

# The Carleton Sentinel.

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WOODSTOCK, N. B., FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 1908.

WHOLE No. 3184

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## MR CARVELL'S SPEECH ON THE BLOCKADE

(From Hansard)

Mr F B CARVELL (Carleton, N.B.) It is really very amusing to see the attempt that hon gentlemen opposite are making to get out of the hole that they find themselves in on this question of Supply. If my hon friend from Leeds (Mr Taylor) had been here in the earlier part of today's sitting, he would not have taken the stand he has taken. This discussion was launched by the hon member for East Northumberland (Mr Owen) complaining of the action of the Minister of Customs (Mr Paterson) in taking part in the campaign in Ontario. The hon gentleman took exception to a statement made by the Minister of Customs (Mr Paterson) on Saturday last, that the Tory opposition in this House were withholding the Supply necessary to pay the salaries of Customs officials. We had the hon member for Lincoln and Niagara (Mr Lancaster) taking up an hour and a half of the time of the House trying to prove that the opposition were not blocking Supply. Now, we have the hon member for Leeds taking up an hour and a half declaring defiantly: We are blocking Supply.

The hon member (Mr Taylor) started at five minutes to one. The House rose at one and sat at three and it is now twenty minutes to four. So the hon member (Mr Taylor) has been talking for three-quarters of an hour. So I stand corrected—the hon gentleman has only taken three-quarters of an hour to say: We are blocking Supply. I give my hon friend credit for being honest in the matter. The hon member for Jacques Cartier (Mr Monk) I believe was the first to state, as he did about a month ago, that the opposition were justified in taking what he said was the only constitutional course of blocking Supply until obnoxious legislation was withdrawn. That was repeated by the leader of the opposition (Mr R L Borden) and has been re-echoed all over the country. The member for Leeds boldly stated it here last week.

But now the members of the opposition are getting scared. Last week, the hon member for North Toronto (Mr Foster) took an hour and a half to prove that the opposition were not blocking Supply. Today, the hon member for Lincoln (Mr Lancaster) tried to maintain the same position. What are the facts? We are told that there is to be an

election in Ontario and an election in Quebec.

Mr TAYLOR. The hon gentleman (Mr Carvell) ought to know; he was out stumping.

Mr CARVELL. I do not vote in either of these provinces, but I take the hon gentleman's word as to the election. As I have said, members of the opposition are getting scared. About a week ago, the Minister of Customs (Mr Paterson) tried for three or four days to get Supply to pay the salaries of the officers of his department. In the course of that discussion, the hon member for Leeds said: Withdraw sections 1 to 17 of the Election Bill and we will give you Supply in a few minutes. But then they found that there was an immense vote in Ottawa dependent upon that Supply for a living. And they got scared—and virtuous. And now their cry is: For God's sake, give these people their money; we have voted it why don't you give it to them? Then, it was stated that no militia camps could be held because there was no money. And these hon gentlemen got scared again, and I should imagine from the statement made by the Minister of Militia (Sir Frederick Borden) that they are begging him: For God's sake, hold the militia camps. They are very anxious that all votes of Supply that can benefit them should be put through, but they will refuse to grant anything that will not secure votes for their side. The action of these hon gentlemen raises the question fair and square: Can the government of this country, whether Liberal or Conservative, afford to be placed in such a position as that? Can any government afford to place itself at the mercy of an opposition and virtually declare that, if the opposition do not like any thing contained in legislation that is introduced, all the opposition has to do is to withhold Supply and the government will back down? Carry out in practice and you have a country ruled not by the majority but by the minority. The facts in this case are very short. About March 1, a Bill was introduced providing for amendments to the election law. In the first week in May the second reading of this Bill was moved and the opposition opposed it. I am not going to discuss the merits or demerits of that Bill. Nor will I deny the right of the opposition to oppose a Bill that they believe to be unjust. But I do say that they have not the constitutional or moral or equitable right to say: Unless you will withdraw these provisions of the Bill which we regard as objectionable, we will deprive the Ottawa civil servants, the contractors, every man or woman who is paid by this government throughout the Dominion of their pay. There is no use trying to get away from it; there is no use in these hon gentlemen saying: We will let you pay the Customs officials for fear we shall not get their votes in the pending election: take the money to hold the militia camps for fear we may not get the votes of those interested. These hon gentlemen would like to get away from this, but we will hold them to it—the plain question is whether this country is ruled by the majority or by the minority. Concede what these hon gentlemen now contend and you establish a precedent under which any future opposition can demand the withdrawal of any section of any Bill under threat of withholding Supply. Can any government, I say, afford to be placed in that position? Will the people of Canada justify any government in allowing itself to be put in that position? It is no wonder the members of the opposition are trying to recede from this position. The course they took during the last week shows that they are trying to recede from it. They persistently obstructed Supply for three or four days over the vote to pay the civil servants in the Customs Department, then they gave in. Ever since then they have, by foolish and silly questions, delayed the granting of Supplies for hours, and finally have allowed one or two small items to go through in order that they might be able to say to the country: We are not blocking Supplies. Take their course last night. The Minister of the Interior brought in a resolution to grant \$200,000 for the payment of certain salaries. I am willing to admit that the hon member for Jacques Cartier (Mr Monk) had a right to ask the question with which he started the discussion, I am willing to admit that probably a quarter of an hour could be reasonably spent in the discussion

