

National Liberal and Conservative BULLETIN

NUMBER 11

OTTAWA, CANADA, JULY 23, 1921

VOLUME 1

Brome and Bromides

Selecting Brome as his initial starting-point of his summer campaign and the sitting member, Andrew Macmaster (a deeply prejudiced Free Trader) as the ideal Liberal the Hon. Mackenzie King launched out on July 1st, on a sea of words. It was altogether a curious speech. Evidently the young man got engulfed in his prefatory remarks and found great difficulty in struggling to shore. He touched the National, Geographical and Historical aspects of the Eastern Townships and came to the momentous conclusion that the six Protestant Members sent to Ottawa from this political Utopia "were not surpassed, if indeed equalled, in character, ability and useful public service." Of course, there is at present one exception which modestly forbade him to name. He was evidently in an historical vein and went back to the Napoleonic wars for a parallel. The defeat of Napoleon he said led to the ascendancy of Toryism in England and Liberalism was at a low ebb. (As the Liberal Party did not come into existence till 1832, it was probably at a very low ebb, indeed.) At any rate, in some curious way, the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen, as a result of all this, is a plain usurper. It is childish logic, but so it stands. Yamaska and Medicine Hat prove it. St. John, Colchester, Sunbury, and other Liberal-Conservative victories also prove it—though, of course, in the opposite way. And we are by no means sure of Yamaska and Medicine Hat. Yamaska was carried on a platform of racial animosity. As for Medicine Hat, there is this to be said: The National Party took its medicine and will be all the better for the purge; but the Lapointe-Liberals "cut and ran." They would be well-advised not to claim as a victory what was really a bitter defeat, for Medicine Hat was a natural stronghold of Liberalism in "the days that are no more."

This is all the speech contained. Not a single constructive idea was advanced. The Tariff, Exchange, the danger of group-government, the necessity of Quebec and Ontario, joining hands in the face of a common danger, the problem of the National Railways were all left undiscussed. Instead we have the wild outcry that the constitutional head of the Government should not be in England. Presumably Mackenzie King should be; but as, according to the Globe, there will only be eighty Liberal Members in the next House, we do not see how that could be either. It is frequently urged that the Prime Minister is too deeply and seriously concerned with the problems of administration—to the detriment of his health and strength, even. It may be so. The trouble with the Hon. Mackenzie King is that he is too gravely occupied with himself. He should take warning from what befell Malvolio. We hope he will keep on in the bromide strain.

An Empire Statesman

A lot of disappointed people hoped that Premier Meighen's political fortunes would meet with shipwreck at the Imperial Conference. They hoped he would offend the British born in Canada by showing a lack of sympathy with Empire problems and Imperial aspirations. At the same time they hoped he would give grounds for offense to the people of Quebec by slighting Canadian autonomy. They were sure he would involve the country in vast commitments for military and naval expenditures.

Never were people so badly disappointed. Mr. Meighen had not long been in London before he was recognized as a great Empire statesman. He is today a trusted adviser of the British Government. He did not involve Canada in great military and naval expenditures but pointed the way to a permanent world peace.

There is little doubt but that he will be as big a figure at the Washington Peace Conference as he was in London at the Imperial Conference.

As to the people of Quebec, they will find the leading American newspapers saying: "Not even Premier Laurier, the great Liberal and strong advocate of Canada for the Canadians, ever advanced the innovations or assumed the independent role marking the Meighen course in the Imperial Conference now in progress."

The attitude of the Farmers towards the rest of the people reminds us of the old Scotchman's prayer, "O Lord, be good to me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more."

The PRIME MINISTER in LONDON

An Impression and an Appreciation

BY SIDNEY WALTON

(From the Pall Mall & Globe, London, England)

"Meighen, as they say with us, is a man of reticence. He does not like, nor does he seek, the glare of the public light, the blaze that beats upon the heights of office. But he's in downright earnest. His motives are good, his principles brave, and his banners unstained. Canada sends you in Meighen a cultured citizen. He will grace your Imperial counsels." It was an American visitor to our shores who spoke. He was interested in what I may call the conclave of Prime Ministers now in London. It is the Empire in conference. My friend is a student of Canada, his country's neighbour on the north, and he admires the culture and courage of the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen, the Premier. I liked his chivalrous compliment.

