

*THE CANADIAN LIBERAL MONTHLY*  
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### CANADA'S OOM PAUL METHODS.

DEPRIVING naturalized citizens of the franchise for political purposes is not a new device. It has at least one striking precedent in our own time. The recollection of this incident may prove embarrassing to the political party in the Dominion which has attempted to prostitute patriotism to the exigencies of the hour and to retain power by suppressing the legitimate voice of the qualified electors of the Dominion, but it should be again brought to public attention, for the motives underlying both instances were exactly the same, viz., the desire to hold office against the wish of the people.

In the famous Pretoria Convention of 1881, which settled the dispute between Britain and the South African republic, President Kruger consented to grant the franchise to all bona fide residents of the republic who had resided within its limits for a period of one year. In 1885 this period was raised to five years, which was reasonable enough, but, nevertheless, a violation of the spirit of the compact of 1881. In 1890, however, Oom Paul went to the extreme. He decided that no Uitlander would be given the vote unless resident within the republic for a period of fourteen years. The result of this arbitrary and unjust decision was the ill-advised Jameson raid. That expedition was however not the fault of the Uitlanders in Johannesburg. These citizens were not responsible for the plot of Cecil Rhodes' lieutenant, nor should they have been held to have instigated it. But, unfortunately, the justice of their cause was confounded with the illegality of the Jameson invasion and the crafty Boer president made the most of the situation. The world condemned Jameson, and, inferentially, the cause which he was supposed to represent. But the truth could not always be confused with the mistakes of judgment of interested individuals and within three years of the Jameson raid we find the British people at war with South Africa because of the unjust denial of the franchise to the newcomers in the republic. Britain went to war with Kruger because the Boer president insisted upon disfranchising naturalized Britishers for fourteen years in South Africa. Kruger feared the votes of these new citizens of his republic, he realized that many of the injustices of his administration would be impossible if the vote were given these clear-thinking and loyal people of foreign extraction who had come to South Africa to carve out a home for themselves and take part in the government of the country as well as in its material growth and progress.

But in the midst of another great struggle we find the same attempt as characterized the conduct of the autocratic old Boer president being made in the free democracy of one of the foremost of the British dominions. We find Premier Borden assuming the role of Oom Paul. We see the reactionary councillors of the Boer cabinet of Pretoria

in 1898 outdone by the burghers of narrow vision and prejudice in the Borden cabinet to-day. We see thousands of loyal citizens—Uitlanders, if you will,—disfranchised, not for a period of fourteen years but for one of fifteen years. We see some, many, in fact, who have worked loyally and faithfully for the cause of empire at this critical time branded as suspected characters unworthy to have a voice in the government of the day. We see an element in our citizenship analogous to the Uitlander element in South Africa in 1898-99 treated worse than Oom Paul treated his citizens of foreign birth. Yet this action on the part of the Borden administration is defended on the grounds of national necessity and safety—the same grounds as adopted by President Kruger in 1890 when he passed his reactionary measure stipulating a residence of fourteen years for newcomers.

We ask in what respect are we in Canada to-day better off than were the Uitlanders under Oom Paul? How can the administration reconcile its action in this regard with its professions of loyalty and democracy? Britain went to war twenty years ago with the South African republic over the very principle which Premier Borden and his cabinet prostitute to party ends to-day. This time there is no Jameson raid to obscure the issue, but there is an attempt, and a dangerous one, to becloud the vision of the people by cowardly and unjustifiable accusations and insinuations of latent disloyalty or worse against the disfranchised citizens of the Dominion and against the Liberal party, which has unmasked this political camouflage, and has undertaken to defend British principles, as did the British government in 1899 when it went to war with President Kruger—a war in which Canada participated but a war which, if we accept the present attitude of the Borden government, we now repudiate. For, if we are to acknowledge the justice of Premier Borden's disfranchisement of Canadian Uitlanders, we cannot condemn President Kruger's action in a similar position. In effect, Premier Borden and his administration range themselves on the Boer side, after twenty years, and virtually tell Canadians that both this country and Britain were wrong in 1899 and that British and Canadian blood shed then was spilled in an unjust cause.

### THE ADMINISTRATION'S RECORD.

WITH the disclosures of the Toronto enquiry into the bacon profiteering of the patriot who on a memorable occasion declared, "To Hell with Profits," the government has apparently come to the conclusion that it has gone about as far as it can safely venture. There is a serious danger of overplaying things at this time with an election on the horizon, and the Borden administration is well aware on which side its bread is buttered. Therefore the public need not expect any drastic action, nor any action at all, on the part of the administration into the bacon hold up, and the squeezing of millions of dollars worth of unfair profits from the pockets of the consumers of this country and from the farmers and hog raisers of the agricultural portions of Ontario and other provinces by the combine represented by