

Protest Against Censorship

On motion of Honourable George P. Smith, seconded by Honourable Frank Oliver, the following resolution was adopted:

"Whereas Liberty of Speech—the right to express opinion by verbal or written words—is a first principle of Liberalism and is the foundation of successful democracy;

"Whereas in time of war the right of free speech may properly be restricted by authority of parliament for the purpose of preventing treasonable utterances and to prevent information of military value from reaching the enemy;

"Whereas it is an accepted principle of democratic Government that when internal conditions justify such procedure the Government may proclaim martial law, thereby putting in the hands of the military authorities the power to arbitrarily suppress such utterances as they see fit, to such extent and by such means as they may deem necessary;

"Whereas the Government of Sir Robert Borden under pretext of war necessity has established throughout Canada a censorship both of the public press and of private speech which is in effect censorship by martial law, without martial law having been proclaimed;

"Whereas this power of the censorship has been employed, not so much to suppress utterances of treasonable intent or effect, or to prevent information of military value from reaching the enemy, as to prevent fair, reasonable and necessary criticism of the inefficiency and graft which has characterized the war administration of the Borden Government, and to protect those concerned from a due measure of criticism by the people whose blood and money has carried on the war.

"Whereas the enforcement of such a censorship has had the effect of decreasing public confidence in any statement made on behalf of the Government, especially concerning military operations, and in that respect prevents full credit being given to the valor and sacrifice of Canada's soldiers in the war.

"Therefore be it resolved that the Union Government is hereby condemned for having established a martial law censorship without having taken the responsibility of proclaiming martial law, and for having abused the power thus usurped to defend their Civil administration from deserved criticism as well as to prevent correct knowledge of their military administration from reaching the people whose sons and brothers were fighting against the imposition by Germany of such a censorship upon the world."

Demands Preservation Canadian Autonomy

On motion of Honourable A. G. McKay, seconded by Honourable J. R. Boyle, the following resolution was adopted:

"Whereas from time to time it is reported in the press that the peace conference about to sit in Paris will result in treaties between the powers directly concerned, which will deal with matters of trade, defence, immigration and other important subjects.