It is well that we should know our distinguished guests. We cannot call them visitors in the usual meaning of the word. They are ourselves. They are England facing and solving problems in the wider England beyond the seas. They are you and me, a little exalted, perhaps, but with like passions and purposes, inheritors of the same spirit and history. They warm their souls at the same altar-fires. And among the Prime Ministers of Greater Britain, Mr. Meighen takes noble place. I think it was Professor Skelton who said of him, on his being chosen and called to the highest office in Ottawa: "Our politics cannot be what reckless critics say when character and capacity find such quick and emphatic recognition." And so it is.

Canada's New Phase.

Mr. Meighen brings to London a new phase of Canada's life—the intellectual. We are too apt to think of Canada's sons as sternly built men who wrestle with all weathers, who force their way through snowdrifts or endure the merciless sun with the energy and patience of the pioneer. We forget the studious mind, the acute intellect, the deep culture, the music and the grace of life which are there also. We think of prairies, and forget the universities, golden with richer grain. Mr. Meighen is frail physically. He is not by any means true to the conventional portrait of the pioneer. As one wit puts it: "He is mind, not matter." His keen and burnished intellect, straight and swift as an arrow in its piercing to the crux and core of a problem, reveals a Canada which is bringing her best brains to bear upon the problems of a war-enfeebled world.

Too long we have been tossed to and fro, like a ship in storm, by the surge of emotions. The passions of war flooding into the years of peace have done sore damage to Europe. It is high time we called what Bacon terms "the dry light" of reason to our aid as we stumble about in dark corridors of problems both national and international in their scope. We have followed to our peril the will-o'-the-wisp of emotion. So I, for one, welcome the presence of Mr. Meighen, with his unimpassioned clarity of judgment. He puts Imperial questions under "the most penetrating analysis of reason." He does not shout in the

streets, nor does he give heed to clamour. "His power," says a critic, "lies almost solely in a mind of cavalry-like swiftness in capacity to analyse, to subject the argument of an opponent to a pitiless inquest of logic." If emotion and passion could have solved our problems, we should this day have been living in a garden of a world, a semi-Eden. But the problems are of a nature that will not yield except to the mind girded and tense and striving in every sinew. So I welcome Mr. Meighen, the scholar-statesman.

Severity of Seriousness

There is a severity of seriousness about him. Before he crossed over from Canada, and during his crossing, he received countless invitations to attend this function and that during his sojourn in Britain. He refused to be feted. "I need all my powers," he said, "for the immense task of the Conference itself. I can best serve my country by giving my whole strength to that work." He preferred to sacrifice a festal popularity rather than dissipate his energies. "This is one thing I do"—there's something Pauline about him.

But he's no stern unrelenting Calvinist. He loves the humanities, he loves humanity. In private life, and at the hearth and in the libraries of his friends (he's an accomplished bookman), he is the most cheerful of companions, an enricher of conversation, with Charles Lamb's delight both in the hearing and the telling of a good tale. His heart is as large and generous as his brain. He is an outstanding personality at the Round Table of Prime Ministers.

Press Comments

We quote with approval the following paragraph from the Edmonton Bulletin—Edited by the Hon. Frank Oliver.

"The people of Canada struggled hard and long to achieve majority rule and responsible government. Are they ready now to give it up at the dictation of any class or group of combination of classes or groups?"

Mail and Empire.

"The great mass of the Liberals of Canada and the great mass of the Liberal-Conservatives of Canada never so well served their country by fighting each other as they did by acting together from 1917 until the end of the war. By thus cooperating they did the most signal national service ever rendered to this country by its political parties. Whatever the future has in store for Canada, there can be no good end to the public good that was done by this rising above the small differences of party. The benefit thus rendered is perpetual."

"Quebec cannot hesitate as to its choice, for the Quebec members of the House and the Quebec people are as strong for protection as Mr. Crerar is against protection. The logic of the situation bids the two old parties to get together and keep together for the greatness of their country."

