

## SIR WILFRID'S GREAT SPEECH

At the Opening of the Dominion Parliament Yesterday.

Ridicules Borden's Wonderful Party Platform.

Mover and Seconder Make Interesting Speeches.

Ottawa, Dec. 2.—The House settled down to work today with the feeling of expectancy that usually marks the opening of the sessions' hostilities, and almost without preliminary plunged into the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne. To Mr. R. R. Hall, the popular member for Peterboro' West, fell the honor of moving the address, and the effective manner in which he discharged the duty won for him the congratulations of the leaders of both parties and enhanced the reputation he had already gained as a fluent and pointed speaker. No less felicitous was Mr. Adelard LaFontaine, the member for Richelieu, who seconded. The attack of the leader of the Opposition on the Government consisted largely of the repetition of the complaints he had voiced in his tour of the French territory. The French treaty gave Mr. Fielding an opening which he turned to excellent account. Seldom has the Prime Minister been heard to greater advantage than in his reply, which roused the Liberal members to a high pitch of enthusiasm. After traversing the points raised by Mr. Borden, he proceeded with withering sarcasm to demolish the Halifax platform, which he described as a masterpiece, not of lucidity, but of elasticity, a structure, not of oak, but of India rubber. He pointed out the position of the Government in the Opposition in regard to protection and public ownership, twitting him with taking the arguments of one section of his followers and drawing conclusions of another, and defined the true policy in regard to railways and telegraphs and telephones as one of private competition with effective State control.

Mr. R. L. Borden.

Mr. Borden joined in the congratulations to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and complimented the mover and seconder on their speeches. He differed from the mover, however, in attributing the prosperity of the country to the Government. He complained of the inadequacy of the postal facilities and, touching upon the question of the recent Cabinet changes, he demanded an explanation from the Prime Minister as to the reasons which had led him to pass over his supporters in the House and to select the two gentlemen who had been appointed Minister of Railways and Canals and Minister of Public Works respectively. The Prime Minister said he had been good enough to make some rather bold and real statements with regard to the campaign funds. "I want to state to the hon. gentleman and to the Prime Minister," declared Mr. Borden, "that if any investigation is desired into the campaign funds in this country, we are ready for it as soon as they are ready. I desire to repeat the terms of the challenge which I made to my hon. friend the Minister of Public Works."

Mr. Borden went on to refer to the recent appointments to the Senate, and asked whether the resignations of these gentlemen had had anything to do with their appointment. Sir Wilfrid Laurier—Their appointments were made without any reference at all to their resignations. Mr. Borden proceeded to call attention to the omission from the speech of reference to the all-red route project, and to refer to the treaty with France. It would be interesting to know, he observed, whether the reductions on champagne, gin, rum, whiskey and all spirituous and alcoholic liquors, on absinthe, brandy, cordials and liquors of all kinds, had been inserted at the instance of the Minister of Agriculture, who had prohibition as one of his planks in 1896.

Mr. Fielding—What is the reduction on brandies and wines? Mr. Borden—I do not know. Mr. Fielding—If the hon. gentleman does not know, he should not say. There are no reductions of any of the articles the hon. gentleman has named except light wines. (Liberal cheers.) Mr. Borden—It is referred to in the treaty.

Mr. Fielding—It was left there because it was in the treaty of 1893. Financial stringency, to which reference was made in the speech, must to some extent be attributed, Mr. Borden claimed, to lack of foresight and prudence displayed by the Government, and in support of this view he pointed to the increase of taxation, which, he declared, had taken place during the past eleven years. The average balance of trade against Canada for the last five years was \$67,432,400, a total of \$287,161,004, and for the year ending June 30, 1907, alone it was \$123,012,948. Proceeding, he had some criticisms to offer as to the claims respecting surpluses.

Mr. Borden was anxious for an explanation of the paragraph in the speech from the throne to the effect that telegraphs and telephones are to be brought under Government control. There was nothing to indicate whether or not it meant bringing them under the control of the Railway Commission, as intimated in the speech of the member for Lacombe. He suggested that contributions to the campaign funds be made public, that provision should be made for investigation where there were reasons for believing that corruption had taken place and where neither party would take action, and for the disenfranchisement of constituencies where corruption was shown to prevail to a great extent.

