

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SUBJECT

D 16521

NAME AND DATE OF NEWSPAPER

*Montreal Globe April 8/30***POLITICS AND UNEMPLOYMENT.**

When a paper like the Montreal-owned Mail and Empire expresses diametrically opposite views on the same issue within a few months, as it did on the liquor clearance question, it is not easy to take it seriously on any subject. Hence its reference yesterday to The Globe's discussion on the Parliamentary debate on unemployment ought to be regarded merely as an outburst of the moment. "Nothing could be more contemptible," it says, "than The Globe's attempt to saddle on the Conservative Opposition blame for the amazing outbreak of the Premier to the effect that he would not give a five-cent piece to any Conservative Government on earth." At some future time, if The Globe has occasion to "attempt to saddle on the Liberal Opposition blame for the amazing outbreak of the Premier," it will expect the Mail and Empire to say "nothing could be more commendable."

The Globe's editorial dealt with the futility of trying to solve the unemployment question through politics. There was ample evidence in this lengthy debate, and in others, that the Conservative Opposition was attempting to make it a political issue, and, naturally, any opposition to these tactics would be "contemptible" to the hidebound Conservative Mail and Empire. The discussion centred around an amendment introduced by the Labor member for North Winnipeg. The Prime Minister read from the British North America Act to show where jurisdiction was divided between Federal and Provincial Governments, imposing responsibility on the latter for social legislation. In the course of his speech he said, as reported in Hansard: "We, as a Liberal Government, are standing by our policies, and are seeking to maintain our position. But honorable gentlemen opposite say to us: 'Now that you have got the country into this favorable position, we ask you to take part of the moneys that you may raise in taxes from the people of this Dominion as a whole and give it to other Administrations to spend.' And to whom, if you please? . . . If you wish to play politics, that is the way to play it. Give to

these Tory Governments and to those Progressive Governments at the present or at all times money raised by taxation of the people of Canada as a whole to spend in their respective Provinces, and thereby save them raising taxes for their own purpose. . . . With respect to giving moneys out of the Federal Treasury to any Tory Government in this country for these alleged unemployment purposes, with these Governments situated as they are today, with policies diametrically opposed to those of this Government, I would not give a five-cent piece."

Some honorable members interposed "Oh!" Messrs. Bennett and Stevens cried Shame!" With this The Globe is not interested, except to show the disapproval expressed when the Prime Minister refused to agree to diversion of Federal funds to Provincial Governments for Provincial purposes.

Nothing shows better the attempt to make political capital out of the issue than the Mail and Empire's comment. Not content with evading the real point on this question, it quotes Mr. Woodsworth as reading from Hansard other remarks by the Prime Minister, and adding: "For the life of me, I cannot see anything else than that, after mature deliberation, the Prime Minister believes that the granting of old-age pensions was based on a vicious principle." Of course, the Mail and Empire could not be expected to give the true interpretation, which, in Mr. King's words, is as follows:

Let me make myself perfectly clear as to that. I did not say that the principle of the old-age pension is vicious. I say that the principle of giving money from one Treasury to another is, having one authority raise the money by taxation and the other permitted to spend it without the obligation of taxation, and it was the conference with the Provincial Premiers that helped to convince me on that point, particularly what the Provincial Premiers themselves said.

The Globe still maintains that the Conservative Opposition and the rest of the Opposition at Ottawa are trying to make a political issue out of unemployment, and that the problem will not be solved until all parties view it in its proper light.

W. L. Mackenzie King Papers

Speeches-1922 - 1932

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