

LAURIER GRILLS THE BORDEN GOVERNMENT

Ottawa, Nov. 20.—The debate on the address was started today, and started with a fight. Sir Wilfrid Laurier followed up the declaration of war which he made on the election of the speaker Wednesday, with a frontal attack today, and drove it home with a vigor and keenness which surprised friends and opponents alike. The galleries were crowded with people who had smelt approaching battle, and they were not disappointed.

R. B. Bennett, of Calgary, moved the address in an agreeable speech, in which he furnished a surprise by going outside the bounds of the address to advocate legislation for the control of trusts, corporations and mergers, and to limit their stock issue so that the public would not be compelled to pay dividends on water.

Arthur Sevigny, of Dorchester, (Que.), speaking in French, made an address which was far more loyal than some he is credited with having made on the platform, to enable him to reach parliament.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier dealt with the reciprocity agreement and its defeat, with the absence of a Conservative naval policy and with the presence in the Borden government of Toronto Imperialists and Quebec Nationalists who had denounced imperialism throughout the campaign. He concluded with a want of confidence motion.

Mr. Borden was more vigorous than usual. He said that he had not formed his cabinet for the purpose of pleasing Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and was not surprised that he was displeased.

He stated that the Laurier naval programme would be dropped, and that there would be substituted for it a well considered scheme, after consultation with the other parts of the empire, as to defence. He also intimated that after the plan was prepared it would be submitted to the Canadian people for their ratification.

OVATION TO SIR WILFRID.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier received a remarkable ovation from his followers when he rose to speak. For several moments the applause was continued until the Liberal chieftain himself raised his hand eventually to secure a cessation.

Sir Wilfrid expressed the delight of all Canadians at the fact that their royal highnesses had come to represent the crown in Canada. They had already won Canadian hearts by their simplicity of manner, their dignity of bearing, and their kindness of heart.

Commenting on the first paragraph of the speech from the throne, Sir Wilfrid noted that the references to the continued and increasing prosperity of the country and the growing revenues were in singular contrast to the situation when the late government took office, fifteen years ago.

The compliment which the present government paid to the outgoing administration could not have been duplicated in 1896 when trade was languishing, prosperity at a very low ebb and the people generally almost in despair. But now after fifteen years of Liberal rule Canada was recognized as a nation upon which was fixed the gaze of the world.

Never before had an administration gone out of office under such conditions. It was not that they had not done enough for the country, but that their opponents said they were going to do too much. He could not wish for a better epitaph for the late administration than that contained in the opening words of the address.

Taking up first the rather meagre legislative proposals promised by the government, he noted that the suggestion for improving trade relations with the West Indies and British Guiana was in line with what the previous administration had already proposed.

Sir Wilfrid then took up at some length the obligations which rested on the incoming administration in regard to meeting the problems of trade, tariffs and imperial relations consequent upon their assuming the reins of office.

ELECTORS MADE A MISTAKE.

"The loss of power," said the Liberal leader, "is a matter of little consequence. I have no fault to find with the verdict of the Canadian people. In my judgment they made a great mistake, but we on this side of the house are prepared to accept it loyally and act accordingly."

The reciprocity proposals had been defeated, but that did not end the matter. Markets must be found for the rapidly increasing agricultural output of the country. Two-thirds of the people of Canada were making

their living from agriculture, and their interests must be kept in full view by any government. The demand for the American market, which had come in the first instance chiefly from the West, had been opposed by the Conservatives, but not on economic grounds.

During the late election campaign, said Sir Wilfrid, Hon. Mr. Sifton gave the closest approach of any to a real economic argument. The chief point urged by the latter against the agreement was that if consummated it might tend to expose Canada to the evils which now beset the United States in the way of monopolies, combines and extravagant exploitation of natural resources. But, said Sir Wilfrid, these very evils in the United States were due to the high tariff for which the Conservative party of Canada stood and which made for the congested cities and deserted or depleted farms. There were already trusts and mergers in Canada as in the United States. The reciprocity arrangement would have tended to ameliorate rather than accentuate these evils.

DANGER OF PACKING TRUST.

"It is not yet two months past," continued Sir Wilfrid, "yet the Canadian people are already to suffer for listening to the voice of passion rather than the voice of reason. If it is true that the meat trade packers in Canada are organizing to raise prices to the consumer we have already the first proof and it will become more and more apparent as time goes on that on September 21 the voice of prejudice and passion and not the voice of reason was in the ascendant."

"The opponents of reciprocity say that the British connection would have been endangered thereby. There is a large class in Britain, a class of British imperialists, who hope to build up the British Empire and solidify it in unity, not by removing the shackles of trade, but by intervening and creating in all its constituent parts and new shackles between one nation and the other within the Empire. This class hailed our defeat as a great victory, and their shout of triumph has been reverberated week after week. They express the hope that before long British manufactured goods will be admitted free into this country to compete freely with the Canadian manufacturer."

