

News From The Parliament Buildings

EVANTUREL NOW PARTY OUTCAST

Debarred From Caucus and Not Recognized as Good Liberal.

FERGUSON WAS HOOTED

Members Did Not Like His Continuation of the Disclosures.

(Continued From Page 1.)

In the observation made by the acting prime minister that the matter is one of great importance and a serious matter, and should engage the serious attention of the government. The Hon. Mr. Foy will find that we will facilitate any action which the government may think proper in view of the matter that has been brought before the house.

When Mr. Rowell first rose from his seat in the house the expectation of the members was that he would add a final word to the debate on the tax reform amendment. Before that point was reached, however, he read the statement which ruled the member from Prescott out of the Ontario Liberal party. His few words in advocacy of tax reform were then taken to conclude the debate and allow the house to adjourn. It being past 8 o'clock. Certain of the government, however, were not prepared to let the matter stand at that stage, and then followed a period in which the rules of the house went by the board and the principles of constitution became almost hopelessly tangled.

Not Far Enough.

Howard Ferguson of Grenville, who had read the letter the afternoon before, craved permission to speak for a few moments, and at once expressed the opinion that although a statement had been forthcoming from Mr. Rowell, the purport of it had not gone far enough in view of the seriousness of the case in hand. The matter required more than a mere repudiation. Could the Liberal party so easily dissociate itself from the facts of the case? What were the facts but that this man had been a trusted confidant of the opposition, a participant in the secret of the policy, one who had while speaking against the temperance stand had yet voted for it in the house. He had been welcomed as a part and parcel of the party and by no means more than by his leader.

He had practically gone arm in arm with his leader on the temperance platform, and yet had been trying to get a sum of money from the liquor interests, "no doubt, with the intention of subscribing a large donation to the party funds."

Question of Taste.

Immediately Mr. Rowell sprang to his feet and interrupted. On a matter of taste he would leave it to the hon. gentleman, but from a standpoint of fact he was wrong. The member had never traveled thru the country with him.

I said figuratively," said Mr. Ferguson.

"Neither figuratively nor any other way," declared Mr. Rowell warmly, with his followers in loud support.

Mr. Ferguson resumed by calling upon the members to look at the records of the house in 1912, since the would find that Mr. Ewanturel had paired with the member for Manitoulin on the abolition-bar debate, both members being out of the house at the time, and in this sense voted against the government.

Here the atmosphere became so warm that the speaker interposed and threatened to rule the whole affair out of order. Hon. J. J. Foy helped straighten matters out, however, and it proceeded.

The hon. member for Prescott had endorsed the opinions of the opposition, and had voted for them in abolishing the bar. They have approved his allegiance and accepted his support. He said that he had not only subscribed to the opposition policy, but had sympathized with the government. This was not the case, and it was not fair for the leader to allow such misrepresentation to exist. Knowing all the time that he was opposed to abolishing the bar, and voted that way, they had yet taken him to the bosom of the party. He supposed that this could be done as long as it was not discovered.

General Protest.

Uproar broke loose at this point, and there were interruptions from all sides. Opposition members rose in their seats and shouted that it was retracted. Others called "Rotten!" "Rot!" "You are the only man in the house who would say it!" and a general protest rose all round the house.

In continuing, the member stated that he did not think the country would be satisfied with the light and trivial manner in which this serious matter was handled. The leader held a very responsible position, and the house could not be satisfied with a mere repudiation. He did not need to point out similar cases which had happened in every legislature and parliament, and the course which a normal, temperate and proper proceeding took. It should be shown that the Liberal party was tainted from the fatal suspicion of being mixed up in the affair.

Liberal Whip Bowman arose, and cries of adjournment were made, but Mr. Rowell declared that the house would sit until the matter was settled. The hon. member could not make unfounded statements without having them denied.

Bowman Did It. Mr. Bowman then got an opportunity and gave a very enlightening statement. He explained the pairing of the vote in 1912, as done on his own responsibility, an action for which he was called to serious account by Ewanturel afterwards. The Prescott member had left a statement with his neighbor to the effect that he did not wish to be paired.

"It could have been expunged," called Mr. Ferguson.

Mr. Bowman stated that he had been caused at the frantic efforts which had turned out to be a disappointment to himself, and probably to a few of his friends on the government side. He stated to amplify the stand and effect of the leader of the opposition, but, he was confident, had signally failed. The house then adjourned.

TAX REFORM PROPOSAL LOST AFTER DISCUSSION IN HOUSE

J. C. Elliott's Amendment Defeated by Sixty-One to Seventeen After Existing Inequalities in Assessment System Had Been Discussed by Many Members.

