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Section VIII

GENERAL ELECTION  
OF 1926

CANADIAN ANNUAL REVIEW 1926-27

Chapter "THE DOMINION GENERAL ELECTION OF 1926"

Pp. 25-56

"The result of the Dominion General Election of 1926 was generally interpreted as meaning that Canada had secured stable government. The consequence of the Election was that the Liberals had control of the House of Commons provided they got the support of six of the eleven candidates who were elected as Liberal-Progressives. This was a marked change from the previous Parliament in which the Liberals for this purpose required the support of twenty-four of the twenty-eight Progressive, Labourite and Independent members. The balloting on Sept. 14, 1926, strengthened the Liberals by nineteen and weakened the Conservatives by twenty-five, while the Progressive, Labour and Independent groups together had six more members than in the previous Parliament.

"The causes of the result have been much disputed. The need of a stable government was emphasized by both Liberals and Conservatives. The Robb Budget, the constitutional issue, and the Customs scandals were the three issues of which most was heard in the campaign. Local issues of major and minor rank also emerged in various parts of the country. Of major importance among the local issues were railway rates in the West, which helped the Liberals, and Maritime rights down by the Atlantic, which helped the Conservatives. Alongside the Customs scandal there were a number of smaller scandals discussed, some of which cut one way and some another.

"The considerations which led the voters to defeat Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, Conservative, and return Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King, Liberal, to office have been much discussed without reaching a generally accepted conclusion. The probability is that the Budget brought down by Hon. James Robb in the Session of 1926 played the largest part in the result. The Customs scandal was offset by overstatement on the part of Conservatives and by the failure of some of the new charges which they brought forward. The constitutional issue undoubtedly influenced voters in some parts of the country. It was prominent in the opening speeches of the campaign and it figured in the speeches made at its close."

During the campaign Mr. Meighen charged the Liberal Party with trifling with its pledges, and accused Mr. King of having sought to purchase a continuation of office by laying before the Progressive party a series of promises of definite and important legislation upon which the country as a whole had not rendered a verdict. He maintained that the evidence obtained in the Customs investigation showed that the degeneration of the Customs Department commenced with the advent of the King Government and continued throughout the

(Cont'd)

W.L. Mackenzie King Papers  
Memoranda & Notes

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