A reference to the revelations in the London conspiracy charges was followed by the statement that the Conservatives in Colchester conducted a clean campaign. (Government laughter.) Hon. Mr. Fielding asked how the hon. gentleman could know it; he was not there. He may believe it, but how can he know it? Mr. Borden said he believed it from his knowledge of the candidate and the pledge of that gentleman and the Conservative Association of Colchester eighteen months ago, and since renewed, that not one dollar should be spent for corrupt purposes.

Mr. Talbot—How about his personal money in the way of expenditure? Mr. Borden—Well, what about it? Mr. Talbot—That is what I want to know. (Government applause and laughter.)

After some further cross-firing of the same nature, Mr. Borden said that hon. gentlemen on the Government side were

smiling, but if they wanted an investigation into the by-election it would be welcomed.

Mr. Johnston (Cape Breton)—The hon. gentleman will have it. (Renewed Government applause.)

Mr. Borden hoped that any investigation would be wide enough to include both sides, and thus concluded.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was greeted with hearty Government applause, added his to the Opposition leader's congratulations to the mover and seconder of the address. He modestly acknowledged their references to himself, particularly in regard to the imperial conference. As a member of that conference he had to confess that, in so far as the spectacular was concerned, it did not come up to the expectations of jingoes, but it had accomplished some work. It would mark a new period in the history of the conferences had been of individuals, and had taken place irregularly, without status and without definite objects. Henceforth they would take place on well defined plans, with objects clearly defined, and, more important than all, they would be conferences not of individuals, but of Government and Government, between the United Kingdom and the young daughter nations of the empire.

Hon. Mr. Foster asked if Sir Wilfrid Laurier was speaking of the views held inside or outside of the conference.

Sir Wilfrid—Of the views held inside and outside.

Hon. Mr. Foster desired the names of those inside the conference who wished to make the colonies subordinate or satellites to the mother country.

Sir Wilfrid answered that if the hon. gentleman wished to pursue that inquiry he would find in the records of the conference that he (Sir Wilfrid) was within the mark in his statement.

Hon. Mr. Foster declared he had read every page of the record, and it could not be found there. Sir Wilfrid replied that it was a question of appreciation of the record, and I say it can be found there. He declared, amid Government cheers, that he spoke of the appointment by the conference of a secretariat as a most important step, and then dwelt for a moment upon the indications that at the next conference, four years hence, a confederated South Africa would be represented. For a moment he read, on the days of 1900, when the Parliament of Canada was considering the sending of a contingent to South Africa. Who could have believed that in the space of seven years a country then engaged in mortal combat with Britain would have become a loyal British colony, and would have been represented at the conference by the very man who had been the soul of resistance to the British arms, a man who at the conference modestly but firmly declared that he was ready to fight for Britain as he had fought against her. (Cheers.) They might hope to see in a very short time two such men as Dr. J. A. Johnson and General Botha representing South Africa at the Imperial Conference, a consummation he believed that would be impossible anywhere but under the reign of the British empire. (Renewed cheers.)

New Relations With France.

Speaking of the Canadian treaty with France, he regarded it as another important step in the history of the Dominion. British diplomacy had been as clear and bright as the deeds of the British army and navy. The Liberal party in Canada, however, long claimed for this country the privilege of making its own treaties, basing the contention of the old maxim that one's own business was better done by one's own self. They had every reason to believe that the treaty with France, which was a healthy counterweight to the new era in Canada's relations with that state. France and England had thrived the world with the history of their quarrels, but the entente cordiale had opened a new era. Thanks to the efforts of His Majesty the King, war between France and England would now be as improbable as civil war would be. (Cheers.) In negotiating the new treaty he thought Canada had added a little more to the strength of the entente cordiale.

Cabinet Changes.