Tax reform has again been revived on the floor of the Ontario Legislature by the opposition, and once again the amendment suggested has been overwhelmed by the government majority. J. C. Elliott of West Middlesex, who yesterday brought in an amendment of criticism at the lack of any apparent intention on the part of the administration to amend the legislation now in force, saw his efforts swamped by a vote of 61 to 17.

The fact that the discussion of this subject only consumed three hours of the session points to its recurrence as a new measure to be dealt with in the next two or three weeks. The opposition, in the words of Mr. Rowell, is determined to bring this matter definitely before the members for an expression of individual opinion. The standpoints taken yesterday did not differ materially from those which have been urged in the past, the general argument of the opposition regarding the inequality which was worked among the counties and the different municipalities, and that the rural districts were bearing an unwarranted burden, whereas the cities were profiting with no good reason for doing so. The attitude of the government in the statements of R. R. Gamney of Manitoulin and A. B. Thompson of Simcoe was that the present act, although perhaps weak in parts, was yet being worked out fairly satisfactorily. Any revision to a system of single tax could not be considered as aiding the situation whatever.

Good Prospects. In introducing the subject of tax reform, Mr. Elliott first spoke of the good prospects of the legislature granting a measure of value to the country on the twin problem of woman suffrage. There was no question of the advisability of the right which the franchise. The deputations which had approached the government could not but be productive of the best results. The question had never been put more tactfully or concisely, and, judging from the action of the speaker, before the session was closed, they would be given the right which the municipal franchise entitled them to.

Was there any doubt, he wondered, with the dissatisfaction over the present system of taxation? Why would he ask, was so sweeping a verdict rendered in Toronto last year? Was it because the mass of the people were Liberals attempting to embarrass the government, or was it not because there was a general demand? The people know what they want and mean what they say.

He took for an example the County of Middlesex, which in farm wealth was the greatest, and the assessment of which stood at \$68,000,000. Simcoe, York and Huron followed in order. These he compared to show the difference in their assessments and those of the cities.

In the Assessment Act you will find at least twenty exemptions in the tax on income," he declared. "This runs thru all the other branches and great discrepancies exist."

Checkered System. In the townships of East and West Williams, in his own county the taxes on land compared alternately with \$32 per acre and \$2 on buildings, and \$2 per acre and \$5 on buildings, and the same ratios prevail all thru the province. It meant that the whole system was one of checkered and inequality. Nowhere would it be possible to find a system that so deserved the name as that in the province. In Toronto the difference in assessment between 1912 and 1914 was \$13,000,000, and whereas the people of Middlesex had taken years to pay the increased value of \$37,000,000, Toronto had greatly exceeded this in one year.

Not Entitled to It. The people owning land and holding it at enormous figures in the cities were not in any way entitled to the value of the business had brought it, but it was not just. The unearned increment should be shared and the proportion removed would still allow the owner all he deserved. A 25 per cent tax on the fifty-three millions of Toronto would be nearly enough to pay the whole business tax of the province. After all it was really the amount who paid the business tax, and it made no difference whether it was a 25 per cent tax on the fifty-three millions or a 25 per cent tax on the business tax.

"Is there enough unearned increment in your town to pay the business tax?" asked a government member.

The reply was that the condition did not exist in the smaller places, and in the country, but that these indirectly were paying it in the cities. He then compared the tax income from York as one million less than that of Middlesex. The explanation was that land values were not realized.

"We are away behind the old land in our taxation system," he declared in conclusion. "The time has come for one far more equitable and satisfactory." The comparisons of Mr. Elliott were laughed at by H. E. Gamney from Manitoulin as ridiculous. "Taxation had no connection with the business tax," he declared. "There was no coming into the province, and if the big cities paid more than the country why should the farmer come in from the easier districts?"

Same Weak Points. Mr. Gamney stated that there might be some weak points in the law. The fact that there were variances in the taxes lay at the door of the different assessors, really.

