

## BORDEN PROCLAIMS THE CONSERVATIVE PLATFORM

Opposition Leader, in Opening Speech of His Tour at Halifax, Outlines Progressive Reform Policy

Non-Partisan Commission for I. C. R., Public Ownership of Telephone and Telegraph Lines, Equipment of National Ports, Public Control of Franchises; Clean Elections and Honest Administration the Principal Features; A Big and Enthusiastic Audience Grets Conservative Leader.

Halifax, Aug. 23.—R. L. Borden, M. P., inaugurated his Canadian tour tonight by a splendid meeting in this city. That about 2,000 people should have assembled and that they should have remained for three hours is proof of the interest of the people of this city in R. L. Borden and in the issues he had to present to their attention.

The meeting was held in the Empire Hotel, the largest auditorium in Halifax, though not the most centrally located. The spirit manifested was one of bright expectancy and enthusiasm. Mr. Borden was given a cordial and hearty reception, and his reference to the fact that despite the figures of the returning officer after the election court revelations, he considered himself still the rightful member of the House of Commons, was the signal for applause that frequently afterwards punctuated the speech that took an hour and a half in its delivery.

With Mr. Borden on the platform as speakers were Dr. R. C. Weldon, J. C. O'Mullin and J. G. H. Bergeron, the last named making the closing address and by his bright, forcible style sending the audience home in the best of good humor, though it was 11.30 o'clock. The chair was occupied by Senator MacKeen.

### Advocates Many Reforms.

Mr. Borden's speech was mainly divided into two parts. The second of these, devoted to an enunciation of the Conservative policy and the proclamation of its features in it, evoked intense interest and loud applause. The statement that Mr. Borden stands for government control of public utilities was particularly well received. There was continuous applause as he laid down the policy of management of the Intercolonial railway by an independent non-partisan commission, the establishment in due time of a national system of telegraph and telephone, of a civil service modeled on that of Great Britain, and the principle that the people have a right to a share of the increment in value of public franchises.

Mr. Bergeron spoke for three-quarters of an hour and created a fine impression by his address, which lasted forty-five minutes.

Mr. Borden upon being introduced by the chairman, and when the applause had subsided, spoke as follows:

At this the first meeting of a series which will embrace every province in Canada except the fair province of Prince Edward Island and the Maritime Provinces from the Atlantic to the Pacific, it is fitting that I should give to you some statement of the attitude and policy of the Conservative party.

### Three Essentials of Good Government.

There are three essential features of good government upon which all men should unite and in respect of which they should feel themselves absolutely unshackled by the ties of any respect to tradition. These are: honest appropriation and expenditure of public moneys in the public interest; the appointment of public officials upon consideration of capacity and personal character and not of party service alone; and the improvement of existing postal facilities especially in newly developed portions of the country and the inauguration after proper inquiry as to cost of a system of free rural mail delivery.

13. A fiscal policy which will promote the production within Canada of all useful articles and commodities that can be advantageously produced or manufactured from our natural resources having regard to the interests of the consumer as well as to the just claims of our wage-earning population.

14. The reorganization of the present railway commission as a public utility commission with wider powers and more extended jurisdiction so as to establish thorough and effective control over all corporations owning or operating public utilities or invested with franchises of a national character.

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the administration of criminal justice which rendered the criminals absolutely fearless. In 1898 the government of this country in its wisdom saw fit to repeal the act providing for pensions to retired civil servants. In taking this course it set aside the example of every prudent business corporation which would have led it to extend and improve that act. But while belittling pensions to retired civil servants the party in power did not fail to establish, out of the secret fund at its command, a pension system for bribees and ballot switchers who upon discovery were forced to leave Canada and seek an asylum in the United States. The existence of this bribees' pension fund has been demonstrated by affidavits of men who have enjoyed it; witness the affidavits of Pritchett some seven years ago who corroborated a few months ago by his sworn testimony in the London conspiracy case, and the recent declaration of the deputy returning officer, James Farr.

### Fight Evils in Both Great Parties.

If I am right in asserting that untainted elections are essential to the success of democracy, am I not right in believing that the Conservative party has today an opportunity of performing a service to the country greater than any which it has rendered in the past? That service will consist in the selection of a deputy returning officer and the enforcement of the law; but it will chiefly consist in the future conduct and management of election campaigns. Fight the ballot thief and the bribee.

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### Guard Public Domain And Big Franchises.