The leader of the Opposition had been very inquisitive regarding the changes in the Cabinet, and had anticipated the usual explanations that were given when such changes took place. In going outside the House for Cabinet Ministers, Sir Wilfrid said, he had taken a leaf out of the leader of the Opposition's book, for the leader of the Opposition had not yet had the opportunity to form a Cabinet, but a leaf out of a lesson which was given to him recently by one of his own supporters. Sir Wilfrid referred to the speech of Mr. Borden at the Monument Nationale, Montreal, in which he boasted that he could make a Cabinet three times stronger than the present Cabinet, and reminded the leader of the Opposition of the suggestion of Mr. Monk, who followed him, that Mr. Thomas Chase Casgrain should be given a place in the Conservative Cabinet as Minister of Justice. "I look in all directions in this House," added Sir Wilfrid, "and I fail to see the figure of my friend, Thomas Chase Casgrain." That was a lesson to the leader of the Opposition, if he were ever called upon to form a Cabinet.

Borden—Wait until after the next election.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier—I never prophesy. There have been so many false prophets on the other side—(laughter)—but perhaps when the leader of the Opposition was called upon to form a Cabinet he would do well to follow the rule which Sir Wilfrid followed in 1896, when he set himself to select the very best material he could get.

The Halifax Platform.

Proceeding Sir Wilfrid said: "My hon. friend the leader of the Opposition in the course of his address brought within the scope of his observations

many topics which are not to be found inside the four corners of his Excellency's speech. Of this, of course, I make no complaint. The hon. gentleman was quite within his rights. He travelled very far afield, indeed, but there is one subject of which he never spoke, and yet of which we have heard a good deal of late, both from himself and his supporters. The year 1907 has seen many important events. It has seen, for instance, the construction of the new platform for the new Conservative party. I have read that platform with some care. And I must say in all candor to my hon. friend that, in my humble judgment, it is a remarkable structure. It is not remarkable, however, for the quality which one would look for in such a document, or in such a structure, but rather for the very reverse. It is remarkable, not for its solidity, but for its elasticity. It was built not of oak, but of India rubber. (Liberal cheers.) Its planks are not the ordinary boards, but, nevertheless, shapeless things, intended to contract or expand according to time, place and circumstances.

Having read that platform with some care, I do not think I am at all unduly severe if I say that, in my humble judgment, almost every proposition advanced in it is coupled with a qualification—coupled with an if or a but—which makes it susceptible of a doubtful interpretation. Every idea is combated by the succeeding one. Every step forward is followed by a step backward. And in the task of expounding it, of explaining what it means, my hon. friend reminded me very much of a caged squirrel, always in motion, but always revolving in a circle and accomplishing nothing.

Demons of Discord.

"Of course, it cannot be expected that the party would be so lukewarm as to be indifferent to the attitude of its leader on public questions. But my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition, who is in correspondence with his followers in every part of the Dominion, who receives expressions of the opinions prevailing in the east, west and centre, knew very well that if he were to draw the party together in counsel, if he were to bring my hon. friend from South York (Mr. W. F. Maclean), and my hon. friend from West Toronto (Mr. O. Selby) together on a question of the ownership of public utilities, if he were to bring my hon. friend from Brantford (Mr. Cockshutt), and some of my hon. friends whom I see opposite me, coming from the western Provinces on a question of protection, he would have anything but a harmonious, deliberate assembly. He would have an assembly in which all the demons of discord would be let loose, and which would become a veritable pandemonium. So my hon. friend thought it better to frame a policy himself. And he framed it in such syllabic terms that everybody could find in it, as in the oracles of old, whatever suited his own convictions, passions and prejudices, and having thus delivered himself, my hon. friend started on a missionary tour—with that, of course, I find no fault—quite the contrary. He started to evangelize the country, setting his sails closely trimmed so as to catch every passing breeze.

Where is Protection?

"Now, one would expect that in a platform of the Conservative party the word protection would be written out very large indeed. But in this platform the word protection is very small, so small indeed, that it is not visible to the naked eye. I do not pretend, however, that the idea is not there. It is there, but so hidden that it is impossible to find it without great effort. But how far we are from the flamboyant rhetoric of the old National Policy! What is the key of the mystery? The key is that my hon. friend is in a sore trouble. In these later days there are in the ranks of the Conservative party protectionists and protectionists, just as the French say there are fagots and fagots. There are protectionists in the city of Toronto and some other places, who would have the tariff raised as high as Haman's gallows, and in the west there are protectionists who would have the tariff brought so low that protection would not be distinguishable from free trade.

