

# MR. BORDEN'S PLEA FOR CLEAN ELECTIONS

## Eloquent Appeal by the Conservative Leader for Clean Elections—Seeks to Amend Electoral Laws.

Closing his very able speech on the address debate in parliament at the opening of the present session, the Conservative leader, Mr. R. L. Borden said:

There are other matters of legislation referred to in the speech from the Throne which, however, I do not propose to refer to at the present moment. These as well as the French treaty, will come before the House in due course. But I would say that so far as the bill for the purpose of reforming the electoral laws of this country is concerned, I will be prepared to give it my most hearty support. I brought up this subject in 1906, upon motion for a committee, when the present Chief Justice of Canada was minister of justice. I did not introduce it in a partisan way. I informed my hon. friend, Mr. Fitzpatrick, at that time, that I did not propose to make any attack on the government in connection with what I was proposing, because I desired that both parties should join together to perfect if possible the electoral laws of this country. A committee was formed which took the matter into consideration, but owing to the objection of Mr. Fitzpatrick to the bench, no bill was brought down. Legislation was proposed last session, but it was not passed, presumably because it was not intended that parliament should be dissolved before holding another session. I am prepared to join most heartily in any action of the government looking to a reform in our electoral laws. I think the government should see that our electoral laws are placed at least on as high a basis in Canada as that which prevails in the British Isles. Notwithstanding certain illegal acts which from time to time come to light in the British Isles, we know that the standard of electoral purity there is much higher than, unfortunately, it has been in Canada during recent years. I believe that we should follow the example of some of the American states, and either prohibit corporate contributions altogether, or at least make it a penal offence for any corporation, or any member of a corporation on its behalf to contribute to any campaign fund, unless it is made public and unless the people thoroughly understand the amount of the contribution and the purpose for which it was devoted. I think that all contributions to campaign funds should be made public. At the present time those of the candidates themselves are made public in this country. In Great Britain a very much stricter rule prevails. There the campaign fund under control of any political club, any political association or organization, must be disclosed under oath, and no contribution can be made without violation of the law unless it is made in a public way, and the amount of it is verified upon oath. I think further that we should have an independent investigation provided for, when necessary, into any election where there is good reason to believe that corruption has taken place, either by one party or the other, or by both, and where neither one party or the other sees fit to take action. I think also that provision should be made for the disfranchisement of corrupt constituencies where corruption has widely prevailed, that as in Great

Britain, so in Canada a constituency may for a time be disfranchised, and also visited with the costs of any investigation made for the purpose of exposing that corruption. These are only a few of the details in respect of which I think that the electoral law may be amended. I will join most heartily, as I have said, in assisting the government in that regard, and I sincerely hope that when a measure is brought down it will not be a half measure. I think hon. gentlemen opposite will join with us, as we are prepared to join with them, in bringing about better conditions in regard to holding elections in this country. We know the methods which were adopted in London in 1905; we know that from 1898 down to the present time not only has bribery been rampant, but there has also been a deliberate attempt to defeat the will of the people by means of the substitution of ballots ballot-switching. In London in 1904 and in 1905 we know that bribery was practiced on a very great scale, we know that has been exposed in the courts of this country, and we know that legal proceedings are now pending, and have had a certain issue in the city of Toronto, with regard to what took place in London in that year. I have every reason to believe that in the recent election in the county of Colchester the Conservative party, at least, ran an absolutely clean election, and that the victory of the Conservative party in that county was won without the aid of a single dollar.

Mr. Fielding. How can the hon. gentleman know that when he was there? I suppose he believes it, but how can he know it?

Mr. Fielding. How can the hon. gentleman know that I believed it, and I went there, and I said I knew it; for this reason, that I know that Mr. Stanfield, in his manifesto to the electors and the Conservative organization in the county of Colchester, eighteen months ago, declared that the by-election, which was then thought to be impending, should be run by the association on absolutely clean lines, and without the expenditure of one dollar for illegal purposes. I know Mr. Stanfield as a man against whom I think not one single word of reproach can be uttered. Knowing him as I do, knowing the pledge then made to the electors of the county of Colchester—I am justified in saying that the election in the county of Colchester was carried on by the Conservative party without the expenditure of one dollar for illegal purposes.

Now, I apologise for having taken up, to such an extent, the time of this House in this connection, and I do so sincerely trust, in conclusion, that the measure promised, almost in the concluding words of the speech from the Throne, in regard to our electoral laws, will be brought down early. As I have said before, we on this side of the House will be prepared to most heartily and sincerely, and in no partisan spirit, to co-operate with the government in making the electoral laws of this country such as they ought to be and such as will minimize the evil which unfortunately has greatly increased in Canada in recent years.

