

# BORDEN AGGRESSIVE LAURIER DEFENSIVE

## Early Stages of Session Show That Government is Weakening—Laurier Alarmed Over Borden's Tour and Ignores King's Speech to Attack Halifax Platform

Ottawa, Dec. 2.—Sir Wilfrid Laurier made a new departure today in the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne. As Mr. Foster very aptly phrased it: He devoted himself to the Halifax platform and ignored the King's speech. He devoted himself to Mr. Borden's platform and Mr. Borden's tour, and for a time the address itself was lost sight of. Mr. Fielding will speak tomorrow and to him will fall the duty of stating the position of the government upon the great public questions of the day. Mr. Borden on the other hand discussed every matter touched upon by the speech from the throne, even those matters which he declared to be outside of party politics. He urged prompt and efficient action to be taken in regard to the reforms. He referred to Mr. Pugsley's speeches, and repeated his challenge that an impartial commission should be appointed to investigate all campaign funds and transactions in the general elections of 1904. He stated his position upon Japanese immigration, and forced upon the government the dilemma that either it had been deceived by the Government of Japan, or it itself had willfully deceived parliament when the Japanese treaty was adopted. He demanded that the officers of the government responsible for the Quebec bridge disaster should be exposed. Mr. Borden reviewed the recent cabinet changes and senatorial appointments, and touching upon the financial stringency, now admitted by the government to exist, pointed out the enormous sums drained from the people by taxation and the heavy balance of trade against us.

**Premier's Reply Vague**  
Sir Wilfrid Laurier, in reply, was not at his best. His opening sentences were scarcely audible. Many points made by Mr. Borden were not referred to and he took his seat with out a single reference to the "All Red" line. Even when pressed for information upon this subject he refused to make any announcement.

Hon. Geo. G. Foster, who had been greeted upon entering the chamber with cheers, and whose desk was adorned with flowers, answered the premier with incisive eloquence. He denounced the doctrine that Japan must be treated better than China, because Japan was more powerful. He made Mr. Carvell, of New Brunswick, and other ambitious Liberals unhappy by saying that Sir Wilfrid considered them as "white wings," or day laborers, that when he wanted skilled labor for cabinet positions he went outside of the House. Only the judgment was correct, could there be found any Liberal politician of sufficient capacity. Indeed he had been driven to pick up cast-offs of the Conservative party. One shining example had recently been imported from New Brunswick. Mr. Hall of Peterboro, who moved the address, was lavish in eulogy of the premier. Mr. Foster said it recalled the fervid words of the member for Centre York (Mr. Campbell) upon a similar occasion. "And where now is the member for Centre York?" he asked. "Alas he has been sent away to the old woman's home. Even he could not land that coveted job in the cabinet."

**Mover of the Address**  
Mr. Hall, in moving the address, commenced by declaring it an honor not to himself, but to his constituency, in being called upon to fulfill the duty he was performing that day. In a prepared speech he made long references to the expansion of trade throughout the Dominion. So far as the financial condition of Canada was concerned he did not think that any one could find any fault with it. He quoted a number of figures showing the growth of Canada's trade with other countries, and cited the improvement in transportation facilities for the shipment of Canada's products to distant lands. Increased immigration under the Laurier regime was also dealt with by Mr. Hall as well as postal reform and improvements in railway facilities. He made a passing reference to the Oriental question in the west, and wished success to the mission of the postmaster general in Japan. The French treaty was briefly alluded to by Mr. Hall, who finished up with a most flattering eulogy of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his administration.

Mr. Lanctot (Richelieu), who spoke in French, seconded the address in reply, and made suitable allusions to the excellent relations existing between the French and English peoples and in this direction he warmly congratulated the government upon the conclusion of its treaty with France.

Mr. R. L. Borden  
Mr. R. L. Borden, who was received with loud opposition cheering, made one of the best speeches he has ever made in the House, and although he paid the customary compliments to the mover and seconder of the address, he practically dispensed with preliminaries and started right in to take the government to task for its wrong doing. While congratulating

**The French Treaty**  
"But, we have something said in the speech from the throne," Mr. Borden reminded the House, "respecting the treaty with France. I join with the government in hoping that this treaty may increase trade between France and Canada and the present good feeling now existing between the French Republic and the British Empire. There are some items in that treaty which must afford peculiar gratifications to the minister of agriculture. It was he, I believe, who committed the great Liberal party by its Ottawa platform to the total prohibition of the manufacture, sale and importation of all alcoholic liquors. In this treaty I find that the duties are reduced upon gin, rum and champagne, brandy, bitters, imitation brandies and light wines. The workmen of this country, even those poorly paid or out of employment, may lay in for the long cold winter a good supply of champagne, light wines and angostura bitters."

**Quebec Bridge Disaster**  
Mr. Borden referred to the Quebec bridge disaster. The scheme was a national undertaking, a part of the transcontinental railway. By law its design and plan was to be approved by an order in council. No money was to be paid except upon estimates approved by a government engineer. Was it not fair to ask what officer of the government was responsible for a defective plan or defects in construction? Whether the accident was the result of their negligence or incompetency? A great scientific authority had declared that the efforts to avert this disaster was more like the shovelling up of a country bridge, than intelligent construction work upon the greatest engineering undertaking heretofore attempted upon this continent.

He also wished to know why the government, when it furnished substantially all the money and assumed the responsibility for the bridge, permitted it to be under the immediate control of a private corporation, which had only put up a capital of some \$66,000.