"And between these two factions my hon. friend hesitated. If he had brought them together he knew there would be a terrible smashing of eggs before they could agree upon the end on which the eggs should be broken. But my hon. friend managed to give good hopes to the one and to the other without committing himself to either. My hon. friend simply ignored the difficulty, and told us, not what his policy was, but what his policy would do. My hon. friend has told us what his protection policy would do, but he has not told us what would be the legislative enactment that would perform this miracle. Indeed, this is a secret of the gods—and among these gods I do not include my hon. friend himself, because he does not know. He could not define his policy, but he has managed to give hope to him who hopes to see the tariff raised as high as Haman's gallows and also to him who hopes that the tariff will be reduced to the lowest possible level, and both may live in the same delusion until both become victims of the same deception. (Liberal cheers.)

Government Ownership.

"Next to the fiscal policy, the most important plank, if I may say so, which has been introduced into the platform, is that dealing with the Government ownership of public utilities. I said introduced, but I must withdraw the word, because it does not correctly apply to the situation. It is not my hon. friend who has introduced that plank into the platform. In this matter he is not the leader, but the follower, and the re-

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tant follower. The gentleman who has introduced that plank in the platform is not the leader of the party, but sits a little below the leader, and we see him (Mr. W. F. Maclean) smiling as I speak. (Laughter.) I must give him his due. He is the leader of the party in this matter, as in some others also. We were told last session that he was no longer admitted to the caucus of the party. This is a matter of no consequence, for, whether within or without the precincts of the caucus, he is the leader so far as this question and others are concerned, and the party dances to his music.

Leader on the Bank.

"My hon. friend (Mr. W. F. Maclean) is a stalwart. He has taken a bold plunge into the cold waters of Socialism. But my hon. friend the leader of the party is not so advanced, if we may judge him by his utterances. He does not approve, yet he does not condemn and repudiate; and whilst my hon. friend from South York (Mr. W. F. Maclean) is splashing about in mid-stream, my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition is on the bank, now and then thrusting a timid foot into the cold water, but promptly withdrawing it, and unable to make up his mind either to go in or to stay out. (Liberal cheers.) So far as the question of Government ownership of railways is concerned, my hon. friend's utterances have been singularly inconclusive and delusive. He has said enough to give hope to the ardent, the enthusiastic, the unthinking, but he has tried to avoid committing himself absolutely. But after he had given a plethora of arguments in favor of Government ownership, after he had stated that 'the denial of our capacity to operate successfully a great public railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific seems no less than the denial of our capacity for self-government,' after he had stated that 'speaking for myself, I believe that State ownership is no more to be condemned for errors of administration than is the general principle of self-government,' when he had reached that climax, when he had soared almost to the sun, suddenly his pinions gave way beneath him, suddenly his heart sank within him. And what was his conclusion with regard to Government ownership? Simply that the Intercolonial should be put under a commission. My hon. friend gave these preliminary arguments, which is the conclusion of the Halifax platform: 'We stand for the operation and management of our railways by an independent commission, free from partisan control or interference.'

"In this instance, as in others, my hon. friend has taken the argument of the member for South York and drawn a conclusion for the member for West York (Mr. O. Selby). Willingly or unwillingly, kicking or resisting, my hon. friend is carried forward on the strong arm of the member for South York."

What is the Platform?

It was better to know on this question where they were and what the platform of the Conservative party was with respect to that question. There was a tendency in Canada at present, derived from the other side of the line to denounce all corporations and represent them as inimical to the public weal. The truth was that the corporations, like all human institutions, were a mixture of good and evil. It was undeniable that corporations had sometimes acted mischievously, but it was also true that corporations had done extremely good. The potent agents of the creation and distribution of wealth amongst all classes of the community. It was undeniable that corporate effort would do more than individual capital, labor or effort. The hon. member for South York said "down with all corporations; down with the railway corporations and let the State perform the duties they are called upon to serve." The true policy was to have the corporations subjected to the control of Parliament, which would see they discharged their duties properly.

Mr. W. F. Maclean—What about Germany?

Sir Wilfrid—Thank God, we are not here to take example from Germany or Russia. (Cheers.)

Mr. Maclean—What about New Zealand and Australia?

