

CRERAR LIKELY TO LEAD THE RETURN TO THE OLD PARTY

Those Who Strayed Away May Receive Complete Absolution from the Liberal Leader According to Indications.

Ottawa, March 5.—Hon. T. A. Crerar, leader of the third party, will announce his policy and statements tomorrow in his speech on the address. It is very probable that he will align himself with the Liberal Opposition as a step toward the first political merger of this Parliament. He has always been a decided Liberal partisan, and so are all the members of his group.

Much interest is manifested in the attitude of Dr. Michael Clark. If Mr. Crerar succeeds in leading him back into the official Liberal party, Parliament will enjoy the spectacle of militant Michael receiving absolution from peaceful King, and will recall one of the most sarcastic comments of the member for Red Deer on Hon. Frank Oliver during the conscription debate, when he said: "The lion from Alberta will lie down with the lamb from Quebec." It will be a decided victory for Hon. Mackenzie King if Mr. Crerar can deliver his political following to the Liberal party. It will also, however, clear the political situation by a reversion to the two-party system based on a difference in fiscal policy. The new farmer members will follow Mr. Crerar unhesitatingly.

Caucus for Tuesday.
The Government caucus will probably be convened on Tuesday. With the leadership problem shelved for a time at least, interest is centered in the attitude of the Cabinet on the question of policy and organization. Among the Unionist members there is a very decided sentiment that any further delay will mean disaster. Members are threatening to disassociate themselves from the party if the policy formulated last November does not at once receive official confirmation. There is an impression that the Cabinet has shown great indecision. Commentors have always been more outspoken in the lobby than in caucus, and the Cabinet may judge the present insurgency in this light. It is evident that there must be some greater bond of union than the record of the Government. Sir Robert Borden's policy, like President Wilson's peace proposals, has fourteen points, but the real issue and that upon which the electors must decide, is the tariff. The Prime Minister's statement of his tariff policy is too indefinite to suit the majority of the Commons. It could be subscribed to by every member of the Commons and allegiance justified by free traders, protectionists, or D. D. McKenzie, Liberals. The party wants a more definite statement of the Government's economic proposals, one that will leave no doubt that its supporters are moderate protectionists. It will be for this that many Unionists declare they will fight to a decision in the caucus.

Prohibition Reaction.
W. F. Cookshutt's arraignment of prohibition in the Commons today marks a marvelous change in sentiment on this and similar legislation since last session. The reaction against such radical legislation has come. If an amendment to the last session's prohibition law, calling for a three-fifths vote to adopt such legislation, is submitted, it may be adopted if the Government permits a free expression of sentiment in the Commons. Twenty Ontario members will support such an amendment, and British Columbia will also give strong support. With a solid Quebec and a fair support from the other provinces, there will be a possibility of British Columbia and New Brunswick at least joining Quebec in moderate temperance legislation instead of the present arbitrary system that prevails in all the provinces but one.

Estimates will probably be placed before Parliament at an early date. The financial year ends on March 31st. The Senate wishes to adjourn next week until some legislation reaches the Commons from the Second Chamber. There must be an interim supply bill passed, and the estimates must be before Parliament for this purpose. As the Govern-

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St. Lawrence Route May Open Early

Ice-Breakers Already Busy on St. Lawrence and Navigation Expected to Open Early in April.

Navigation will, in all probability, open some time during the month of April, according to the estimates of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, yesterday. It all depends upon the moon, and, Easter falling this year on April 4th, the river should be clear by April 15th. As far as ice conditions are concerned, said Mr. Wiallard, they are normal for this time of the year. An apparent difference may exist on account of the fact that the ice breakers have not been engaged in their usual work; the Montcalm was taken down the river and was caught in the ice herself, but she is now at Halifax where her propellers are to be replaced, and she will return to Quebec as soon as possible to resume her regular functions. The Lady Grey started in work yesterday morning near Cap Sante, 135 miles from here. There is, however, nothing abnormal in the present ice conditions, added Mr. Wiallard, although there is, of course, more ice than there would have been if we had had an exceptionally mild winter, and there is no reason to believe that the present conditions indicate, why the opening date for navigation should be later than April 15th.

The suggestion that an appropriation committee to revise the estimates be appointed is growing in favor, and will probably be adopted next session. It is claimed that such a procedure would make for elimination of unnecessary expenditure, and would also curtail discussion in Parliament.

The enormous deficit on the Canadian National Railways is having a great influence in favor of a substantial increase in freight rates. When the railway estimates are before Parliament and the amount of the deficit disclosed, the subject will be thoroughly discussed. Members advocate various remedies for the system. Some favor a forty per cent freight rate increase, some would retain the present rates and have the Government subsidize the deficit, some favor a small increase in rates, but only sufficient to maintain the Canadian Pacific dividend at present rate and the Government to shoulder the remainder of the burden of the National Railway deficit, and there is another group who would have no increase in rates until the result of the co-ordination of the Grand Trunk with the National system is known.

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EXECUTIVE MET.
A meeting of the executive committee of the Canadian Club was held yesterday afternoon in the office of the treasurer, H. A. Porter. The usual and Lionel Narrows.

PRESENTATION.
A presentation of a silk umbrella and a table book case was made to Arthur Wakim, who has resigned his position in the United States Immigration service. The presentation was made on Thursday in the office of the Inspector in charge, E. L. HaE.