

Prairie. And I want no better authority than the 'stormy petrel' of our Quebec politics, who said the other night, at a banquet tendered me on the 22nd of March, 1924, in Montreal, and was cheered for it by 2,000 listeners: 'As for your great leader, I esteem him as a man of great courage and independent thought. He is a man who preaches the same sermon everywhere. (He could have added that he preaches also in the French language.) He is frank and outspoken, and in this country of different nationalities, race and religion, it is by frankness and openness that we can understand each other. Our industries are going to the dogs and we greet the man who has the courage to preach protection, not only here, but in the West, where it is unpopular.'

"For my part, it was a great satisfaction, I assure you, to have had this new occasion to bring to a man, who is a friend as much as a chief, the public expression of my most devoted esteem and admiration. And if there is a thing in my political life which I prize most highly it is the honor of having fought by his side and to have shared with him the glory of an undeserved defeat.

"I will add no more, unless, perhaps, that the people will soon acclaim the chief by whose frankness it was hurt at a time when truth was hard to hear, but still harder to tell, but for whose courage public admiration has not died out: the people will acclaim him because it can see 'his heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth,' to use the words of your great Shakespeare, 'fearless minds climb soonest into crowns.'" (Applause.)

Dr. Paul Poisson, of Tecumseh, introduced Hon. Dr. Manion in a felicitous speech, and the member for Fort William pointed his remarks with a series of funny stories, which made his speech the feature of the evening from the standpoint of entertainment.

"Everything the Government does seems to be just a little worse than the last thing they did," he declared. He spoke of the wheat board and lake freight rates legislation, and said: "I know of no piece of legislation brought in by the present Government that has been a success, and as far as I can see it is getting worse the farther they go. You may think I am joking, but I am not, and if you were to go with Ottawa people into the galleries of the House and watch the juvenile proceedings you would understand. Mackenzie King either does not take himself seriously, or, if he does, he is deceiving himself as he deceived the people of this country. He takes an attitude opposite to that of last year. He makes promises he does not carry out. As far as I know he has carried out none of his promises and none of the plans of his platform. If the people of this country want a government that will endeavor to live up to its pledges, and always has—if they want a man who will take the same attitude in Quebec as in Ontario and the Prairie Provinces, who is playing the game honestly and fairly, and who knows the affairs of Canada better than any other man, I would say it would be the duty of the people to vote for Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen and his party." (Applause.)

Col. Wigle introduced Mr. Guthrie as one who stood high in professional life and as an advocate of British fair play and the greatest good to the greatest number.

HON. HUGH GUTHRIE.

Hon. Mr. Guthrie declared the actual leadership of the House was in the hands of Mr. Meighen and that without his assistance the Government would have made even a sorer picture.

"When he sits silent," said Mr. Guthrie, "the Government blunders. When he offers advice they generally snarl, but they generally take it, and of useful legislation placed on the statute books of Canada during the last two and a half years almost the whole of it is attributable to the good work of the leader of the Opposition. The Government is not a Government of serious statesmen; they would not claim it for themselves, I think. They are a Government of time-servers, opportunists, and it is said of them, 'Join the Cabinet and see the world.' (Laughter.) What shall I say of the Progressive force? They are sitting there day after day and night after night, accepting the crumbs that fall from the Government table. They asked for a fish and they got a serpent, and the serpent is going to sting them when the budget comes down. Such a flood of telegrams and letters and delegations of protest have come that even this dull and shiftless Government realized, I think that if it desires to continue in office a short time it will be well to do nothing with regard to the customs tariff on agricultural implements.

"They are blotting out the militia system. There will be no annual camps, I am told. The artillery is not to go to Petawawa. The Government can buy land in Paris at \$2,000,000, and in London a property costing more than that, and out here at Belle River a pier, but training of the militia is not an economical proposition."

Urging co-operation between Ontario and Quebec the ex-minister said: "Our interests are one; our laws are largely the same. Religion may be different, but in reference to the great fundamentals of life we are a unit. There should be no dividing line so far as the interests of Ontario and Quebec go. That, I am satisfied, is the attitude of the honorable gentleman who is the leader of the Opposition and that is the message Mr. Monty delivered. All we ask at this time is just give it a chance."

Commenting in his afternoon address upon the items of \$600,000 for completion of the Parliament building tower and \$1,300,000 to buy an office building in London, Mr. Guthrie said some Progressives opposed the votes, but slipped out before the division came.

PROGRESSIVES' MOTTO.

"The Progressive motto," he said, is 'hold on!' I don't know whether they would adopt the motto used in the days of the Medes and Persians, 'O, King, live forever' but they would say, 'O, King, live until the last possible day of the last possible year of the present Parliament, in order that we may draw out full indemnity without facing the country.' The Government has not so far developed a single new idea, or given consideration to a single new avenue of development in this country; it is a Government that is resting on its oars and letting things happen as they may. Their motto might be well described as 'Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest.' That has been the whole attitude for two years and a half, but I honestly believe if the Government during that period had been absolutely inactive and done nothing they would have caused less positive injury to the country than through their few brief moments of wakefulness. It was during their few moments of wakefulness they undertook to tinker with the tariff."

