

Pamph
HC
R

Record

of the

Union Government

331190
8.9.36.

The record of the Union Government, a Government of solid work and progress, a Government that did nothing in the way of propaganda and that consequently was much misunderstood, is one of hard, grinding toil, ceaselessly and unselfishly performed without regard to consequences, political or otherwise. The members of the Union Government who largely comprise the present Government, *played the national game and it only*. In obedience to the mandate of the people given in 1917 they forgot politics entirely, and through so doing were able to perform in a short space of time more genuine national service, and to accomplish more important and far-reaching reforms than have been witnessed in Canada in twenty-five years.

There is an old and trite saying that the ways of reformers are hard, and it is especially true in the case of the Union Government. In the circumstances criticism was to be expected. In the national interest many unpleasant duties had to be performed, and it would be unreasonable to expect that those whose toes were trod upon would not raise a "holler." Conscription, which nobody liked, had to be resorted to; the law had to be enforced against shirkers and slackers; more and more taxes had to be imposed; restrictions had to be imposed

in a hundred different ways, some of them interfering with personal liberty and inclination; a difficult railway situation, the responsibility for which Union Government, at least, had no part, had to be solved, and in solving it important interests were considerably annoyed.

The Government had to perform all these more or less unpleasant tasks under a ceaseless fire of criticism, more or less unreasonable, and in many cases based upon ignorance of the facts. They had no time to hit back at their critics, no time to play the political game; they were too busy carrying on and doing national duty as they saw it. Amid all the welter of criticism it is specially noteworthy that rarely if ever did the critics get down to particulars. The real reason for this is that in most cases the critics do not know what they are talking about; they do not know the record of the Government, and perhaps care less. It pleases them to slam and bang, to bark and bluster, very often without rhyme or reason. It is equally noteworthy that in Parliament the opponents of the Government have cut a sorry figure, and have not been able to make any headway whatever. In every instance where they have challenged the Government they have been put to rout by a simple disclosure of the facts.

The following brief summary of the record of the Government is submitted for the thoughtful consideration of reasonable men and women:

(1) The war was vigorously prosecuted. Everything humanly possible was done, and well done, by the Government to keep our fighting forces up to strength, to provide our soldiers with everything they needed for their

welfare and comfort. Even the most bitter opponents of the Union Government have never uttered a word which they have been able to make good.

(2) At home the Government carried on a vigorous administration to cope with the thousand and one problems directly and indirectly arising from the war.

(3) A War Trade Board supervised the production and distribution of our materials of imports and exports.

(4) A Food Control Board increased production of food, conserved food resources, prevented waste and, undoubtedly as well, undue enhancement of prices.

The profits of packers, millers, and wholesale merchants were restricted. The use of grain in the manufacture of beer and spirits was prohibited. The hoarding of food stuffs was prevented. Restrictions were placed on the use of beef, bacon, bread and sugar.

The net result was that Canada was a very important factor indeed in feeding the Allied armies and the civil population in the allied countries.

(5) A Fuel Control Board regulated the supply and distribution and price of coal at a critical time.

(6) A Munitions Board established at the instance of the Government was of the greatest possible assistance in the production of Munitions throughout the war.

(7) A War Purchasing Commission, established to buy everything required for the Government war and civil services, by concentration of intelligent effort and by

skilled organization, saved many millions of dollars for the country.

(8) The demobilization of our troops was carried out in such an expeditious manner as to set a record not approached by any other country. In point of arrangements and of time the results accomplished were almost astounding.

(9) The close of the war found the people of Canada socially, economically and financially better in all respects than the people of almost any other country in the world.

(10) A most important duty of the Government was to take care in a manner befitting the country all the maimed and wounded of the country, and of the dependents of the disabled.

Who is there who can truthfully say that that duty was not performed thoroughly and efficiently, and with kindness and compassion? One country after another, including the United States and Great Britain, sent their commissioners to look over the Canadian methods of re-establishment and of vocational training of rehabilitating wounded and other returned men, and each of these commissioners returned to their own land and reported that of all the countries they had visited they found the best system in this country. In Great Britain and the United States they followed the methods of Canada step by step and line by line. Could there be stronger testimony than that?