Sydney Post.

"Whatever the relative strength of the groups may be in the next House of Commons, the political dividing line is likely to follow fiscal opinions, and the protectionists are practically certain to outnumber the free traders. A free trade or low tariff Government would be the greatest catastrophe that could come to Canada, in this era of world-wide protectionism. Free trade is the menace Agrarianism holds over the country. Fortunately the movement has its local limitations and cannot spread greatly beyond the Central West, and certain parts of rural Ontario."

The Manitoba Free Press.

Under the caption of "Mr. King and Mr. Meighen," The Manitoba Free Press wonders just what Mr. Mackenzie King thinks he is accomplishing by the speeches he is delivering in Quebec if their scope and character are truly indicated in the summaries carried in the Canadian Press reports.

Pointing out that there are many public matters on which Mr. King could dilate the paper continues,

"But this repetition day after day of the sing-song that Mr. Meighen has usurped power and is having the joy-ride of an autocrat in defiance of constitutional usage—and that sort of thing—is, we think very tiresome to the public; and is likely to give them the idea that Mr. King is the kind of a man quick to discover grievances and prone to make an obsession out of them. Mr. King, it is true, tries to put his argument in terms of the public interest; but his words leave an impression upon many minds that he is oppressed by a feeling of personal disappointment at being kept out of his rightful place, the premiership, by Mr. Meighen's unaccountable reluctance to quit."

"If, moreover, Mr. King's remarks are to be interpreted as a demand for an immediate general election he is not advocating a policy in the public interest."

"... If Mr. King, through undue eagerness, is instrumental in precipitating an election before redistribution, he will not help his cause. Any such outcome of a parliamentary manoeuvre would be apt to be regarded by the West as a collusive effort by the Opposition and the Government to rob the West of its proper representation in the next Parliament."

The Guelph Herald (June 29)

"It is clearly evident from the election in Medicine Hat that the Western prairies are strongly swayed by the Crerar freetrade theories."

"It is just as full of meaning to protectionist Liberals as it is to Conservatives, emphasizing that so far as the grain growers of Western Canada are concerned they are not concerned about closing down the factories of the East if they can succeed in saving a few cents on the goods they want to buy in the United States."

The Naked Issue

It is entirely reasonable to infer that those Conservative farmers who have joined up with the U.F.O. and kindred organizations are still stout protectionists by conviction, and will return to the old party loyalists the moment the danger threatening the entire country is clearly seen. On the other hand, the real strength of the Free Trade movement in politics has always had its centre in the Liberal farmer group. They were never satisfied with Laurier's policy. The Liberal voters in the cities and towns have never been ardent Free Traders. At least, they have but paid it in sincere lip-service. The moment it is realized that the prosperity of the towns and cities of the Dominion are in danger, they will rally to the standard of Protection as one man. The big guns have not yet started to belch. So far we have had but sniping and ambuscades. But Medicine Hat brought home to the average dweller in the East, as nothing else could, the sinister fact that the approaching fight is not to be between the two historic groups, as in the old days, but between those who are persuaded that, with its unbounded natural resources and unrivalled water-powers, to say nothing of its happy geographical position, the future of Canada is necessarily involved in industrialism; and those who care for none of these things, but would be well content to see the country a mere dumping-ground for foreign manufacturers, and Canadians a race of peasants and unskilled laborers.

If the programme of Wood, Drury and Crerar should triumph, and the farmer-theory triumph, the whole financial and industrial fabric would be rent in twain and national insolvency would result in six months. The tendency throughout the world is in the direction of protection against the cheap labor of Germany. Even England at the present moment is a tariff-nation. What madness it would be for us to stand alone. To attempt to do so would be to invite destruction. Yet this is precisely what Wood, Crerar and Drury are after. They must be fought to the last ditch by any and every legitimate weapon on which we can lay our hands. Liberals and Conservatives must sink all differences and rally around the one man who uses no equivocal phrases but stands four-square in favor of reasonable and moderate protection to all our industries—agricultural as well as manufacturing.

