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FIRST CLASH OVER EXTENSION ISSUE

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purpose of purchasing anaesthetics for use in the hospitals of the allies at the front.

Proportional Representation. Mr. Turriff (Assiniboia) moved the adoption of a resolution in favor of proportional representation in the election of members in the house of commons. Mr. Turriff said that proportional representation was by no means an untried experiment, having been for years in force in Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, Tasmania, and Japan. The City of Ottawa, he said, had endorsed the principle by a plebiscite, but had been unable to obtain the necessary amendments to its charter from the Ontario Legislature. It was, however, in force in Calgary and other municipalities. The purpose of proportional representation was to give a voice in national affairs to any considerable body of public opinion. If we had it in our parliamentary elections we might expect to see a certain number of farmers, workmen and nationalists who were not in accord with either of the old political parties.

Many Voters Disfranchised. He said of course it would be necessary to do away with the single riding and group constituencies. The experiment, he thought, might first be tried out in large cities like Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. He pointed out that under our present system many thousands of Liberals were practically disfranchised in Toronto, and the same injustice was perpetrated upon Conservatives in other parts of the country. In the present house the Liberals had nine out of ten members for Saskatchewan, but no one would pre-

sent that only ten per cent. of the Saskatchewan people were Conservatives. In 1904 Nova Scotia returned 18 Liberals and no Conservatives to the house of commons, although the Conservatives polled fifty-one third of the total vote cast in Nova Scotia at that election. It was quite possible under our present system for one of the two political parties to be in the minority on the popular vote and yet have a large majority in the house of commons.

Details of Proposal. Explaining the details of the proposed plan, Mr. Turriff suggested that the City of Ottawa and the contiguous counties of Carleton and Russell might constitute one constituency, with the right to elect four members to parliament. Any candidate who was the choice of four thousand and one voters would be elected, assuming the total vote to be twenty thousand. If party leaders like Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier headed their respective tickets they would probably receive considerably more than the four thousand and one votes required to elect, and a proportion of the surplus vote would be credited to the men who he failed to get four thousand and one votes as first choice, he might be elected by voters of either political party who designated him as their second or third choice. The general effect of the proposed reform would be to ensure a fair-sized minority securing some representation.

Mr. Turriff called attention to the fact that the principle of proportional representation had been included in the Irish home rule bill and that it was recommended by the "speakers" committee, which recently considered and reported upon electoral reforms for the United Kingdom.

White Not Convinced. Sir Thomas White said he was not impressed by the example of Tasmania or Japan, nor did he think it threw

any light on the subject to show that proportional representation had worked well in Canadian municipalities. We had in Canada a representative or party government system. It was inaccurate to say that parliament ruled the country. Parliament had no executive function whatever. The country was ruled by the prime minister, but of course he had to maintain a majority in the house. It was important that this majority be a good working majority, and it was quite undesirable to have any device by which a few members could hold the balance of power and be able to turn our governments at will.

Sir Thomas admitted that he had never given the subject any thought before this afternoon, but said it seemed to him almost trifling with serious matters to be discussing such reforms when all our thoughts should be devoted to winning the war. However, if Mr. Turriff insisted, the government would consent to the subject being referred to a select committee to investigate and report.

Gives Labor a Chance. Hon. George P. Graham thought the minister was holding fast to many old ideas, which would soon have to give way to more progressive ones. There was a strong feeling in this country in favor of proportional representation, especially in the west, and governments should not be in terror of anything in the way of innovation. There were many anomalies in our present electoral system. Thus parliament in redistributing the country for the coming parliamentary election had decided that it required thirty-five thousand people to choose a member of parliament for Leeds and Brockville, but that seven thousand would be enough for Grenville. He felt sure that proportional representation would secure representation to the labor party in industrial centres like Toronto.

W. A. Buchanan (Medicine Hat), and G. W. Kyle (Richmond, N.S.), spoke in favor of proportional representation. Mr. Kyle thought it would have a

marked effect in decreasing corruption and breaking the strangle-hold of the political party machine.

Protest Against Embargo. Mr. Copp (Westmoreland) adjourned the debate.

