

September 25, 1918

courage and ability. As I said before, keep an eye on him.

As if to prove the theory that Cabinet Ministers are accidents the man who grew on the House most during the session was the greatest accident of them all—Hon. A. K. Maclean. He wasn't meant to be in the Union Government at all. Premier Murray was the Liberal selected from Sir Robert Borden's native province. But, when Mr. Murray got back home after the formalities had been completed, he found the old party spirit too strong. To put it baldly, he backed up and Hon. A. K. Maclean stepped into the vacancy and proceeded to work his way to respect and popularity. Everybody likes "A.K." even if he did criticize budgets in a rather weepy voice when he was financial critic of the Opposition. But they didn't expect very much of him. Consequently when he came through with the best budget speech heard in years and explained Hon. J. D. Reid's railway muddles so that at times they were almost intelligible the Unionists, or some of them anyway, were pleased as well as surprised.

Hon. C. J. Doherty, around whose devoted head the storms of the session howled harmlessly, is the most lovable old gentleman in the lot. He may be, and probably is totally unfitted to enforce a Military Service Act but he can explain a knotty point in any bill so that even the lawyers are mystified. What more could you ask of a Minister of Justice? And he can close his argument with a smile that carries sunshine even to the hearts of the Opposition.

Sir Thomas White, who was absent during the entire session through alleged illness, should fit securely into any Union scheme because, though nominally a Conservative, he was so recently a Liberal that he can hardly have forgotten all the teachings of his earlier life. He was once fancied for Premier but lacks personal magnetism. It begins to look as if it would take a man with a personal following to get very far in the near future and Sir Thomas' personal following is rather a negligible quantity.

As for the others they're more numerous than notable. Hon. J. D. Reid is the chore boy. In those ten distracting days when Sir Robert Borden was choosing his first Cabinet the rush of great men to the Borden residence was appalling. Hon. Dr. Reid is said to have come early and waited patiently. In fact, it is said he took a chair in the Borden kitchen and sat down. Men came and went in a steady stream but, every time Sir Robert sought refuge in the kitchen, there was the Doctor waiting for him, prepared to comfort him and do him good. Such patience and constancy had to be rewarded. It was. And Hon. J. D. Reid has been waiting on his Premier ever since with splendid results from a personal standpoint.

Hon. C. C. Ballantyne is probably a good business man. But when did business find a place in politics? He may learn the game if he lasts long enough but the chances are against his lasting. He looked stronger early in the session than he does now.

General Mewburn is a soldier rather than a politician. All of his earlier speeches proved that. Moreover, his colleagues look on him as a temporary convenience and are giving him the kind of work that does not tend to increase his popularity. He may last the war out.

Hon. Thos. Crothers headed all the lists of those who were to be retired before Union Government was born or thought of. The activity of W. F. O'Connor in regard to bacon and one or two other foods prolonged his official life. Now O'Connor is gone.

Hon. Martin Burrill too will soon be back in his Okanagan peach grove while Hon. Frank Cochrane sits silently wondering whether Sir William Mackenzie has enough influence to keep him from becoming head of the Government railway system. As for Hon. Hugh Guthrie he never fully arrived; and the House is tiring of Sir George Foster's oratory.

There you have the Union Government. You'll probably admit that it is rather a motley gathering. What is going to become of it, and when? Well, that is another—or rather two other stories.



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