

NAVAL BILL SECOND READING 30 MAJORITY.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier Made a Ring- ing Speech for a Canadian Navy, Built and Manned by Canadians.

Ottawa, Feb. 27.—Both leaders have defined the issue before Canada. Before crowded and tense galleries, and keenly interested parliamentarians, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Premier Borden spoke at an early hour this morning. Liberalism did honor to their veteran chief. Again and again he was interrupted by tempests of wild cheering, and when at the close of an eloquent sentence, he leaned toward the government benches and exclaimed: "Liberalism adheres to British principles and calls for an appeal to the Canadian people," their enthusiasm knew no bounds.

Sir Wilfrid put the unerring finger on the underlying principle of the whole issue. "This double consideration—the rights of Canada as a nation—the duties of Canada as a part of the British Empire—dominate the problem."

He earnestly maintained the rights of all Canadians to control their own affairs as a nation within the empire, to guard their own coasts and trade routes, and to assume that portion of the imperial burden that Britain was now bearing.

In regard to the German "peril," he expressed the statesmanlike conviction that no improper motives should be ascribed to the German nation, because they were proceeding to increase their defence commensurate with their growth in population and commerce.

Premier Borden has abandoned the idea of a Canadian navy. This is the only conclusion that can be drawn from his specific declaration in concluding the debate that what he stood for was "one empire, one fleet, and one foreign policy, as compared with five foreign policies, and five scattered fleets of five different portions of the empire, which must then all go down individually to defeat."

The vote taken after 1 o'clock this morning concluded the second stage of the government's attempt to force the measure through. The second reading carried with the echoes of the two declarations from the leaders going out of the country. "We call for a submission to the issue to the Canadian people," was the Liberal challenge through its leader. "We will force it through," was the government response, voiced by the premier.

Division on Mr. Guilbault's amendment to the amendment calling for the submission of the naval question by plebiscite to the people was supported by eleven votes, seven being National-Conservative and four Liberal. The Nationalists were Messrs. Ashin, Boulay, Mondou, Lamarche, Barrette, Guilbault and Bellemare. The Liberals were Messrs. Thompson, Proulx, Turfitt, and Lapoint. The figures of the division were 11 yeas, 18 nays.

Division on Mr. Turfitt's amendment calling for immediate redistribution to be followed by an appeal to the country on the naval issue was 81 yeas and 117 nays, a government majority of 36. Four Nationalists, Messrs. Ashin, Lamarche, Barrette and Guilbault voted for the amend-

ment, and Col. McLean, Liberal, again voted with the government.

At 2 o'clock this morning the third division was taken on the second reading of the government bill. It carried by a vote of 114 to 84, a government majority of 30.

"Coming down," cried the Liberals, amid cheering. The seven Nationalists voted against the government, and Colonel McLean again with it.

A scene of intense enthusiasm greeted Sir Wilfrid's rising late tonight. Liberals cheered and cheered again, standing in their places, until the veteran chief himself had to raise his hand for silence. He commenced in quiet tones, on the approach of the end of the second stage of the government measure to oppose it with even greater earnestness than he had done earlier in its progress. To him the political aspect of the proposals was less than the important consequences which must follow an adoption of the principle underlying them. The government had inaugurated the progress of its proposals with acclaim, but it began to stop short before it had gone very far. Silence was a lesser danger than explanation, and for days supporters of the government had their mouths closed.

"We have asked information. We are waiting for it yet," proceeded Sir Wilfrid. "Yet we have heard enough now to justify us in comparing their position with our position, and to realize with some exactness the measure of the difference between us, not only upon the question at issue but upon the broader problem of imperial defence. Canada has passed through the period of infancy, of tutelage, and while up to the present time it has been sufficient for her in matters of defence to provide and organize a few land forces, she has now to look beyond her shores and to undertake, in the matter of naval defence, duties and responsibilities consequent upon having reached the status of nationhood, and consequent, just as much on the position she occupies in the British Empire. This double consideration—the rights of Canada as a nation—the duties of Canada as a part of the British Empire—constitute, yes, dominate, the problem."

In his speech, Hon. Mr. Foster had expressed himself as unable to understand why, in his previous comments, Sir Wilfrid had alluded to the fact that during the last election campaign the Conservative party, as a whole, had taken the position in Quebec that Canada owed nothing to Britain. "If I brought it in," proceeded the Liberal leader, "it was not, as the minister suggested, through a slip. I did it purposely, and if he did not understand the obvious motive, I regret all the more his absence today, for it would take but a moment for the light to penetrate his eyes."

"There is, certainly, no necessity on the floor of this house to affirm that Canada has a duty to the mother country, that we have obligations as Canadians and as British subjects to discharge to her, but places there are in this country where another doctrine was preached by members of this house who sit behind the government; yes, and by members of this house who sit in the government."

"If I have brought this to the attention of the house, it is not for the vain pleasure of having a fling at my opponents. I claim to be impelled by a nobler motive. It is because it is here, on the floor of this house, within these walls, that all such doctrines have to be fought and determined. I brought it up in this house because

those to whom such appeals were addressed, will understand to what extent they were deceived, or the character of the man who deceived him. I brought it up because today it must be determined as a first step in the discussion in which we are engaged that as Canadians wherever we are in this broad dominion, whether it be in the province of Quebec or any other province, we have rights as British subjects and we have also duties as British subjects to perform."

Sir Wilfrid maintained that the contribution was both unwise and unnecessary, and had been brought in under false pretences. The admiralty memorandum specifically declared that Britain was prepared to guarantee the security of the empire for years to come.

After dealing with the explicit statements as to relative sea power contained in the memorandum, Sir Wilfrid noted that the government is now basing its case on alleged "secret information" possessed by the premier, but the facts spoke for themselves, and that was all the house should go on.

Dealing with the growth of the German navy, Sir Wilfrid Laurier maintained that this growth had only been commensurate with the growth of the German Empire in population and commerce since 1871, and that, according to Mr. Foster, was the basic principle upon which all navies were built. It is neither fair nor politic to ascribe this natural growth to sinister designs upon England. As well say that the growth of the British navy was with a view to attacking Germany. Moreover, in the character of the German emperor himself there was guarantee steadily becoming stronger, that peace, not war, was the aim.

The deliberate statement of the first lord of the admiralty in the British house was that Britain had now and could and would maintain a sixty per cent superiority in vessels of the Dreadnought type over Germany. The very passing of this contribution would weaken rather than strengthen Britain's prestige, since it would be a declaration to the world that Britain was now unable to cope with her enemies. The Liberal policy was based rather on the gradual development of all parts of the empire with the daughter nations as they grow in wealth and strength protecting their own coasts and trade routes and prepared, if the need ever came, to take their place in the empire's fighting line.

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