Mr. Guthrie gave figures from the current issue of the commerce department's bulletin showing that in the five months before the Fordney tariff was imposed Canada sold to the United States \$12,000,000 worth of cattle, and in the past five months \$2,300,000 worth. The figures for sheep were \$1,085,000 and \$124,000, respectively; flour, \$9,000,000 and \$884,000, and poultry, \$448,000 and \$135,000.

"Would reciprocity have been a good thing," someone asked from the audience. "It might have been a good thing in farm products," replied Mr. Guthrie, "but we have anything but reciprocity now, and if we have no reciprocity in delivery between the two countries what is the objection to getting reciprocity in tariffs? Why throw out markets open to the United States when they refuse to let us go freely into their market? (Applause). We have the whole solution in our own hands. We are importing eggs and butter and cheese that we produce here, and we let the producers of the Southern States send their fruit and vegetables in here early and take the cream off our market. We can remedy this by a tariff that will protect." (Applause.)

MR. MEIGHEN.

Rt. Hon. Mr. Meighen, introduced by Lieut.-Col. S. C. Robinson, opened with a tribute to his colleagues for loyalty through trying times. In connection with the \$1,300,000 Union Club purchase in London for "a new home for Mr. Larkin," the Opposition leader recalled that Mr. King had pointed to an announcement in the House last June as implying authority of Parliament for the deal, while it turned out later the purchase had actually been consummated in May.

"What a triumph for responsible Government," he commented, "and the re-establishment of a prostrate control of Parliament! Never was Parliament held in contempt as this Government in its incompetence has held it."

"The tariff was the issue in 1921, but because the people did not challenge the Liberal party and give a verdict on that issue is one of the main causes of the morass we find ourselves in today. You may go wrong on railways and get out of it somehow, but if this country goes wrong on tariffs it gives up the battle to the great country to the south."

"I am told in criticizing the administration I lack constructive ability. My colleagues are assailed in this language, too. My first corner stone is a strong, sound stable, fiscal policy. (Applause). There are other constructive things that must be done. There have been other things constructive the past has

called forth, but these things we will have virility enough to do if we first set ourselves right on tariff matters. I don't know that it lies in the mouths of these men to assail us with lack of constructive capacity. I wonder if the late administration did not have some constructive enterprises to pass upon. Did not we have some mountains to scale. There is not a citizen but will admit that handling of Canada's affairs through those black days and nights of war was the biggest burden ever heaped upon the backs of any administration. Through all these difficulties we marched. Every one that presented itself was surmounted, and this country came through, not only creditably, but compared with all other nations in a manner our posterity will look back upon with pride. We were harassed with railway problems scarcely less complicated than the war itself. Every time we took a step in solution of something difficult we were denounced by political foes, with all the vigor of peace politics, in the very midst of war.

SUBSTANTIALLY SOLVED.

"One by one the difficulties were surmounted, and I put it to the people of Canada to-night, is not the railway problem of this country now substantially solved? Is there even a substantial portion of the people of Canada who would not reserve the course we pursued? Those who attacked us are now sitting in the pride of office and pointing with pride to the system we initiated."

Mr. Meighen referred to the United States tariff wall, and the volume of Canadian raw products pouring over the border to be manufactured by American labor. He recalled the diverse appeals of the Liberal party in 1921, preaching something very near free trade where that was popular, and yet running protectionist candidates in Brantford and other industrial centers. "To-day," the King Government, he said, sought to hold power by "one frittering compromise after another with the Progressive leader." Two years ago a two and one-half per cent. cut was made in the duty on farm implements and five per cent. on shoes from Britain. On the other hand, the sales tax had twice been increased. Consumers to-day pay no less, but employment has been reduced. Actual injury in elimination of employment, Mr. Meighen said, was less than by the uncertainty and apprehension caused in business by these "steps in the right direction." Mr. King said it was all in the interests of unity, when in fact neither he nor his ministers had been frank with the West.

"Is it not time," asked the speaker, "to do away with double-dealing and pretended appeals for unity and let all parts of the country know what our tariff policy must be. I don't know how we are going to make any progress until we do. Nobody wants an oppressively high tariff in this country, but only one that will enable our industries to go on, and to employ hands, and keep our people here; and until we have men of courage and political honesty to declare this in all parts of the Dominion we may as well abandon all hope of national unity in this country. Is this country ever going to learn the lesson that not in reciprocal arrangements with the United States, but sturdy, self-reliance and assertion of every geographical and fiscal advantage, only by such a course is this country ever going to hold its own." (Applause.)

PURCHASES FROM U. S.

"Here we stand, a country of 9,000,000, buying from 110,000,000 over there \$1.55 of agricultural products for every dollar's worth the whole 110,000,000 buy from us. That is the situation farmers of Ontario and Quebec are laboring under to-day. Mr. King points to the trade returns and says: 'Aren't they fine,' but the whole increase is in raw products. Over \$426,000,000 worth of exports to the United States last year—and we bought \$600,000,000 worth—and \$228,000,000 of the export total was wood and the products of wood. Our forests are being depleted and we are in the position of a man who increases his returns by selling his neighbor part of his farm. Wood and wheat account

MEIGHEN PAPERS, Series 3 (H.C. 24, I, Volume 112)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES
ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA