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Opposition Gone Mad.

The attitude assumed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his supporters from the very beginning of the present Parliamentary Session at Ottawa shows how little they care for the welfare and good government of the country. Of course, an Opposition could scarcely be expected to approve and support everything a Government would bring before Parliament; but there is a limit. Legitimate criticism, with a view to amending and perfecting legislation, is quite proper; but opposition simply for opposition sake, and the waste of valuable time by obstructive tactics are not evidences of great statesmanship, and when carried to extremes deserve the most emphatic condemnation. This is the manner of tactics pursued by Laurier and his friends during the present session. Every important measure introduced by the Government has been fiercely attacked and subjected to the most factious opposition.

The Borden Government have shown that they appreciate at its proper value the responsibilities of government; that they are charged with a most important trust, and that the solemn and sacred duty devolves upon them to legislate in the interests of the people, and to jealously safeguard the resources of our country. The striking contrast, in these respects, between the conduct of the present Government and the Laurier Government has no doubt intensified the chagrin of the Opposition and embittered their opposition to every step in the Government's Parliamentary programme.

The policy of the Laurier Administration seems to have been to leave undone whatever offered any difficulty; to compromise the people's rights to Government advantage, and generally speaking to subordinate the good of the country to political expediency. By such tactics as these they left many complications to be unraveled by their successors. Among these is the question of the Manitoba boundaries. The matter of extending these boundaries has been under discussion for a great many years, and negotiations looking to a settlement have been in progress between the Federal and Provincial Governments all these years. But the Laurier Government never seriously entered into the work of effecting a completion. They kept putting it off from year to year till they were turned out of office.

This was a matter of extreme importance, considerably complicated and involving no little difficulty; but it had to be settled, and it is the test of statesmanship to grapple with and to find a solution of such difficulties as were here involved. This was one of the many knotty problems bequeathed to the Borden Government by their predecessors in office. The Borden Government did not shrink from the task or seek to evade their duty in the matter. They grappled with the difficulty and propounded a solution.

Under these circumstances one would be disposed to believe that the Opposition would be glad to assist the Government in their difficult

work. Nothing of the kind. The chagrin and disappointment of Laurier and his friends at the Borden's success in this matter was so great, that they exerted their utmost ingenuity to create difficulties for the Government and to place all manner of obstacles in their path. Meaningless amendments were moved and all manner of obstructive tactics indulged in, with a view of embarrassing the Government. But all they succeeded in accomplishing was a delay in the passage of the bill.

Attempts are made by Laurier and his friends to bring in all manner of side issues and to arouse prejudice against the Government. Then the Opposition press gets in its nefarious work. The Grit papers, from end to end of the Dominion, print reams of lies about the proceedings of the Government, in the hope of arousing dissatisfaction and discontent. The Grits are beside themselves with rage, because the Government are not following their advice. Let them possess their souls in patience; the Borden Government have no intention to commit political suicide to please their enemies. Their duty is to carry on the business of Canada in the most sane and enlightened manner, and they will not be turned aside by the ravings of the chagrined and disappointed Opposition.

A Costly Experiment.

That interesting legacy which the former Government of New Brunswick handed over to Mr. Hazen—the New Brunswick Coal and Railway—is still in evidence in the public accounts. The report of the commissioners presented to the House of Assembly yesterday shows that the deficit between earnings and expenses this year is about two thousand dollars more than last year and has reached the respectable figure of \$18,000. The experiment of the old Government in connection with this enterprise has proved a most disastrous one for the Province. Had the original proposition submitted to the House been carried out and the road built from Chipman to Gibson the country would have had something to show for the money invested and an enlarged market would have been provided for the mines. Instead of carrying out the pledge made to the country the Government of that day squandered the people's money in the construction of about 15 miles of main track and 10 of branches. The original proposition was a business one and had it been carried out honestly would not have been an expensive one for the Province, as it would have opened up the coal areas and given large employment. The scheme substituted by the Government was bad enough in itself, but the manner in which it was carried out was the most scandalous handling of public money ever known in this Province. Three-quarters of a million of dollars were spent in one way and another and no proper vouchers are obtainable as to what this money was spent for. The investigation held revealed an unbelievable condition of accounts, or lack of accounts, which failed to show anything of the business of the company. It was part of the old Government to muddle accounts and the success of this system has no better example than in the Central Railway.

The failure of the old Government to develop the Queens county coal areas has not prevented the present administration from taking up the question and dealing with it. Arrangements have been made for the construction of the Gibson Minto Railway and

for the operation of the coal mines on a much larger plan than in the original proposition. The Government has not only secured a company to build the railway but has arranged for its lease and operation by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, which also agrees to use the coal mined in Queen's county on its own line. Under this agreement there will soon be raised in Queen's county 100,000 tons of coal annually which alone will provide a paying traffic for the railway. In addition to providing a new outlet for Queens county coal, the Government will also lease the railway from Norton to Minto to the company operating Gibson-Minto section and the Province will be relieved of further deficits but will still have to contribute the interest and sinking fund—almost \$50,000 annually, because of the blundering, if not worse, of Messrs. Tweedie and Pugsley.—St. John Standard.

Federal Parliament.

(Condensed from St. John Standard's Report.)

Ottawa, March 6.—That a conference of the premiers of all the provinces of the Dominion will probably be held this summer to decide the question of Maritime representation was foreshadowed by Mr. Hazen tonight during the debate in committee on the Manitoba boundaries bill.

The minister of Marine and fisheries in the course of his speech made an eloquent plea on behalf of the Maritime Provinces both on the question of loss of representation and on the claims for compensation when the public domain is taken over by the prairie provinces.

The subject was brought up by Mr. Pugsley who moved an amendment to the section respecting the annual payment to Manitoba. The amendment was to the effect that the annual debt allowance to Manitoba should not be fixed until after a conference between all the premiers of the Dominion to consider revision of all provincial subsidies.

He asked that the question should be settled at an early date before redistribution and also that an act should be passed to prevent representation of the Maritime Provinces being reduced.

The Manitoba boundaries extension bill has had its second reading and has made some progress in committee of the whole.

The Liberals and Nationalists challenged it again at the formal second reading, and the government again secured a majority of 38. The debate today comprised but two speeches, by Mr. Lemieux and Mr. Borden.

Mr. Lemieux made a very long speech and took no stand. Mr. Borden made a rather short speech explaining exactly where he stood.

The first speaker of the day was Mr. Lemieux, who spoke for an hour, and three quarters and took no attitude whatever, on the question of separate schools.

The greater portion of his speech was a denunciation of Mr. Monk, Mr. Pelletier and Mr. Nantel, whom he assailed with great vigor as insincere and as having abandoned Mr. Bourassa after profiting by their alliance with him. He agreed with the criticisms of the terms of the arrangement put forward by other Liberals and defended Sir Wilfrid Laurier against the charge of having fought a double-faced campaign in 1896.

He met the quotation from Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Quebec speech in 1896 where he promised to coerce Manitoba,

if necessary, by saying that the words in the report "Did not sound like Sir Wilfrid Laurier."

Mr. Borden after some reference to the relations between Ontario and Manitoba, said that Mr. Lemieux had taunted Mr. Pelletier and Mr. Monk. At all events those ministers had had the courage to stand up in the House and state where they were on this question; while Mr. Lemieux had left the House as much in ignorance as to his attitude as it was with regard to the attitude of his leader. He had assailed Mr. Monk for his present attitude on the navy. Had Mr. Lemieux recalled his letter of August 4, 1903? Did he still stand there?

"Exactly," said Mr. Lemieux.

Mr. Borden read the letter. It was an attack on the Montreal chamber of commerce for having passed a resolution "Affirming a principle absolutely false, the obligation of the colonies to participate in the defence of the Empire." Proceeding Mr. Borden dealt with Mr. Lemieux's argument that Sir Wilfrid Laurier had not promised to coerce Manitoba on the ground that the words in question, "did not sound like him." Sir Wilfrid Laurier had not denied having uttered those words. He did not deny them now.

Thus pointedly appealed to Sir Wilfrid Laurier sat silent.

Mr. Borden went on to satirize Sir Wilfrid Laurier for his retreat to the lines of Torres Vedras, and Mr. Lemieux for being even deeper in than his chief. Why did not the Liberal leader state his own position? Instead he was submitting a cunningly devised amendment which might give him some advantage, while he remained in the lines of Torres Vedras, while his own press was making the attack which he did not make. Though willing to wound he was afraid to strike.

The Prime Minister then discussed Mr. Lamarche's compliment for the moderation and reasonable nature of his speech. He went over the legal argument which Mr. Monk had developed on the previous day.

He came from Nova Scotia, where there was no statutory provision for separate schools, and where none the less the relations between Protestants and Roman Catholics were as good and as friendly as anywhere in the Dominion. The Roman Catholics of Nova Scotia had no reason to complain; they were fairly, justly and honorably treated. What had been Sir Wilfrid Laurier's argument in 1896? That it was better to leave the matter to the people of Manitoba. The Roman Catholics of Manitoba constituted a larger proportion of the population of that province than did the Roman Catholics of the whole Dominion of the whole population of Canada. It could not be supposed that the influence of the Roman Catholics of Manitoba in advocating what they considered their just rights would be less powerful than it would be if they relied on ordinances passed under the Northwest Territories Act. The Roman Catholics of Manitoba were a more powerful minority than the Roman Catholics were in all Canada, and the majority in Manitoba would be as disposed to deal justly as was the majority in Nova Scotia.