(11) The Military Hospitals and Re-Establishment Homes have taken care of 150,000 returned men. Forty-eight thousand have been admitted to vocational

training, of which twenty-eight thousand have graduated already. In these vocational institutions no less than four hundred and ten different occupations are taught.

(12) The Department of Civil Re-Establishment has placed in permanent positions no fewer than 175,000 undischarged men.

(13) Apart from the treatment of wounded and disabled men, and the expenditure therefor, no less a sum than \$160,000,000 has been paid in gratuities to returned soldiers. In this respect Canada paid by far the largest amount per man of any country, even of the richest country in the world to-day—the United States.

(14) In the matter of pensions, Canada is easily the most generous of all the nations. The pension list to date includes 177,000 persons who are receiving benefits. Up to the present approximately fifty-five million dollars have been spent in this way.

(15) A scheme of life insurance has been adopted whereby returned soldiers may be insured without medical examination, at actual cost, not even including cost of administration, in sums of from five hundred to five thousand dollars. This is the cheapest insurance on earth.

(16) Over twenty-thousand returned men have been placed on the land, and loans to enable them to make a proper start have been granted amounting in the aggregate to seventy-three million dollars. In this way two million acres of new land have been brought under conditions of cultivation. The press throughout Canada has nothing

but the highest praise for the the work of the Government Board which carried out this land settlement work.

(17) Patronage, the fruitful mother of scandal, corruption, and political favouritism, was boldly abolished by the Union Government.

(18) To the fullest extent of its authority the Union Government assisted the Provinces in bringing about prohibition if and to the extent the people desired. During the war it exercised its extraordinary powers under the War Measures Act and prevented trade in liquor between the provinces and the importation thereof as well as the manufacture thereof.

(19) The wheat crop was nationalized under the control of a Government Board, and so successfully was this crop marketed for two years that farmers got the highest prices obtainable without the intervention of the middlemen, and for the crop of 1919 the Wheat Board was able to divide among the farmers the huge sum of forty-four million dollars in excess of what would have been realized from the guaranteed prices.

(20) The C.N.R. Railway system was taken over and nationalized, and similar action is now being taken as respects the Grand Trunk Railway.

The Government was compelled to take these steps to save the situation, to prevent the railways going into bankruptcy, and being rendered useless to the people by the breaking up of railway systems with serious losses to the Dominion as a Government and to the credit and reputation of the country as a whole. The Union Government

are not responsible for the deplorable railway situation which developed, but Union Government had to clean up the mess.

(21) All former Governments neglected to deal with the question of technical education, than which none could be more important to the country. They either did not have vision enough or were afraid to spend the necessary money. The Union Government grappled with the problem and provided a grant of ten million dollars for the purpose to be spent on condition that the provinces spend a similar amount. A scheme of co-operation was developed which is now working out successfully.

(22) For many years political squabbles between the two old political parties prevented action by the Dominion to assist in the construction of good roads. The old Tory Party wanted to assist but the Liberals objected to the manner in which the money was proposed to be spent, with the result that nothing was done. The Union Government, casting politics aside, voted twenty-million dollars to assist the provinces in the construction and improvement of highways, the money to be spent within four years, and to represent forty per cent of the total expenditures to be made by the provinces. Plans covering every detail of superintendence and otherwise are now in full operation.

The provinces following the lead of the Dominion Government have voted in the aggregate no less a sum than fifty-three million dollars, so that the total expenditure on good roads in Canada within the next few years will be something like seventy-three million dollars.

A Department of Health was created and is doing excellent work.

The important Housing problem was dealt with, no less a sum than \$25,000,000 being loaned to the provinces.

The franchise was extended to women.

A new and eminently fair and reasonable franchise law was passed, pronounced even by papers opposing the Government to be the fairest Franchise Act ever passed.

The highly important steel plate industry was established by Government encouragement, and on so well thought-out a plan that it is not likely to cost the country a dollar.

A vigorous shipbuilding programme was carried out with the result that Canada to-day owns 40 ships which are plying the seven seas carrying the produce and wares of Canada to all countries. Twenty-three more will soon be ready.