of that question. After that, we had a spectacle which would not be tolerated in any other parliament of any civilized country in the world—we had three hours of obstruction, three hours taken up in every possible way, from the leader of the opposition down to the hon member from Macdonald (Mr Staples), for three hours and a half all sorts of silly questions were asked, and finally they granted the \$200,000.

Mr STAPLES. I want to ask the hon gentleman who says: 'Down to the hon member for Macdonald,' does he not think that the questions which the hon member for Macdonald asked last evening are quite as intelligent as the stuff he is getting off at the present moment?

Mr CARVELL. If the hon member wants an honest answer I shall have to tell him that I do not think so and I think that every honest member of parliament on either side of the House will agree with me in my conclusion—except possibly the hon member himself. Now, Sir, when the next item came up, as I said before, what did the opposition do? They deliberately blocked Supply, and then allowed the item to pass so that they might go to the country and say: We did not block Supply, because we gave you the \$200,000. I ask again: Can any self-respecting government afford to be placed in this position? I say there is only one solution to this question; if this opposition, or any other opposition, chose to pursue such a course, the inevitable consequence will be the closure. I am not the first one to advocate the closure. I am going to quote to the hon gentleman an authority coming from their own party, I am going to quote to them an article from the Montreal 'Gazette' of June 1, in the form of an editorial, a portion of which reads as follows:

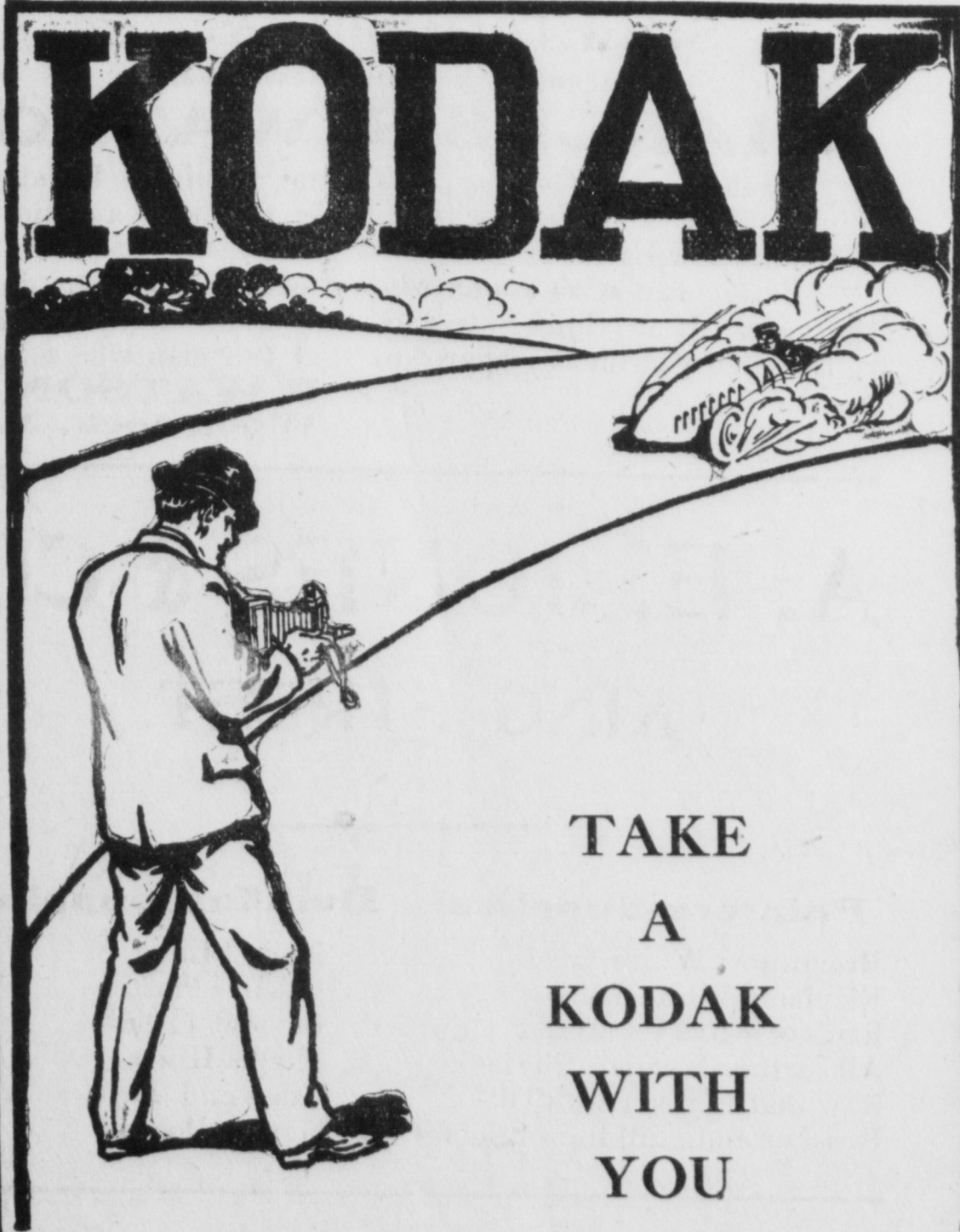
It is not the use, but the abuse of the right of discussion that creates public weariness and leads people to upset the natural order of things and to think of the government which acts as of more importance than the parliament that only talks. So probably, the mass of the people, without knowing much about the situation, would approve of a plan which promised to shorten the session of parliament by checking the flow of unreported talk. Closure began in the French parliament. It was adopted by that of Great Britain. It exists in the Congress of the United States. These are in their way the three leading parliamentary bodies in the world. What they

have agreed to accept may be expected to come in other popularly ruled countries.

To my mind that is the proper doctrine. I am sorry that it has become necessary that we should discuss the question of closure. Hon gentlemen opposite, and more especially the hon member for Leeds (Mr Taylor), have tried to show that this is not the first time Supply has been blocked in this parliament in order to prevent obnoxious legislation going through, and they have referred to the conduct of the Liberal opposition in 1896. But I want to tell the hon member, and he knows I am telling him the truth, that it is not a parallel case at all. The records of this House can prove that there was no blocking of Supply as a matter of fact parliament expired by effluxion of time on the 24th of April, and Supply was granted up to the 1st day of July following:

The opposition gave the then government Supplies up to the first of July, and there was plenty of time between the 24th day of April and the 1st day of July within which to hold an election, to call parliament together and vote Supply. Therefore, I say that is not a parallel case. It is just as well that the people of this country should know that it is not a parallel case, and I hope the members on this side of the House will not forget to show the people that it is not. I am glad this question is beginning to be agitated. I am much obliged to the hon member for Northumberland (Mr Owen) for bringing on this discussion. It is a question that needs to be discussed, it is a question on which the people should have more light. I think the people ought to know that if the civil servants cannot get their pay, if contractors cannot get their pay, if the railway navvies, as the hon member for Leeds calls them, cannot get their pay, if the merchants and others from whom the government purchase supplies cannot get their pay, the people ought to know who is responsible for it. The idea of talking such nonsense as some hon gentlemen do here, that they are not blocking Supply! I ask you, Sir, has there been an instance since this session began on the 28th of November last, when the government have asked for Supplies that they have not been met by an organized system of obstruction? I am safe in saying that in nine-tenths of the cases where

(Continued on eighth page.)



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