The Premier next noticed the proposal to restrict the legislative authority of Manitoba with regard to the added territory. The proposal was politically impossible, because a Manitoba would not accept an extension of territory coupled with such restrictions.

It was constitutionally impossible. Mr. Borden cited the British North America Act of 1871, and showed that under it, while parliament may impose what constitution it chooses on a new province which it creates, once a province has been created its area can be increased or diminished only with the consent of its legislature.

The division on the second reading followed. The bill carried by 114 to 76, the majority again being 38. The same five French Conservatives bolted.—Mr. Bellemare, Mr. Guilbault, Mr. Lamarche, Mr. Paquet and Mr. Sevigny. Mr. Mondou voted with the government.

March 7th.—The Manitoba Boundaries Extension Bill was taken up in committee this eve-

ing and was persistently obstructed by the Liberals, their discussion being tedious and devoid of new issues. Sometime after midnight the first vote was taken, the government having a majority of 89.

Several miscellaneous items of government business were dealt with.

Mr. Hazen's bill creating the Biological Board of Canada was disposed of after a short discussion in committee on the investigations which the board conducts.

The Senate amendment to the inquiries Bill was accepted. Mr. Doherty secured the assent of the House to his resolution dealing with the Yukon judges. In boom time the Yukon was given an outfit of three judges each established for life, each with a living allowance of \$5,000 a year in addition to his salary as judge. It is proposed to retire two of them on full pay for life, leaving Judge MacAulay in charge. Two living allowances of \$10,000 a year in all will be saved.

Two more government measures were advanced. Dr. Reid's bill to improve the salaries of certain customs officers in the outside service and Mr. Pelletier's resolution to give assistant postmasters in post offices yielding a revenue of \$1,000,000 and upwards. Toronto and Montreal, salaries ranging between \$2,800 and \$3,500.

After 8 o'clock the House went once more into committee on the Manitoba Extension Bill.

The Liberals obstructed all evening Messrs. Turgeon, Molloy and Emerson being the earlier speakers.

Mr. Emerson spoke at considerable length, censuring the government for the financial terms, for its opposition to reciprocity, for its behaviour on the branch lines of the Intercolonial, and for a few other wickednesses. Incidentally he bewailed the condition of New Brunswick, citing the immigration convention which is being held in Fredericton as a proof of the prevalent despondency.

He also referred to the badge to be worn by delegates, and bewailed the desperate straits to which the province was reduced for want of immigration.

These unbecomingly lamentations by the member of Westmoreland were not allowed to go unanswered. Mr. Hazen promptly came to the rescue of the fair name of the province.

"I also," he said, "am the proud possessor of one of those badges which I now hold in my hand."

My honorable friend was giving a very free translation of the inscription. To listen to him one would think the convention was to be held because the people of New Brunswick are bowed down with care and sorrow, and that they felt it necessary to hold this convention because of what he called the deserted homes and deserted farms throughout the province. That is not at all the reason. The convention is being held because there is a feeling of extreme optimism in the breast of everyone in the province today. Mr. Hazen read the inscription on the badge: "Delegate to Immigration Convention, Fredericton, March 8th. We are going to boost New Brunswick."

"Not New Brunswick the downtrodden," he continued, "not New Brunswick the depressed, but New Brunswick the busy east of Canada," the House cheered.

Mr. Hazen went on to call attention to the reasons given why the delegates should attend the congress, and read from the St. John Standard an extract from the address of T. H. Estabrooks at a meeting of the board of trade. The report, he remarked, in passing, was in a paper read on all occasions with great care by Mr. Pugsley, and to which he occasionally made reference in the House. Mr. Estabrooks, he pointed out, had stated to the board that owing to the more favorable attitude assumed by the federal government to the eastern provinces, and the interest shown by the provincial government in immigration, they should do all that was possible to boost the immigration movement and send a large delegation to the congress.

"It is not necessary for me to remind my hon. friend from Westmoreland," concluded Mr. Hazen, "amid laughter of the House, or to remind any hon. gentleman who knows New Brunswick, that Mr. Estabrooks, who made this statement about the more favorable attitude of the federal government and the attitude of the provincial government as regards immigration, is not a member of the Conservative party, but is a leading citizen of St. John, and one of the most active and jealous leaders

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Unauthorized publication of this notice will not be paid for.

G. J. DESBARATS,
 Deputy Minister of the Naval Service,
 Department of the Naval Service,
 Ottawa, Feb. 10th, 1912.
 Feb. 21, 1912.—41

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