# The Week in Parliament

Ottawa, Dec. 18.—In the House this afternoon, Richard Blain, Conservative, registered a strong complaint against the damaged grain, shipped into Ontario on account of foul seed.

Hon. Mr. Fisher said he fully appreciated the danger, but as the seed is being used for feed, the bulk will be ground, and he did not think the danger serious. Mr. Blain's action in bringing the matter up will serve a good purpose as a warning to the farmers not to use it for seed.

The last two hours before the adjournment for the Christmas vacation were devoted to a discussion on the Japanese immigration question, both leaders speaking.

Mr. R. L. Borden raised the issue by moving for copies of all orders in council, correspondence, etc., issued this year. He commented on the fact that no minister had taken part in Monday's debate. He challenged conventionally the practice under which as indicated in speeches by British Columbia representatives, members of the House had been furnished with assurances on the part of Japan that a large influx would not be allowed. Taking up the premier's previous statements, Mr. Borden interpreted them to mean that China could be treated with contempt, because they had no army. Japan as a power must be treated with respect. What a doctrine this for the apostle of peace.

Reviewing the various warnings Mr. Borden stated that the first was Mr. Morrison in his demand in 1900 for

policy of the government. It has been expressed in the different recommendations of the royal commission, which advised the placing of the head tax on the Chinese but accepted the assurance of the Japanese government. True public opinion in British Columbia did not make a distinction in this regard. The royal commission recognized British Columbia's attitude, but recommended a different course which the government accepted. Reviewing the situation the premier said "The influx is contrary to the government's understanding of Japanese assurances." The government, he thought, had followed the right course in sending an envoy to Tokio. They took the ground that their government's assurances had been evaded by Japanese subjects. He had the assurance that they had been systematically violated by the Japanese government.

The premier believed the denunciation of the treaty was the proper course, but the government would not take that view until representations had been made to Japan. Mr. Lemieux's mission had ended, the premier advised caution. The journalist who wrote that dispatch knew more than the government knew. He hoped Mr. Lemieux was still in abeyance.

In answer to Mr. Borden the premier stated that Mr. Lemieux will sail from Japan not later than January 8th.

Direct? asked Mr. Foster.

Direct, replied the premier.

Mr. Monck Jacques Cartier, in a speech, strongly critical of the government's diplomatic ability, maintained that by the treaty the government had surrendered all right to control Japanese immigration, even under the ordinary deportation law.

The last session of the House before adjourning over the holidays was perhaps the most interesting and important of any to date. Not only did the minister of finance take the opportunity of explaining his insurance bill which is modelled on the recommendations of the royal commission, but both the premier and the leader of the opposition made striking pronouncements of their policy on the Japanese immigration question, speaking on the adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Ralph Smith.

Insurance Bill

In regard to the insurance bill, Mr. Fielding said that the commission had raised matters of such importance that the government considered it inadvisable to proceed with the measure last session, but now prepared to deal with it with the assistance of insurance experts represented carefully and constructively thought. The commission had dealt only with life insurance, but the measure now presented covered the whole range of insurance, although the principal adherence to the present statutes covered life insurance.

In dealing with the recommendation of the royal commission regarding pension funds, Mr. Fielding said that the government could not agree with the same, which were to the effect, that they be forbidden, as the experience of all large corporations had shown them to be necessary to keep good men. He proposed to permit the establishment of pensions provided that the holders be allowed a vote at all general meetings.

The minister also entered at some length into the method of voting and into the principles governing the existing systems of fraternal insurance. The bill will insist that all business of fraternal companies shall be carried on according to the national congress table of mortality, the same being the official accepted rate.

The minister of finance proceeded to outline in detail the various other important provisions of the bill, which is extremely comprehensive in character, covering the ground of the royal commission, but generally not going so far in its recommendations.

The commission recommended, said Mr. Fielding, that the powers vested in the finance minister were not broad enough, and this would be remedied. By the new bill, the minister may, for any violation of the insurance act, withdraw, suspend, or refuse to license any insurance company. The powers of the superintendent of insurance are widened, giving him authority, especially over the American companies doing business in the provinces.

Commission Recommendations

The minister of finance then proceeded to discuss the recommendation of the royal commission proposing to abolish all deferred dividends and commissions, and to substitute an equal annual distribution of surplus; but he thought that somewhat drastic, and instead of which the bill proposed that the surplus should be divided every three years. The bill also deals with the liability of companies from surplus funds of deferred liabilities.