SPEAKER'S DINNER

The following were invited by Hon. Mr. Speaker Hoyle to dinner on Thursday night, to meet His Honor the Lieutenant-governor: Sir James Whitney, Hon. J. J. Foy, Hon. Dr. Fyfe, Hon. Dr. Reame, Hon. J. S. Duff, Sir William Meredith, Sir Glenholme Falconbridge, Sir Mortimer Clark, His Grace the Archbishop, Rev. Chancellor Kidd, His Lordship Bishop Sweeney, Rev. Dr. A. Carmichael, President R. A. Falconer, Rev. Chancellor McCrimmon, Rev. Provost Macklem, Rev. Crawford Brown, Rev. Rabbi Jacobs, Principal H. W. Auden, Col. G. T. Denison, D. M. McIntyre, Major Gen. Lessard, Hon. Senator Jaffray, His Worship the Mayor, Dr. J. A. Macdonald, Sir John Willison, W. J. Douglas, J. E. Atkinson, J. Ross Robertson, W. F. Maclean, N. W. Rowell, E. Clarke, W. Proudfoot, J. C. Elliott, C. S. Cameron, G. S. Henry, Hon. Dr. Preston, C. M. Bowman, Hon. Thomas Crawford, W. McNair, J. L. Eastehart, T. H. Lennox, W. D. McPherson, W. S. Brewster, C. R. McKeown, G. H. Ferguson, Dr. D. Jamieson, T. R. Whiteside, E. W. J. Owens, P. W. McGarry, Col. J. S. Ryerson, James Clancy, Dr. J. McQueen, T. Marshall, Dr. A. Campbell, Dr. Wishart, A. H. Syder, Major Caldwell, Mr. Glackmeyer.

His own opinion was that a whole country could be better served by the one official rather than by having each municipality. The system might be wrong, but it was being carried out consistently, and there was no reason why one place should suffer more than another.

His conclusion was that every one held his own opinion of what was right in the matter. There had been no minority report when the assessment committee of 1902 brought in their report.

"I differ with the Assessment Act myself in some respects," he declared, "but when you come to talking of exempting buildings, having single tax on land alone I differ entirely. I know that plan would not serve the country as it is equitable as could be devised. Further, every man should pay a tax on every dollar that he possesses, no matter where it is. To have single tax and to grant individual rights to municipalities would not help matters at all."

He argued that the whole objection of the opposition was founded on a political basis. The member from East Middlesex was playing to the country and embarking the government.

His impression was that from a business standpoint the country was pretty well satisfied with the present situation. He would advise asking the farmer and the citizen how they liked the legislation they were getting.

Any Move Good. Z. Mageau, Sturgeon Falls, in seconding the amendment, followed Mr. Gamney, and criticized some of his statements. He contended that any amendment which would bring about a revision in the present system of assessment and taxation would be a move in the right direction. He declared that the present system was a hardship on the settlers in New Ontario, as it favored the non-resident owners who got their statutory work done by proxy and that such a condition hindered development. He wanted the assessment act made clear, so that every municipality would not have to employ expensive counsel to interpret it and a definite value could be placed on the land and buildings. In regard to Mr. Gamney's endorsement of the work of the agricultural colleges, Mr. Mageau declared that not one young man from New Ontario was attending the Guelph college, because it was too expensive. He advocated the extension of the college functions to various parts of the province. He declared that the front-end phase of taxation, the speaker declared that municipalities of Ontario were supposed to receive half of the \$860,000 revenue from railway taxation, but New Ontario municipalities were not included in it.

Mr. Gamney challenged the Mageau statement, declaring that every properly organized township in New Ontario got its share.

"I have never seen any of it," replied Mr. Mageau. "Sturgeon Falls has never received any of it," he declared. Mr. Mageau was forced to admit that he was not certain of his statement, but he intended to find out. The amount received, if any, was not sufficient to pay for the tax books.

Different Conditions. A. B. Thompson, Centre Simcoe, said that Mr. Mageau was attacking the government for not doing something it had already done, referring to the matter of agricultural college training in rural districts. He instanced the thirty-seven traveling representatives who visited various parts of the province and said that over fifty farmers' sons in his own constituency had already received training in all branches. Taking up the single point of revenue, he declared that it was tried under boom conditions, but the same conditions did not prevail in Ontario. He quoted an instance in Toronto of a large residence erected at a cost of \$500,000 (the Pallast case), being assessed at \$200,000, which was later reduced by the courts to \$100,000. The single tax, in his opinion, was a splendid scheme to make the poor man pay the taxes of the rich man.

V. R. Atkinson, North Norfolk, declared himself in favor of taking taxes off improvements and placing them on land, and he said the women ought to have a vote. Allan Studholme vigorously supported the amendment, declaring that there were variances in the taxes in his own assessment with each municipality.