"There are at the present time on the sea certain British imperialists of this class, and they will learn on their arrival what false calculations they have had in their minds. They will know that with the men who are now in office there is no more hope for British competition than there was for American competition. They will learn that the men who, during the last election, talked loudly of maintaining British connection never intended to preserve it by admitting British products into the markets of Canada on more equal terms."

"Our British friends will learn, bye and bye, that if they are to reach the goal of their ambition they will have to come back to the Liberal party who first introduced the British preference."

WON ON FALSE PRETENCES.

"Thus," continued Sir Wilfrid, "I make bold to say that the recent elections were carried under false pretences. I know there are men on the other side of the house who imagined that in rejecting reciprocity they did a great service to England and the empire. I respect their views; I know their eyes have been closed to the facts; but let me say that in my humble judgment, far from rendering a great service to Britain, they have done an injury to Britain and to the British Empire."

"We, sir, are in a state of transition. The old civilization is passing away and a new civilization is coming. The period of conquest, of domination and of aggrandizement is passing away. We have so far advanced that there is no general conflagration over the conflict of Italy and Turkey, of France and Germany in Morocco. In the new condition of the failure—a condition not of war but of peace—the friendship of the United States would be the best asset that England could possess."

"I do not believe that any Canadian was influenced by hostility to the American people, but I regret that the language of certain newspapers

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and public men during the campaign was not such as to promote the friendliest relations with the neighboring republic.

"The American people can find no fault with us if we took the attitude of rejecting the reciprocity convention. It was our right and privilege. Nevertheless, I believe we have lost an opportunity, both an opportunity of trade and an opportunity of increasing the friendship of the Canadian and the American people."

ARBITRATION TREATY IN DANGER.

Sir Wilfrid went on to quote the *New York Times*, a very conservative publication, in which it was intimated that because of the Canadian result the arbitration treaty between Britain and the United States would be defeated.

Mr. Foster—"Does the honorable gentleman endorse that statement?"

Sir Wilfrid—"In the manifesto that I issued to the Canadian people I stated my belief that reciprocity would help the passing of the arbitration treaty. My opinion is here confirmed. And I stated a moment ago that while in my judgment the Canadian people had taken the wrong course, yet they had done nothing at which the American people should take umbrage."

"But human nature is human nature, and, while the relations of the two countries are satisfactory, my contention is that they would have been more satisfactory, and that a better sentiment would have been created had this arrangement passed."

Continuing, the Liberal chief touched on the annexation cry, and took occasion to point out that the West had voted emphatically for the larger markets. What was going to be done for the producers of the west? The western interests felt that they had been sacrificed to the eastern interests.

"There is in this," added Sir Wilfrid, "a danger far greater, far more to be apprehended than the vain illusory idea of annexation. There is nothing more detrimental to our national life than that there should be cultivated between the east and the west the feeling to which I have invited the attention of the government."

"I do not ask today for an answer. It would not be reasonable to ask the government at this time to be prepared to offer a new policy. But at no distant day the government should be prepared to deal with the situation and give the western people some compensation for the benefit which they expected from the trade arrangement."

THE NAVAL POLICY.

The house sat up and leaned forward in eager expectancy when the "Old Chief" passed on to the consideration of the naval policy. The ministerial benches were patently ill at ease, and as Sir Wilfrid continued, amid roars of laughter and applause, they made a sorry spectacle. He read the resolution in which the house had unanimously concurred, calling for some naval action by the former government, and supplemented it with the reading, amid laughter, of Mr. Borden's resolution calling for the building of a Dreadnought, and a more advanced naval policy than that of the former administration.

Mr. Borden had complained because the naval policy of Sir Wilfrid had been too autonomous and not imperial enough. The country had waited in vain for Mr. Borden's pronouncement of policy in this speech from the throne. The present government, of course, would be a true blue Tory administration, tinged and saturated with sound imperialism—as they understand imperialism.

"I could quote sentence after sentence, speech after speech," continued Sir Wilfrid, "but it will be sufficient for the present to recall the words of my honorable friend, the prime minister, spoken at Toronto, when he declared that the voice of Toronto should be the voice of Canada. Well, we know the voice of Toronto in regard to the navy. The voice of Toronto has always been that the navy bill which we introduced was not sufficiently imperialistic, and was too much autonomous. That is the only criticism that was ever made."

CHAMBERLAIN'S BLESSING.

And, Sir, on the present occasion I have to say that the voice of Toronto has been endorsed....The character of the victory of September 21 was a triumph of imperialism. All over the country we were greeted with peans of triumph, with shouts of victory for the cause of imperialism. Indeed, on the very next day, the 22nd of September, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain himself the apostle of imperialism, cabled his congratulations and his blessings to my hon. friend, stating that he saw in the victory the dawn of the day he had

long been looking for, and that he hoped soon to see the realization of his imperialistic dream.

