

# Our Ottawa Letter

War Session of Canadian Parliament  
(By The Guide Special Correspondent)

Ottawa, August 22.—The first war session of the Dominion Parliament, which opened on Tuesday, August 18, closed this afternoon. The disposition on all sides was to make it a brief sitting, and the house sat only five days. The prediction that the session would be of a non-contentious character has proven to be correct. An agreement to that effect was reached by the two party leaders and the compact was sealed in public when Sir Robert and Sir Wilfrid spoke on the address. They united in declaring that it was the duty of the Canadian Parliament, as well as of the Canadian people, to display a unanimity of purpose in the face of the foe; that the German and Austrian governments should get no comfort from the display of any party division in the greatest of the British overseas dominions.

The formal opening was solemn and businesslike. There was no fuss or feathers. When the Duke of Connaught read the speech from the throne he was attired in the service uniform of a British field marshal. The Duchess, who sat beside him was simply attired. The Princess Patricia and two ladies in waiting were the only representatives of the gentler sex on the floor of the senate. In the galleries the long rows of seats were occupied by the general public who, for the first time on record, were admitted without ticket. The officers of the headquarters staff in attendance on the Duke wore khaki uniforms. In a word the opening was about as democratic as it was possible to make it without a departure from the usual forms. It was all over in half an hour.

## Sir Wilfrid Laurier

On Wednesday a crowded house and still more crowded galleries listened to the speeches of the leaders on the address. Sir Wilfrid Laurier came first and in his opening sentences extended the olive branch to the government. There would be no criticism of what had been done, he said, even if the opposition considered that the government had not gone about all the business in the proper manner. The tongues of the critics would be silenced "so long as there was danger at the front." In eloquent language Sir Wilfrid defended the decision of the Imperial government to stand by its solemn obligations to its allies. "This is a just war," he declared. "It is a fight of the people against autocracy, a struggle against those blind forces which recognize might as right. It is our duty—more pressing upon us than all other duties—at once, on this first day of debate in a Canadian parliament, to let Great Britain know, to let the friends and foes of Great Britain know, that there is in Canada but one mind and one heart and that all Canadians stand behind the Mother Country, conscious and proud that she did not engage in that war from any selfish motive, for any purpose of aggrandizement, but that she has engaged in that war to maintain untarnished the honor of her name, to fulfill her obligations to her allies, and to save civilization from unbridled lust of conquest and of power."

In closing Sir Wilfrid referred to the unity of the British Empire as demonstrated by the silencing of the factional fight in Ireland, and made the optimistic prediction "that thru this painful war the British Empire will emerge with a new bond of union, the pride of all her citizens, the living lesson of other nations."

## Sir Robert Borden

The house fairly rocked with applause as Sir Wilfrid resumed his seat and Sir Robert Borden rose, not on this occasion to "reply," but to "acquiesce" in all that had been said by the leader of the opposition. The prime minister, amidst frequent outbursts of applause, quoted from the Imperial white papers and from the speeches of Premier Asquith and Sir Edward Grey to show that the British government had done everything possible to prevent this war. He

expressed the earnest conviction that Germany had long contemplated a breach of the neutrality of Belgium and that the attack of Austria upon Serbia was premeditated. Of the part Canada and Canadians should play in the struggle he said: "We stand shoulder to shoulder with Britain and the other British dominions in the quarrel. And that duty we shall not fail to fulfil as the honor of Canada demands. Not for love of battle, not for love of conquest, not for greed of possessions, but for the cause of honor, to maintain solemn pledges, to uphold principles of liberty, to withstand forces that would convert the world into an armed camp, yea, in the very name of peace that we sought at any cost save that of dishonor, we have entered into this war and while gravely conscious of the tremendous issues involved and of all the sacrifices that they may entail, we do not shrink from them, but with firm hearts we abide the event."

## The "Sinews of War"

The house having devoted the Wednesday sitting to a justification of participation in the conflict, the session of Thursday was taken up with consideration of the measures to be adopted to provide for the "sinews of war." As Dr. Michael Clark stated in his short criticism of the budget announcements of the minister of finance, war produces abnormal conditions which must be met. Hon. W. T. White had made this perfectly clear in his summary of the situation. During the fiscal year which closes on March 31 next, he explained, the revenues of the country will just about meet the current expenditures which are expected to total approximately \$135,000,000. This means that the war expenditure and all capital and special expenditure must be provided for either by increased taxation or borrowings. The war and capital expenditures, so far as they can be estimated at the present time, will amount to \$68,500,000, of which twenty-five millions has already been provided for by loans. The minister proposes to raise an additional seven millions by increased tariff and excise duties before the end of the fiscal year, to provide fifteen millions by an additional issue of Dominion notes and to borrow another twenty-one millions. Just where we are going to borrow the money the minister did not explain. As a belligerent nation we cannot borrow in the United States and it will not be available in England. It is probable, therefore, that there will be an issue of government funds which will be taken up by the Canadian people. The new taxes are confined chiefly to sugar, coffee, tobaccos and liquor. There are slight increases in the tariff on canned fruits and preserves, cocoa, chocolate, etc., but there is no new tax on tea. For a full fiscal year the new excise taxes are expected to produce \$6,600,000 per annum; the customs taxes on sugar, \$5,000,000; on coffee, \$500,000; on liquors, \$2,500,000; and on tobaccos, \$200,000. The excise and customs duties on liquors and tobaccos are made retroactive to Aug. 7, the day on which war broke out. Mr. White raised a general laugh in the house when he explained that this had been decided upon "to meet the action of brewers and distillers in drawing their goods out of bond in anticipation of these very taxes."

## Income Tax Suggested

Members of the opposition refrained from any serious criticism of the government's proposals, altho under ordinary conditions such additional taxes would have been bitterly fought. Dr. Michael Clark regretted that in order to raise the comparatively small amount required the government had deemed it advisable to disturb existing tariff conditions. The taxes on sugar, coffee, etc., he said would impose an additional tax upon the poor who will bear more than their share of the burdens of the war. The government might have been well advised had it imposed a graduated income tax on all incomes exceeding fifteen hundred dollars per annum. Dr. Clark approved the war



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