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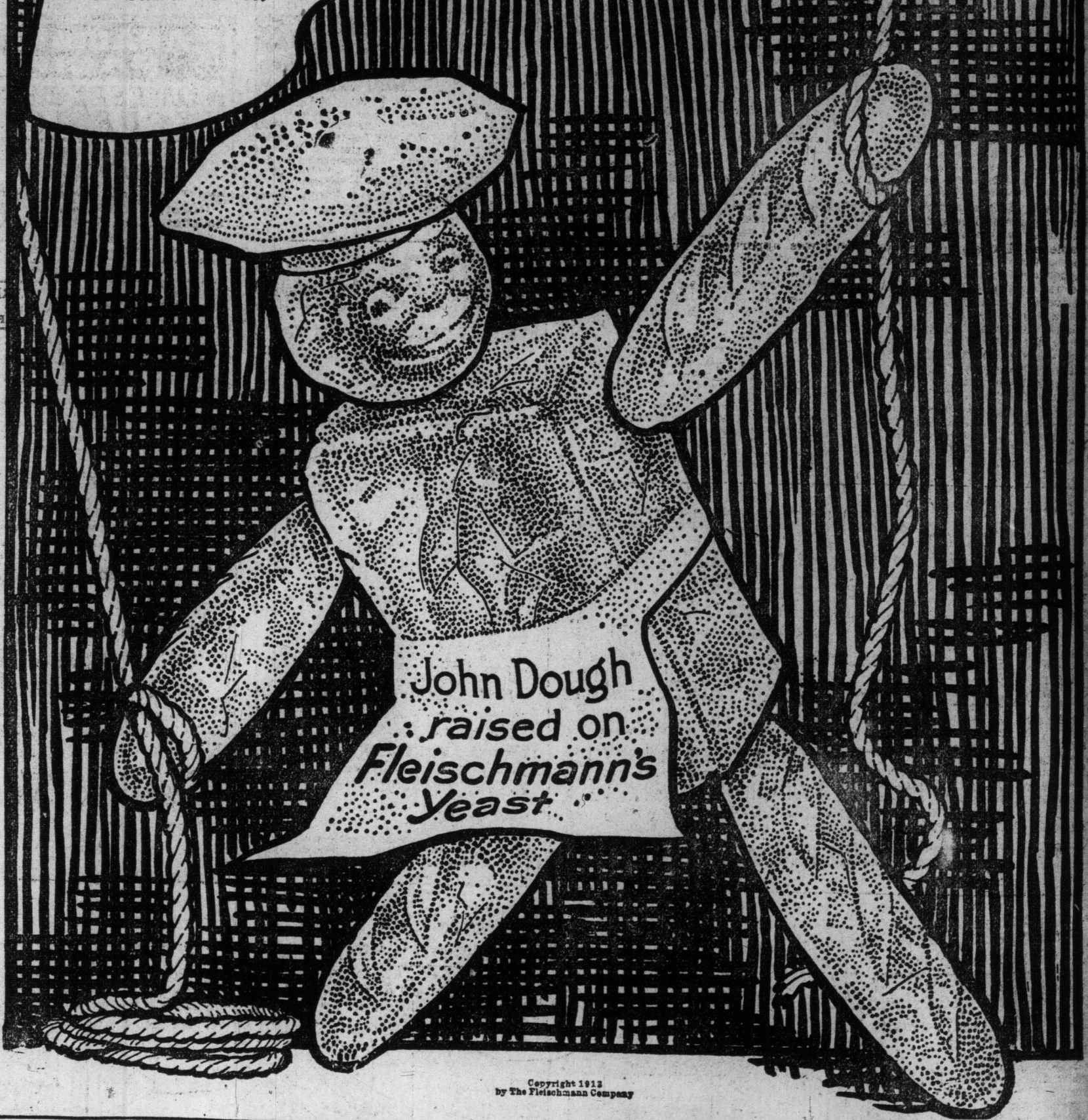
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NEW MEMBERS TAKE SEATS ON COMMITTEES

The new members of the legislature now take their places upon the standing committees. Messrs. Falls of Peel, Henry of East York, and Cameron of North Grey, sit on the private bills and on the standing orders, with the two latter also serving on the municipal. John McFarlane from East Middlesex, and Falls are together on agriculture, and Cameron and McFarlane on the privileges and elections. Three new faces appear on the public accounts committee for the year. They are Messrs. Torrance and Lennox of the government, and Dr. McQueen of Wentworth for the opposition.

GERMANY WILL GUARD OIL IN NEW GUINEA

BERLIN, Feb. 26.—A promise to withdraw all the oil lands in German New Guinea from private exploitation pending investigation of their nature and extent was given today by Herr William Solf, minister of the colonies, at the instance of the budget committee. A appropriation of \$125,000 was passed by the committee for the purposes of survey. Dr. Solf said the companies bidding for the concession had all demanded the exclusive rights of exploitation. The government was opposed to doing this as a plan for the operation of the oil fields by the government was under consideration.

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