

REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

RECIPROCITY has been defeated and incidentally the Conservatives will come into power. Perhaps some people would prefer to say that the Conservatives have come into power and reciprocity has been defeated. Personally, I prefer the first way. If it had not been for the question of reciprocity, the Government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier would not have gone to the country for another year, and even then they might have pulled through another election. They had been fifteen years in power, but the personality of their leader was still strong.

However, that is mere speculation. The question of reciprocity with the United States was introduced into the House of Commons on January 26th last, and there has been trouble ever since. Previous to that date, reciprocity had been discussed in a general way. United States commissioners had visited Ottawa and Canadian commissioners had gone to Washington. The country as a whole took little notice of the negotiations. A reciprocity pact of a wide character was thought improbable.

When Mr. Fielding and Mr. Paterson returned to Ottawa and Mr. Fielding announced the broad measure of reciprocity which had been agreed upon by President Taft and the two Canadian ministers, the country began to take notice. The first general impression was that it was a triumph of diplomacy. But shortly there were murmurs against it. Then the Conservatives began to talk against it. Some prominent Liberals in Toronto issued a manifesto saying that it was not right. Two or three Liberal members in the House became restless. So the trouble grew until the issue became well defined, one party supporting it and one party opposing it.

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CANADIANS apparently do not like to be rushed. One of the great cries in the eight months' campaign on reciprocity was that the pact was made too hurriedly. The men sent to Ottawa were "elderly gentlemen," as their opponents termed them, and were not prepared in advance with exhaustive statistical information. It was claimed that the United States negotiators had better information.

Even if the information was sufficient, the opponents of the pact declared that the people should have been prepared for so radical a trade move. The defenders of the pact answered this by saying that for forty years Canada had been discussing reciprocity and that every Canadian publicist had been in favour of it at some time or other during that period.

Eventually, the Conservatives decided that they would not let the measure pass the House of Commons until the question of reciprocity had been decided upon by the people at a general election. They did not ask for a referendum, nor did the Liberals suggest such an expedient. The Opposition was anxious, as all oppositions are, to get possession of the Treasury benches, and were not likely to suggest it if they thought there was a chance of defeating the Government on the question. The Government did not suggest it because probably they thought it would be undignified for a government with a big majority in parliament to refuse to take the responsibility for this agreement.

About this time the Coronation of King George was due. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Premier of Canada, should be there. He didn't want to go and leave reciprocity undecided. The Conservatives didn't like to take the responsibility of keeping him away. Finally it was decided to adjourn Parliament, allow Sir Wilfrid to go to the great Empire event, and to resume the discussion on his return. This was done.

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MEANWHILE, the forces which were opposed to the pact were extremely busy. Mr. Borden made a trip through the Prairie Provinces to preach against it. The "interests," if one may use the term without giving offence, organized independent opposition and collected funds for an organized campaign. If there was a truce in Parliament, there was no truce in the country. Both party organizations prepared for a possible general election. Candidates were nominated, the "machines" were looked over and oiled up, election material was gathered together, and it began to look like real war.

There are those who say that the fight against reciprocity was won on Mr. Borden's tour through

the West. This is an exaggeration. There is no doubt, however, that his straight hitting did much to line up his somewhat disunited forces in the region where reciprocity was most popular. He made a good campaign of it, and for the first time in his career he won some reputation as a fighter. The people admired what they thought was a "forlorn hope" tour.

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SIR WILFRID LAURIER returned and Parliament was again called together. Both sides were more decided than ever. It was soon discovered that no business could be done. The Opposition was determined to fight it out and compromise was impossible. Parliament sat for a few days and suddenly one Saturday noon the announcement came that Parliament had been dissolved and that a general election would be held on September 21st. Each leader issued a manifesto and the real battle was in sight.

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AT first, the discussion took the form which might have been expected on a trade question. Statistics were bandied about in the newspapers and on the platform to show that Canada would be financially benefited by the pact. The prices of wheat, barley, beef, bacon, eggs and fruit on both sides of the line were brought together and compared. In this discussion the honours were easy, with perhaps the defenders of the pact having

Standing of Parties.

	Opp'n.	Gov't.
Ontario	72	13
Quebec	27	36
Manitoba	7	3
British Columbia	7	0
Alberta	1	6
New Brunswick	5	8
Nova Scotia	9	9
Prince Edward Island	2	2
Saskatchewan	1	9
Total	131	86
Mr. Borden's majority 45.		
Four deferred elections.		

a little the best of it. On this point, there will probably be a difference of opinion, so I shall not press it.

Finally, an element was introduced into the campaign which turned the tide the other way. The Opposition began to cry "annexation," and to plead for British connection. For a time these two features ran side by side, but eventually the economic arguments practically went by the board and only the sentimental argument remained, so far as the Conservatives were concerned.

