

## BOQUETS FOR BORDEN: BRICKBATS FOR ROGERS

How Things Are Manipulated at Ottawa by Those Holding the Seats of the Mighty—Bob Rogers Wants an Election, but Sir Robert Uncertain as to Tory Prospects, Adopts the September Morn Attitude—Inclined to be Finicky on Issues.

Ottawa, June 19.—Sir Wilfrid Laurier's challenge, "I will not open the portals of office with that bloody key," has captured the imagination of the country. The opinion grows that Premier Borden must either take it or leave it. The opinion also grows that he will leave it because so far he has refused to discuss it. Silence is one of the best things the premier does.

A plain statement from Premier Borden that there will be no general election until the war is over would be a great boon to Canada but that statement Sir Robert shirks making. It is true, as his campaign literature advertises, that Borden backs Britain, but that probably means that he backs Britain as far as expedient. He has not considered, for example, the possibility of backing Britain by following her example and postponing partisan strife until Germany is disposed of.

**POORER'S VACILLATION.**

Meanwhile Premier Borden's halo is fraying at the edges. Even his own friends condemn his vacillation. It is well known that the premier likes to monopolize all the stained glass attitudes in party politics. For instance, if any ex-communicating is to be done it is Sir Robert who indulges in the grand gestures which sweep sinners like Garland and Foster out of sight. Sometimes the sinners refuse to stay swept but that makes no difference—the Great Purifier has done his work and been seen in one of his favorite poses. Like-wise Sir Robert has a habit of seizing any laurels that may be handed about and if occasionally he gets a Garland of thistles instead of the gotten and a general election would

wreath of bays he was expecting, it is his own fault for grabbing more than his share.

Certain working members of the cabinet have begun to complain at a division of labor which apportions all the glory to Sir Robert and all the blame to his humble and inferior associates. Sir Robert, so they say may hold his head among the stars but he has his feet firmly planted on earth to know what the Honorable Bob and his side partners are doing. In a word, Sir Robert is the real minister of elections and the Honorable Bob is only the screen door which keeps the flies from irritating his master.

If anything the Honorable Bob is the traveler man—he would do it now—but Sir Robert can be scared off. The premier is much of Hamlet's frame of mind when about to commit suicide. He hesitates to fly to evils he wots not of. The rumor runs that Premier Borden has never been opposed to any general election that had a fair prospect of success. What he sought to defer was failure—in which attitude he was strengthened by practical friends in the cabinet who thought it a shame to hand the spending of one hundred and fifty million dollars over to the Liberals. In short, the election has been as moveable as Premier Borden's fears which receive new impetus every time a Canadian casualty list arrives from Europe.

**UNSETTLED WEATHER.**

It is not men that intimidate the premier but events. If there was a smashing victory for the Allies to-morrow the proprieties would be for Garland of thistles instead of the gotten and a general election would

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have the right of way. The barometer of public opinion is never out of Sir Robert's hand but every time he has read it, the glass has said "unsettled weather." Meanwhile the Conservative job presses are turning out tons of campaign literature and the nimble cartoonists are doing their worst with the features of the opposition. If there is a chance at any stage of the game to nip in and get a snap verdict Sir Robert is not going to miss it.

The situation seems to be that Sir Robert does not resist a general election, but that a general election re-sists him. Twice he has appeared as September Morn shivering on the brink—but both times the water has been too cold. Last fall he recoiled shuddering. The recoil was so strong

that it sent him as far south as the Virginia hot springs, where he got warmed through again. Early this summer he gabbled his toes in the water but found it too cold for politicians. It was the right temperature, however, for fish, so he went fishing.

After his return from his fishing trip two suggestions met him, both of which he succeeded in dodging. One was that the government should hold office till the war was over, the other that its term should be extended over two years. These suggestions were unofficial but hearty. Many Conservatives believed that this was the only way the government could prolong its life because on its record the one thing it could plead was extenuating circumstances. Besides there was always the danger that the opposition might adopt a policy of passive resistance, let the government have all the seats without a fight and put it in wrong with the people that way. At least that was what the specious reasoners urged but Sir Robert did not see it in that light. Like John Maynard, the brave pilot, of whom he used to read

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Are you discouraged? Is your doctor's bill a heavy financial load? Is your pain a heavy physical burden? I know what these mean to delicate women—I have been discouraged, too; but learned how to cure myself. I want to relieve your burdens. Why not end the pain and stop the doctor's bill? I can do this for you and will if you will assist me.

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in the school books, he felt that he ought to "hang on a little longer."

That is how the case for a general election stands at present—Sir Robert getting all the bouquets for waving it back and the Honorable Bob getting all the brick-bats for pushing it forward. Some people call Sir Robert's attitude resisting, others, more accurate, speak of it as waiting.

### FINICKY ON ISSUES.

Sir Robert is as finicky about issues as he is about occasions for a general election. Up to date four issues have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. The first was the contumeliousness of the sen-

ate which was discovered by Bob Rogers in April, just about the time the Manitoba government began tottering. As that excuse would not wash a second issue was put forward—the necessity of securing a mandate from the people to spend one hundred and fifty million dollars which had been unanimously voted by parliament. The second issue proving as flimsy as the first a third issue was invented—the over-great burden of responsible government on the shoulders of fifteen cabinet ministers who would therefore ask the people to allow them to carry it five years longer. The third



issue having been laughed out of court the fourth issue is now broached—the shortcomings of Mr. White's war tariff. Though its defects are admitted, Mr. White has plenary power to alter and amend and nobody is asking for a general election on the head of it—nobody, that is to say, except the Borden government to whom a poor excuse is better than none.

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