The house then adopted without dissent the resolution proposed by Dr. Schaffner (Souris) declaring that an early opportunity should be taken to endeavor to have removed the embargo on Canadian cattle entering the British Isles.

Dr. Schaffner and Mr. Blocker (Montreal) agreed in saying that the embargo was a protective measure and that the claim of Canadian cattle being infected with pleuro-pneumonia was a mere pretence.

Dr. Edwards (Frontenac) said the British Government had imposed the embargo in 1882 on account of the widespread propaganda in Canada at that time for unrestricted reciprocity with the United States. He said there was no doubt that the British authorities would lift the embargo if the liberal party formally renounced its adherence to the reciprocity fad.

Urges Cattle Raising. Hon. Smith (S. Ontario) thought that question not a very practical one at present as we were not raising enough cattle in Canada for our own needs. He thought the farmers of the western provinces would be better off if they devoted more time to raising stock and less time to talking free wheat. He declared himself, however, in favor of the resolution.

Hon. Nesbitt (N. Oxford) said the Ontario farmers were now finishing their own cattle instead of shipping them to England for that purpose, which he thought was a distinct benefit to the country.

Hon. Martin Burrell, minister of agriculture, said the subject was one which the prime minister had brought to the attention of the imperial authorities during his present stay in England. The minister intimated that the embargo might shortly be

removed, but saw no reason why the house should not adopt the resolution.

A. K. Maclean (Halifax) moved the adoption of a resolution declaring it to be the opinion of the house that the government of the day should not make any more appointments to the Dominion Senate until after the next general election. He said that the life of this parliament had been prolonged by an agreement between the two political parties as a war emergency measure, and that the government since October last had been a war emergency government. It was in power by the grace of the opposition. It should not fill all the offices with partisans, but attend to the business of the war and let questions of political patronage go over until after the next election.

Must Fill Vacancies. Solicitor-General Meighen said the government could not accept the resolution. It was true the parliamentary term had been extended, but by unanimous consent. The government, he said, had not gone down on its knees and begged the extension as a favor from the opposition. On the contrary, the prime minister had stated his proposal and had left it to the opposition to act as they thought best, but quite apart from this, Mr. Meighen contended that appointments to the senate were not matters of political patronage. They were prerogatives of the crown that could not be bartered away by political agreement. Vacancies in the senate had to be filled in the same way as vacancies on the bench had to be filled, whenever they occurred, by the government.

Hon. George P. Graham said that senatorial appointments might not be political patronage, but it was a singular coincidence that every government filled every vacancy in the senate by appointing one of its own partisans. The house of commons was getting on very well with the vacant seats in the senate and he thought the country would not suffer

greatly if the senatorial vacancies were not filled until after the election. Sir Thomas White indignantly denied that the government was retaining office by grace of the opposition. The government had just the same authority today as it had in 1912. The parliamentary term had been extended by common consent, because it would have been almost unspeakable to think of dividing the country by a general election during the war.

Mr. MacDonald (Picton) said the government had quite complacently prepared for an election in 1915, nearly a year after the war commenced. They had printed ballots and sent them overseas, and Hon. Mr. Rogers had declared that the people in thunderous tones were demanding an election. The government today was appealing to the opposition to sink their party differences for the good of the country. Would the government cease peddling out political patronage and give more thought to the good of the country?

Clark Deprecates Friction. Dr. Clark (Red Deer) said every good citizen of Canada wanted to devote all his energy to winning the war, and for the purpose desired the public men of the country to forget their party differences and to work together for winning the war. This had been done in Great Britain and every British country except Canada by coalition governments. It had been pretty well accomplished in Canada by the extension of the parliamentary term. That extension was upon a mutual understanding that party differences should be lost sight of. He sincerely hoped there would not be an outbreak of partisanship which would bring on an election. A terrible responsibility would rest upon the party responsible for the election. The opposition should refrain from such an outbreak, but certainly the government should set the example. The government should not by its treatment of the opposition stir up political feelings and rancor. The government, Dr.

Clark said in conclusion, had the legal right to pursue a partisan policy and devote itself to distributing political patronage, but he thought they would make a great mistake in voting down the resolution offered by Mr. Maclean of Halifax.

The motion was then declared lost on division.

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