The people of a great undeveloped country like Canada have within their possession and control an opportunity of solving many difficult questions which have disturbed other communities where conditions have become so fixed as to admit little possibility of change. Canada has a vast public domain and in that sense we

It may not become a member of the commons to criticize too severely the merits or performance of the other branch of the legislature; but those who have watched with any care the work of our senate in recent years must be convinced that it is not playing the part which was intended by the framers of our constitution. There seems little sense of individual responsibility, little desire to grapple with public questions, little disposition for effective work but intense inclination and indeed determination to make its sittings as infrequent and as brief as the barest decency will permit. In saying this I do not overlook important individual exceptions. When one considers the problems to be solved he is met with the declaration not easily disproved, that the present method of appointment is sufficiently good if the power were properly exercised. It is beyond question that while some appointments to the senate by the present administration have been excellent a very considerable number have been absolutely improper and even absurd, so that the senate should be greatly superior to the house of commons in the chief essentials of a legislative body and should be one of the main safeguards of our constitution. It does not occur that position either in fact or in public estimation. I realize certain possible dangers of an elective senate, but conditions may force it upon us; I shall stand for:

"Such reform in the mode of selecting members of the senate as will make that chamber a more useful and representative legislative body."

4. A thorough and complete reformation of the laws relating to the Civil Service so that future appointments shall be made by an independent commission acting upon the report of examiners after competitive examination.

5. Such reform in the mode of selecting members of the senate as will make that chamber a more useful and representative legislative body.

6. A more careful selection of the sources from which immigration shall be sought, a more rigid inspection of immigrants and the abolition of the bonus system except under very special circumstances and for the purpose of obtaining particularly desirable classes of settlers.

7. The management and development of the public domain (in which are to be included great national franchises) for the public benefit and under such conditions that a reasonable proportion of the increment of value arising therefrom shall inure to the people.

8. The operation and management of our government railways by an independent commission free from partisan control or interference.

9. The development and improvement of our national waterways, the equipment of national ports, the improvement of transportation facilities and consequent reduction of freight rates between the place of production and the market whether at home or abroad and the establishment of a thorough system of cold storage.

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chise to certain gentlemen who had associated themselves as a corporation under the name of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company. The Conservative opposition regarded the contract as improvident but the people ratified it, probably in ignorance of its real effect, and it must be carried out in good faith according to its terms. This great railway is to be constructed very largely upon capital provided by the credit of this country under a guarantee of its bonds, but the company is also permitted to issue \$50,000,000 common stock which will not represent one dollar, actual cash invested. We demanded that three-fourths of that stock should be retained for and should belong to the people of Canada. The government refused and handed it all over to the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company which had guaranteed one-fourth of the construction bonds. At the present moment that stock is worth nothing.

In twenty years it will be worth one hundred and perhaps two hundred cents a share. The increase in value will be due to the influx of settlers, the development and progress of the country and the expansion of commerce. In that increment of value the people of Canada will not participate to the extent of one dollar. How different is this from the progressive policy of the British government under Lord Beaconsfield, who secured for reasons of state a controlling interest in the shares of the Suez canal and accomplished not only a great political gain for the empire but a remarkable financial success as well.

The tendency of the present day is to criticize and rail at corporations, especially those controlling or operating public utilities. Would it not be better both for the corporations and for the people that franchises of a public character should be granted under such conditions that while the capitalist will receive not only a fair but a generous reward for his enterprise, the people will also participate in the profits which arise through national development and progress. This can be accomplished by participation in the stock issue or by applying a principle frequently used in street railway franchises, Montreal and Toronto receive from their street railways what is virtually a rental

dals? And last but not least are we to hand over our government railways to private corporations because their management has been very greatly discredited?

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. The remedy is to amend the methods. Gross maladministration is rife today in many public departments in Canada. Outrageous election scandals have been disclosed during the past ten years, but we do not therefore propose to repeal our constitution, or to abandon altogether our system of responsible government.

The Intercolonial Railway has suffered from lack of business management, from lack of discipline, from partisan use and partisan interference. The remedy seems obvious. Let us place our government railways under an independent commission and select for that purpose the best available person or persons with the requisite knowledge and experience. The commission should be accorded a status similar to that of the general railway commission of Canada. It would demonstrate our satisfaction in a very few years whether or not operation of government railways can be carried on honestly, efficiently, with proper discipline and by business methods. Personally I do not doubt the issue. A Canadian has made state ownership and operation successful in Australia. The Ontario government railway commission has a successful record of good business management and business results. I do not overlook the necessity of safeguarding the interests of the whole country by proper provision for the continuance of any existing rates which may be essential for the development and progress of commerce between the maritime provinces and other portions of Canada.

We stand therefore for the operation and management of our government railways by an independent commission free from partisan control or interference.

In 1903 and again in 1904 we advocated the extension of the Intercolonial Railway to the shores of the Georgian Bay. We believed that policy sound and that the government of Canada should have acquired and developed the Canada Atlantic Railway as part of the Intercolonial instead of permitting it to pass into the hands of one of the great railway corporations. That opportunity having passed, I believe it better first to demonstrate the possibility of efficient and successful business management in the operation of the 1,700 miles of state railway which Canada now possesses. When that demonstration shall have been successfully made and when the interests of Canada and especially our great west shall render necessary the construction of another great transcontinental railway I do not doubt that the country will be ready and prepared to extend a successful system of government railways to the great provinces of the west.

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