

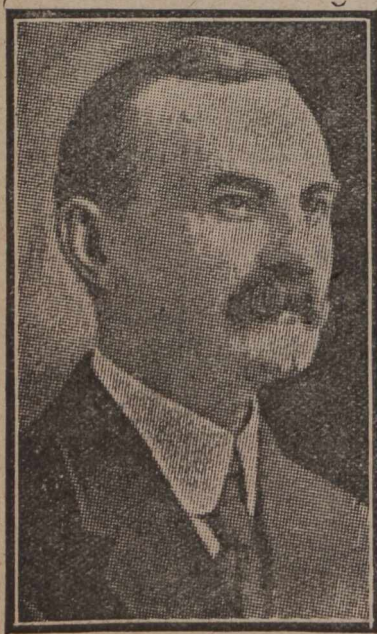
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A NATIONAL CALAMITY

THE disastrous fire which all but destroyed the Canadian Parliament Buildings at Ottawa on the night of February 3rd was a calamity the extent of which the people of Canada were not slow to realize. The loss of the stately building which has been the home and the symbol of Canadian nationality since Confederation would be a disaster, but happily there is room for hope that the damage is not so great but that it may be restored in all its ancient glory of design, with the added advantage of the most modern and safest of interior construction. The loss of records and valuable state documents which cannot be replaced, is serious and will undoubtedly cause great inconvenience. All these however, must be regarded as nothing in comparison with the loss of human lives.

Mr. Bowman Brown Law, Member of Parliament for Yarmouth, N.S., was the only Parliamentarian to lose his life; many others escaped to safety by the merest margin. The death of Mr. Law is a loss that will be keenly felt not only by relatives, friends and constituents and the Liberal Party, but by the whole of Canada. In more than a score of years of public service, first in the municipal life of his City, and later as its representative in Parliament, he was an example of all that is best in Canadian citizenship.



The late B. B. LAW, M.P.

First elected to Parliament in 1902 in a by-election caused by the appointment of Mr. T. B. Flint as Clerk of the House of Commons, he was re-elected in 1904 and 1908 and again in 1911 when he was accorded the huge majority of 1184. The fact that his majorities in 1908 and 1911 were the largest ever recorded in Yarmouth is possibly the best proof of the esteem in which he was held and the place he had earned in the confidence and affections of those who knew him best, his own constituents.

A NATIONALIST SPEAKER.

THE opening of Parliament on January 12th marked one more red-letter day in the history of the Conservative-Nationalist or Borden-Bourassa alliance. The sole business of the day was the election of Dr. Alfred Seigny, Nationalist M.P. for Dorchester, (Que.), succeeding Hon. Dr. Sproule who had been called to the Senate

The appointment of Dr. Seigny was moved by Sir George Foster who was followed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, from whose speech we quote:—

"As has been stated by my hon. friend, our first duty to-day is to select a new presiding officer for the House of Commons. My hon. friend has told us that the Government's choice has fallen on the hon. member for Dorchester (Mr. Seigny). Considering the circumstances of his coming into this House, I think it is a fit sequence that he should be elected to the higher office of Speaker. When Dr. Sproule took the Speaker's Chair he was an ardent Tory; the hon. member for Dorchester, when he came to this House, was an ardent Nationalist. As extremes always meet, it seems to be fitting that Mr. Seigny should follow Mr. Speaker Sproule. And what an evolution this is since the year 1911. If, in the year 1911, the Nationalist candidate in the county of Dorchester, now the Conservative member for the same county, had heard the prediction that he would accept an office, either high or low, from a Conservative Government presided over by Sir Robert Borden, I am sure that the hon. gentleman would have been the very first to protest against such an idea.

"I am not sure that he would not have taken it even as an insult, because those of us who come from the province of Quebec know that my hon. friend carried on a campaign of sulphur and brimstone not only against the Liberal party, but, in equal measure, against the Conservative party. My hon. friend denounced the nefarious policy of Laurier—which was a matter of course with him—and also the nefarious policy of Borden just as vigorously, perhaps even more vigorously. He assailed without measure the navy, and I think he was pledged to the repeal of the Naval Service Act. I understand that he also opposed every form of participation by Canada in the affairs of Great Britain.

Loaves and Fishes—And a Change of Mind.

"He entered this House still breathing heavily, threatening still. But when once in this House he took his seat behind the Treasury benches—and behind the Treasury benches things which he had condemned took with him another shape. No one heard him in this House denounce the nefarious policy of Borden. I think he ceased to denounce the navy. Certainly he acquiesced in the participation of Canada in the War. He became a repentant sinner, and I never saw a sinner—and I have met some sinners in my time—who derived so much comfort out of repentance. My hon. friend never did penance in sackcloth and ashes. He was within the rays of the ministerial sun; he luxuriated in the tall and fat grasses of ministerial pasture. He was the recipient of some marked ministerial favours. I do not say this by way of complaining of his conversion—far be it from me to do so. If I have any fault to find with him it is that his conversion did not go far enough, because I am not aware that he ever, in the County of Dorchester, confessed his sins to his electors and begged pardon for having so led them astray in 1911.

To-day my hon. friend is to be elected by this House to the chief office which is in its power. However we may have differed from him in the past, the moment he assumes this Chair he becomes Speaker of the House of Commons, and entitled to all honour and all respect; and, so far as this side of the House is concerned, it will be our duty—nay, it will be our pleasure—to do what His Majesty's Opposition always have done so long as I have been in this House—we shall deem it our duty to give him every assistance to maintain the dignity and traditions of his office, and as well to maintain the dignities and privileges and rights of the House of Commons."