"So under the circumstances, therefore, there is perhaps no occasion to ask what is the character of this administration; is there any doubt? If I were to listen to my own reasoning, my own judgment; if I were to attach importance to the deliverances of my hon. friends opposite, I would conclude that this is a true imperialist administration. That is what my reason would tell me, but my eyes tell me a different story. (Laughter and applause.)

"When I look about I cannot see what is in the hearts of the hon. gentlemen—that they have refused to tell us—but I see before me a very composite galaxy; I see men sitting on the treasury benches opposite, one, two, three, perhaps four, whom the blessings of Mr. Chamberlain would produce the same contortions as the sprinkling of holy water upon the head of Satan. (Renewed laughter and applause.) They cannot have come together without something extraordinary having taken place."

"This government is like another Joseph; it wears a coat of many colors, (Hear, hear, and laughter), and the other Joseph was betrayed by his brothers and sold into bondage. I have no hesitation in saying, with a full sense of the responsibility attaching to my words that the honorable gentlemen now on the treasury benches cannot have come together unless some of their brethren have been betrayed, and unless some of the electors either in Ontario or in Quebec have been sold and badly sold. (Cheers.)

"But who is it that has gone back upon his record? Who has abandoned his principles? Is it my honorable friend, the prime minister? Well, my honorable friend will permit me to tell him, and I do not think he will differ from me, that he has been many things in succession and not one long at a time. (Laughter.) I believe, however, that he is still a true Tory and imperialist. Is it my hon. friend the minister of trade and commerce, Mr. Foster. (Renewed laughter.) I believe that the fear of the electors of Toronto will keep him to his guns if nothing else will do it. (Laughter.) Is it my hon. friend the new minister of finance (Mr. White.) I once knew him in better company, but he has fallen from grace and it is much to be feared that he has fallen down, down, to the lowest depths of the bottomless pit. Will it be my hon. friend the minister of public works (Mr. Monk.) (Cries of hear, hear, and prolonged cheering.) Once upon a time my friend the minister of public works, then the member for Jacques Cartier, was the pride and hope of the Conservative party. He was promoted high in the ranks, until he became the first lieutenant of the leader of his party. He sat by his side, with him cheek by jowl every day. But unfortunately that cordiality did not last long. For some reason, better known to my hon. friends, the minister of public works for some reason, which he never explained, left this seat and took a back seat,

though still remaining in the ranks of his party—broke openly with his party and refused any longer to take part in its deliberations. He shook the dust off his feet at the door of the caucus room—would not enter the caucus room. He joined the ranks of the Nationalists who held Laurier in abomination and Borden in execration. (Renewed laughter.)

"Mr. Monk last session, was in the house sullen and isolated from his Conservative side. He posed as the avenging angel of an outraged people whose sons were soon to be thrown upon the decks of men of war to be disemboweled, fighting for England. No wonder he dissociated himself from the Conservative party whose only complaint against the law was that it did not go far enough."

"Mr. Monk was opposed to the Conservatives until Sept. 21, and his passage to the government side of the house is an acrobatic performance which did credit to his limbs, if to nothing else, and showed that all the weight of principles which he carries will never interfere with the freedom of his movements."

"What has taken place to bring Mr. Monk with his Nationalists, and Mr. Borden with his Conservatives, together? They have spoken in public two or three times and neither has told us. They have not told their naval policy in the speech from the throne. Are we to suppose that these men holding views so dissimilar have formed a government ignoring altogether these important questions and intend to sit there together? Constitutional government demands that we have an explanation, and as we have received none we are bound to conclude that the administration have no naval policy."

"I believe there is a measure of truth in the statement that they intend a referendum, and that Mr. Borden in one part of the country will be able to advocate a larger naval policy, leaving Mr. Monk free to advocate a different policy in another part of the country. I think I am not criticising the course of the government too strongly when I say it is a scandal and a violation of the fundamental rules of British government."

LAURIER'S AMENDMENT.

Sir Wilfrid moved an amendment, seconded by Hon. Dr. Pugsley, that the following words be added to the address:

"We beg to represent to your royal highness that by resolution of this house, adopted the 31st of March 1909, it was affirmed that, 'This house fully recognizes the duty of the people of Canada as they increase in numbers and wealth to assume in larger measures the responsibilities of national defence.'"

"And further, 'This house will cordially approve of any necessary expenditure designed to promote the speedy organization of a Canadian naval service.'"

"That in pursuance of that resolution the late administration proceeded to adopt a well defined policy of naval organization."

"That with regard to that policy as well as to the whole question of

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naval defence, there is in the present cabinet a flagrant conflict of opinion, and that some of its members have repeatedly both before and during the last elections, denounced naval defence in any form whatsoever.

"We respectfully submit to your royal highness that it is a fundamental principle of constitutional government that the advisers of the crown shall be heartily in accord on

all important questions of public policy, and that the inclusion by the prime minister in the present cabinet of members holding diametrically opposite views on a question of the highest importance to the dominion and to the empire, is contrary to the well understood principles of responsible government and should not receive the approval of the house."

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