**Asiatic Immigration**  
The leader of the opposition then touched upon the matter of Japanese immigration. It was an economic question. It should not be confused with any lawless outbreaks of individuals or with the unbridled duty of the government, to make reparation for any outrages committed. "We have no race question," he declared, "and we want no race question in Canada." True, the House has adopted the Japanese treaty, but why? He quoted from Sir Wilfrid Laurier's assurance that the Japanese government had restricted to ten from each province, or 120 a year at all. This statement had been made by the premier in 1903, and repeated in 1906. The minister of agriculture upon his return from Japan had assured parliament that the Japanese were a home-loving people, and that he had secured from the Japanese government assurances, that they would not be permitted to go from Japan to Canada or other countries, unless they were merchants, students or travellers. In view of recent events, Mr. Borden declared that "one of two things was evident: Either the Japanese government had deceived the Laurier Government, or the Laurier government had deceived parliament."

He repeated that the matter was an economic question. The working men of British Columbia would not and should not be forced to lower their standard of living to the Asiatic standard.

**Financial Stringency**  
The financial stringency, in the speech from the throne, was referred to as world-wide. The speech had not been as frank in previous years, when diating upon the prosperity of Canada.

To what extent was the government of the day responsible for this stringency? It had enhanced the cost of living by its high valorem customs duties and had depressed individual thrift by its onerous burdens of taxation.

In the five years ending 1896, the Conservative government administered the country by collecting in taxes \$27,750,000 per annum, or \$5.60 per capita. In the five years ending 1907 the Liberal government collected in taxes \$57,000,000, or \$9.47 per capita. For the year ending March 31, the taxes collected were \$68,000,000, or \$10.74 per capita. This government was at present collecting from the people of Canada \$1,322,000 a week, or \$800,000 a week more than the Conservative government collected in 1896 when it was roundly denounced by Mr. Fielding in the Halifax Chronicle for its "reckless extravagance." He had investigated against the government at that time for its surpluses, saying they "drain the Dominion" yet today as minister of finance, he boasted of surpluses amounting to ninety million dollars.

Then, too, was it strange that this country today should begin to suffer from the way that, under this government, the balance of trade had grown against us? The average balance against us for the five years ending in 1896 was only \$8,250,000. For the five years ending with 1907 the average was \$57,432,000. For the current fiscal year the adverse balance

and accomplishing nothing. The leader of the opposition, said Sir Wilfrid, had started a missionary tour to evangelise the west, setting his sails nicely trimmed to catch every passing breeze. The word protection was written very small indeed in the Halifax program, so small indeed that it was not visible to the naked eye. In the Conservative party there were protectionists and protectionists.

**Degrees of Protection**  
"There are protectionists in the city of Toronto," he said, "and some other places, who would have the tariff raised as high as Haman's gallows. There are other protectionists who would have the tariff brought so low that protection would not be distinguishable from free trade." Between these two factions Mr. Borden hesitated some years ago and declared in favor of adequate protection, but it would appear in the course of time, and according to experience, adequate protection became inadequate. Next to the fiscal policy the most important plank in the Halifax platform was that of dealing with public ownership of public facilities, and in this matter, Sir Wilfrid asserted that Mr. Borden was merely a follower of the member for South York.

In spite of the attitude of certain public journals, Sir Wilfrid claimed that corporations were necessary on the ground that they could accomplish more than could be done by individual effort, and he urged that the railways were better managed by private enterprise than by State ownership. When the question arose of the construction of the C.P.R. there was not a single question raised at that time as to whether it should be constructed under government or private ownership.

**Japanese Question**  
Passing reference was made by Sir Wilfrid to the question of public ownership of telegraphs and telephones, and next he took up the question of Japanese immigration. It was a question entirely different from that of Chinese immigration. Japan was no longer a nation they could treat with contempt and indifference, and moreover she was in alliance with Great Britain. Moreover Canada had a treaty with Japan and was selling goods to the Japanese. The question was not one for British Columbia alone, but it was an imperial one. Canada could not treat Japan as she could have done 25 years ago. He spoke hopefully of the visit of Mr. Lemoine to Tokio. "The people of British Columbia have certain views said Sir Wilfrid, "I would not be honest with myself or with them if I were to say I share these views, but while I may not share them I am bound to respect them."

The premier critic said Mr. Borden's attitude upon the matter of increased subsidy for British Columbia. He declared that the question of provincial subsidies was one of the most dangerous ones in this country. It was the weak link in the chain of confederation. At the provincial conference of 1906 the provinces agreed on a basis; all agreed that British Columbia should have an extra allowance, and the only dispute was as to the amount. That amount was fixed at \$100,000 per year for ten years and the agreement was ratified without dissent by parliament. Was it, the premier asked, clean politics to hold out a promise of financial gain to British Columbia as an inducement to vote for the Conservative party?

When the premier concluded, Mr. Borden asked—How about the "All Red" line?

Sir Wilfrid Laurier—I have nothing to communicate to the house on that subject at present.

Hon. Geo. E. Foster  
Hon. George E. Foster began his reply by saying that it did not lie in the mouth of the premier to say that the leader of the opposition was offering a bribe to British Columbia. It was historical that he (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) had made a direct, specific bargain with Honore Mercier by which for Laurier, that province was to get a certain amount by way of increased subsidy. The premier had ridiculed the Halifax platform as indefinite, he had discovered that it was obscure

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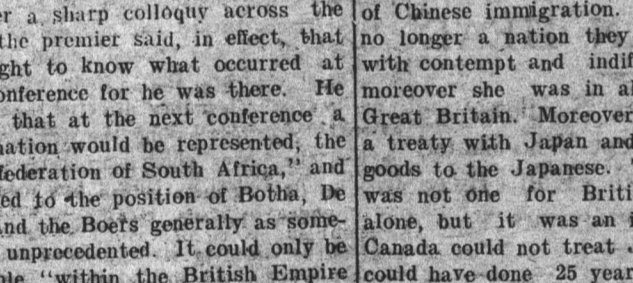
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