Mr. Fielding also explained the provisions of the new bill regarding the distinctions of expense between the old and the business, and stated that it would not go so far as the recommendations of the commission. Officials at the head office would not be permitted to receive commissions in any shape or form; such being paid only to the agent. In addition no salary of \$5,000 or more should be paid without a special vote of the directors.

The features of the new insurance bill introduced today are as follows: The powers of the minister to deal with insurance are enlarged. For any violation of the act he can withdraw

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withdraw or suspend licenses. The powers of the superintendent are increased as far as adding and inspecting are concerned. The trust funds of foreign companies must in future be placed in the hands of corporate boards, and not individual trustees. No salary in excess of \$5,000 can be paid to any official at the head office without being voted upon by the board of directors.

Salaries and Commission

All salaries and commissions of \$4,000 and upwards must be reported to the department and published in the annual report. Rebates are forbidden. Any director or manager who violates with knowledge will be fined \$100 each.

Company Investments

Investments are on an entirely new basis. Companies may invest in debentures as now authorized, in preferred stock of any company which has paid not less than four per cent for seven years, or in common stock of any companies which have paid not less than five per cent. Dividends for ten years. Pensions are not forbidden but the annual meeting must approve of same. Voting on old proxies abolished, must be obtained quarterly returns to insurance departments of investments in detail if compulsory. Companies cannot hold more than twenty per cent of the stock of any subsidiary company. A period of five years is allowed companies to dispose of any stock now held not in accordance with the provisions of this act. Fraternal insurance companies which have not yet adopted the national congress tables of mortality are required to conduct all new business on this basis, and old policies must be kept in a separate account and all claims met from this account.

prosecution of work in the spring. The new exchange has already started, and a large amount of contracts have already been laid in the city streets. The government has done this much work, and are now committed to go on with a public system, which shall be brought within reach of all residents of the province. It will entail a great deal of expense, and if they take over the Bell system a great deal less work will be needed.

A new exchange has already been planned in the city for the extension of the Bell system, owing to the large increase in the number of subscribers. The new exchange which the government is at present building would be large enough, and would be available in a short time as an auxiliary. The new conduits which have been constructed would also be very needed in further extension.

The strongest opposition which has been made against the Bell system has been in Canada, where both Alberta and Manitoba have taken up the public systems, and the Alberta government now have their system in operation. With these two provinces going ahead with the public systems it is expected that Saskatchewan will follow suit, and that the Bell system have now opened negotiations which they were asked to do last spring.

## MAY ABSORB BELL SYSTEM

### Three Provinces May Buy Out The Existing Company—Negotiations Going On With Manitoba.

Winnipeg, Dec. 18.—A lengthy and important conference was held this morning at the government buildings when C. F. Size, president of the Bell Telephone Co. of Canada was closeted with the entire cabinet discussing the telephone situation.

When the conference was closed neither Mr. Size nor the government had any statement to make as to the result of their deliberations. According to the Free Press, the conference is significant owing to the fact that last spring before the government started work on the public telephones system, they made an attempt to get into negotiation with the Bell Co. as to what might be done to have but one telephone system in Manitoba. No reply was secured to their suggestions at the time. It was understood however, that the Bell Co. have been laying off a goodly number of employees and that they have not prosecuted work in the province during the last year as they have usually done. If such a condition of affairs prevails it may possibly throw some light on the meeting this morning.

It is understood that if the government of Manitoba could make arrangements with the Bell Telephone Co. to take over their system in the province, they would gladly do so, provided that Saskatchewan and Alberta did likewise. In case, however, if Manitoba and Alberta should purchase the Bell system still remained in Saskatchewan, it would act as a buffer between the two public systems, and might militate to a certain extent against the efficiency of both systems. Manitoba has up to the present expended more than \$200,000 in surveys and construction work and are making plans for a vigorous

was the genial host of the evening. The contract has been let to W. B. Neil for the construction of an eight foot sidewalk along three blocks in the business section. The work will be started at once, and is to be completed before the holidays.

An open air skating rink is commenced, and local sports expect to have things in shape for a hockey match on Christmas day. Several of the neighboring towns have skating rinks and it is altogether that a local hockey league will be formed, which will send teams to the big centres to compete in the final games towards the end of the season.

A printing office is one of the latest enterprises to be established here. It is in charge of an experienced and enterprising publisher, and it is expected that the Lanigan Telegram will soon make a name for itself among Saskatchewan newspapers. The first issue will appear in a week or two.

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