Sir Wilfrid answered that they were young commercial communities that had gone much further than he would agree to go. If the incentive of ambition and emulation were removed the result would be suppression of progress and the introduction of stagnation and immobility. He cited the Canadian Pacific Railway, first commenced as a Government enterprise, but finished and now operated by a private company, in support of his contention.

"Now, sir, upon this point, as upon the other," Sir Wilfrid went on, "we think on this side of the House that the remedy is not Government ownership, as has been advocated by my hon. friend, but private ownership and Government control. (Cheers.) He has asked me what we mean in regard to this. We mean that we shall introduce legislation

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to increase the power of the Railway Commission, increase its membership as well, and give it control of telegraphs and telephones, as it has of railroads."

Japanese Immigration.

His hon. friend, Sir Wilfrid continued, had complained that he had been unfair in charging him with having pondered to local prejudices in British Columbia in respect to Japanese immigration. Sir Wilfrid affirmed that there had been no unfairness, the language and conduct of him in his high position. It was true that in 1896 he had sent a telegram to British Columbia with regard to Chinese immigration, in which he had said the question was not for the east, but for the west to decide, and what was true then was true now. But, with regard to Japanese immigration, conditions were altogether different. There was a very wide distinction, and he reproached his hon. friend with not having made it. Japan has entered the circle of civilized nations, and was and had been for some 15 years past the ally of his Majesty the King. "If to-day," he said, "there should be war between the Orient, which God forbid, in which it was the fortune of Britain to be engaged, the heroic Japanese fleet would be at the side of the British fleet. That was not all, Canada had a commercial treaty with Japan, a treaty that had been passed without word of dissent, and under which flour, lumber and other products of the Dominion were being sold to the Japanese. British Columbia was vitally interested in this, as the great future for her trade undoubtedly was in the Orient, but other Provinces were concerned. At this very moment Ontario was shipping wheat to Japan. This then was not a question of interest only to the people of British Columbia, but to the whole of Canada, nay, it was an Imperial question. These things had been ignored by his hon. friend, who had put the Chinese and Japanese questions on the same footing."

The Government did not suppose that the Government of Japan had gone back on the understanding the Canadian Government had with them. The Government's contention and belief was that certain parties had eluded the understanding and instead of sending the immigrants direct from Japan to British Columbia, in which event the situation could have been much more easily handled, they had broken the understanding by first sending them to Honolulu, thence to Canada. "We are sending our commissioner to Tokio," Sir Wilfrid said, "in order to have an understanding on this point and to have this understanding respected."

In concluding, Sir Wilfrid said there were other matters he would like to have touched upon, but time would not permit. "This much, however, I will say to-day We have been eleven years in office, and I have no doubt, I am sure, indeed, that we have made many mistakes and errors, but when the time comes for us to go before the people our judges, for my part, I shall submit with confidence our record with its mistakes and errors against the wild schemes of the new, though still self-styled 'Conservative party.'" (Prolonged cheers.)

Mr. Foster.

Hon. George E. Foster, who followed, argued that, far from being a contribution to the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, Sir Wilfrid's address had been a contribution to the manifesto of the leader of the Opposition was the real speech from the throne. His hon. friend had criticized the Opposition platform as being neither solid or liquid, a thing largely qualified by its and but; nevertheless, he had then proceeded to break through the rules of practice in regard to the discussion on the King's speech by devoting his energy and time to attempt to break down that platform. Dealing specifically with the planks of this platform, Mr. Foster quoted that of appointment to office by merit, and declared that Sir Wilfrid had been guilty of bedeviling the public service of the country. There had been too much of everything, from Judgeships down, until every department had felt its deleterious effects. The platform of the Conservative party was a platform not only to get on, but to stand on. He charged the Prime Minister with having drawn a distinction between Japanese and Chinese, because one had a big stick and the other had not.

Mr. Fielding moved the adjournment of the debate.

The House adjourned at 10.55.

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STRAIGHTEN UP THE ARGUMENT.

Leader's Advice to Hon. Clifford Giffon on All-Red Line.

London, Dec. 2.—The Leader urges Hon. Clifford Giffon, expected to address the Liberal Colonial and Canada Clubs on the all-red route, to talk business. It says "the present position is that Canadians have been told it is splendid business (for them), whilst Britain has been told it is noble sentiment. So long as the argument remains so lopsided it will not raise enthusiasm."

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