defender of the indefensible. The Parliamentary party which his vote helps to maintain for the betterment of public affairs has been perverted into a group of personal apologists and advocates for those whose dealings he would neither emulate nor endorse.

This perversion and paralysis of the opposition is more than the business of Mr. Borden and his parliamentary followers; it is of concern to more than the newspaper lights which reflect their doings and sayings, and has an interest broader even than the membership of the party of whom they should be the representatives.