It has taken the Farmer party just two short years to play ducks and drakes with the finances of the Province of Ontario.

Under Which Flag

It is quite evident that the Toronto Globe has ceased to represent the Liberal Party, or any remaining fragment of it. It has insolently, with an almost medieval fierceness, excommunicated the loyal Liberals. Baser and more insulting words were never penned than those in which it dared to threaten with political ostracism men, who, in an agonizing crisis stood firm in honor and loyalty. It has ignored the Hon. Mackenzie King and is scorned by the Quebec contingent. These latter—Lapointe, Lemieux, Murphy, Cannon—hate it with a violent and bitter hatred for what they will always look upon as its desertion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Its fawning endeavors to get back into their good graces are quite unavailing. It has perhaps already learned to its pained surprise that an organ can "rot" but it cannot "re-rot." Had it remained faithful to the noble ideal which swayed Sir Robert Borden they might still have hated it, but they would have respected its consistency. As it is, they both hate and despise it.

What single party but one does it stand for at this hour? Labor? Where is the evidence of that? The U.F.O.? J. J. Morrison, who is the orthodox leader of that organization, and not Drury and his intimidated satellites, never loses an opportunity of pouring out his vials of wrath on its hypocritical attitude. He, at any rate, sees through its game and does not propose to deliver the original farmers' organization into the hands of a camouflaged and poorly designed ambush. Having deserted and insulted the Union-Liberals it does not stand for them. For whom then? There is but one answer. Crerar and the so-called National Progressive Party. That is all there is left for it to represent. Truly, as J. J. Morrison remarked in his speech of defiance at Goderich it is "without a home." By a process of elimination, of which its own editorial columns supply the proof, we arrive at Drury, Crerar and Free Trade. This explains its constant harping at the necessity of all the Progressive forces getting together. It has become the organ of National disruption. With Crerar, Drury, Wood it must now sink or swim. It has sown the wind; it must be content to reap the whirlwind. We wonder what the solid business men of Canada think of its tactics? It is about time they woke up to the conspiracy against their very life which has been going on in the very heart of Protectionist Ontario.

The Farmer Party would be better described as the "Hedgehog" party.

Carping Criticism

We despair of Mr. Mackenzie King ever attaining the stature of a statesman. He seems to have a fatal facility for saying and doing the wrong thing at the wrong time. We refer particularly to a recent speech in which he declared that of the Premiers assembled in London, the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen was the only one without authority from the people of his Country. This is tantamount to telling the British people that they should pay no attention to him. Whatever political differences we may have at home, it is surely the worst of bad form to try to weaken the influence of the constitutional head of our Country in representing us in Empire relations and negotiations. Mr. King's criticism will have no effect upon British public men; their political vision is too large to accept such twaddle other than at its face value, but, nevertheless, the deliberate attempt to wound and to weaken the Country's stand as exemplified by the attitude of Mr. Meighen is manifest, and it is not at all to Mr. King's credit.

If the Prime Minister had, either in his speeches before he left Canada or in those he made in London prior to Mr. King's unfortunate utterance, given any evidence, whatever, that he was running counter to Canadian public opinion, there would be some justification for Mr. King's attitude, but the reverse is the case. Even the Toronto Globe declared "that in opposing the renewal of the Japanese Alliance, Mr. Meighen expressed the deliberate opinion of this Country." The Toronto Star and the Winnipeg Free Press, both prominent Liberal organs, likewise gave their approval of the four points laid down by Mr. Meighen to govern the relations inside the Empire. Indeed, there has been no adverse Canadian criticism of the Premier's stand at the conference.

Mr. King will have to take a few lessons as to how to play the game a little more fairly and with less bitterness.

Lapointe is, apparently, the only one who is able to see the point in his Leader's speeches.

It will take the Province of Ontario a long, long time to recover from the "blighting" influence of Raney. He is the wettest wet blanket ever thrown over a red-blooded people. The only reason for his being in office is the abnormality of the age. When the people get back to sane, solid thinking he will be quickly shorn of the power which he abuses with so much rant and cant.