In 1873, Sir John Macdonald lost a general election on a bit of sentiment concerning his own foolishness in accepting money for campaign purposes from a member of the Canadian Pacific Syndicate. In 1878, the same astute statesmen won an election on a sentiment—the National Policy. So that it cannot be said that this is the first election to be decided upon sentiment.

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SOME have said that the Conservatives set the heather on fire. One shrewd Canadian made the remark that President Taft, Champ Clark and Hearst set the heather on fire and Borden merely fanned the flame. The Montreal *Witness*, an ardent supporter of reciprocity, says that when President Taft proclaimed that Canada had come to the parting of the ways, he furnished the explosive that blew up his whole project.

President Taft had a difficult task when he tried to carry the reciprocity pact on his own side of the line, and he used some arguments over there which, while effective among his own people, were bad for the same pact on this side. Champ Clark, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and other politicians, went farther and openly declared in favour of the annexation of Canada. They must bear their share of the blame for the defeat of reciprocity in this country. It will not do for these gentlemen to say that the whole fault is with the Canadians. Nor will it be fair for the United States people to believe that Canada is unfriendly.

The simple fact is that Canada got frightened, and the Canadians voted to preserve their nationality and British connection. It may have been unreasonable, but that is what occurred.

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IN Quebec, the situation was somewhat different from that in the other provinces. The Nationalist party, under Bourassa, were opposed to Sir Wilfrid Laurier because of the Canadian navy measure. This element and the regular Conservatives practically joined forces. It was termed an "unholy alliance," and no doubt it was in a political sense. The Nationalists elected some eight members, the Conservatives nineteen members. Undoubtedly the Conservative vote helped in the Nationalist constituencies and the Nationalist vote helped in the Conservative constituencies.

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THE largest turnover was in Ontario and Quebec. In the Maritime Provinces the Liberals had their representation reduced from 26 to 20. In the four Western Provinces the Liberals had 17 before and have 18 now. In Quebec, the combination against them gave them 36 seats instead of 54. In Ontario the landslide reduced their representation from 36 to 13. The Liberals have a majority of 5 in the Maritime Provinces, and a majority of 2 in the West, but the Conservatives and Nationalists have a majority of 52 in Ontario and Quebec. The Conservatives and Nationalists have thus a combined majority of 45. Without the Nationalists the Conservative majority is 29. This will be increased by the deferred elections.

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NOW that the smoke of conflict is beginning to clear away, Canadians can discern clearly one comforting fact—that each of the contending forces has a leader worthy of a great contest. Followers and opponents are assured that Sir Wilfrid will make a cheerful and graceful loser, while those who have sat on the Government side of the House can bear testimony to the dignified urbanity, under all circumstances, of Mr. R. L. Borden.

It has been a stubborn fight, and all the world loves a fight, though we have substituted ballots for bullets. The two men who have led the contending forces are above reproach as citizens and gentlemen, and their attitude towards each other has been such as all Canadians have approved. Sir Wilfrid is full of years and honours and his successful opponents in the hour of victory will not be slow to acknowledge the temper of his political foe's steel. To have witnessed such a contest, with such men foremost, is to have known a controversy of historical magnitude. Whatever asperities may have developed among lesser combatants the leaders fought to a gallant finish.

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THERE is one pleasant feature of the resulting change of government, Sir Wilfrid Laurier goes out on an issue and Mr. Borden comes in on an issue. Scandal and mal-administration did not force the one out; nor a discussion of scandal bring the other in. Sir Wilfrid goes into opposition without discredit; no one may say that Mr. Borden comes into power in an oblique way. Both stand high as political leaders and as statesmen.

Eight members of the Laurier administration lost their seats in the House. Their party will regret these losses. Especially will they regret the absence of Hon. George P. Graham, Minister of Railways. Mr. Graham was a great administrator, and it will be a distinct loss to public life if he does not return. Of course, he can go back into the Ontario Legislature and again become leader of the Opposition; but it would seem even better to have him back in the Federal House.

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SOME day this week or next Sir Wilfrid Laurier will drive in his motor-car to Rideau Hall and hand his resignation to the Governor-General. The latter will probably ask Sir Wilfrid whom he would suggest as his successor. This is usual but not absolutely necessary. Sir Wilfrid will no doubt advise His Excellency to summon Mr. Borden, and the advice will be followed. Mr. Borden will drive down to Rideau Hall, and receive a request to form a ministry. He will consent. He may then or at a later date hand to His Excellency the list of members for the new cabinet. His Excellency will accept them all, and they will be sent for and sworn in as privy councillors. They will then resign their seats as Members of Parliament and go to their constituencies for re-election. When they are re-elected, Parliament will be summoned.

These proceedings will occupy several weeks, and in the meantime Canadian affairs must get along as best they can under the guidance of deputy-ministers and the civil service.