

Before going into politics Borden had become a highly successful and prosperous lawyer, having established his practice in Halifax after a short stand in Kentville. As a young man he showed little interest in politics but was rightly regarded as a Liberal. His one public utterance on political matters was an impromptu speech in behalf of his cousin, Dr. Fred Borden, long time Liberal member for Kings County and later to become Laurier's Minister of Militia. But in 1891 Borden moved over to the Conservative camp in support of John A. Macdonald's campaign against unrestricted reciprocity with the U. S.

Five years after his political conversion, Borden, on the urging of Sir Charles Tupper, stood as a Conservative candidate for Halifax. The Liberal newspaper of the city, The Chronicle, seemed not too impressed with the new Tory standard bearer. It declared disdainfully: "If Halifax wanted a good lawyer or even a nice man for a small tea party Mr. Borden could be conscientiously recommended. But what Halifax wants is a member of parliament who understands something about politics and has some political backbone. Mr. Borden is just the kind of man who will not suit that purpose".

But the voters of Halifax apparently did not agree for, although the Tupper Government went down to a smashing defeat, the political newcomer led the poll in Halifax, and took his place in the Conservative Opposition at Ottawa. But Borden was somewhat disappointed by the House of Commons. He was shocked by the lack of dignity in the attitude and behavior of the members, and his tidy legal mind was distressed by the unbusiness-like methods and enormous waste of time.

Nor did the new member make a very great impact upon the House. He was never an eloquent or dynamic speaker, and in the Eighth Parliament there were many men who were both. Nor was he colorful or showy in his manner. But he had the confidence of the party leader Tupper, he was a hard worker and faithful to his duties, and before the fourth session was over, the whip advanced him to the front row benches.

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