

BOURASSA AND MOORE WERE TOO WISE TO VOTE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S MONETARY POLICY

(Montreal Star)

Ottawa, Nov. 3.—In Parliament, at least, it is the unexpected which is always happening. Yesterday was a case in point. Whereas all that an advance reading of the sitting's horse scope could reveal as likely was that second reading would be given at long last to the United Kingdom agreement, what actually happened was something totally different; the hour of adjournment found the House apparently as far as ever from its formal decision upon the conference agreement, but with the achievement to its credit of having declared itself definitely and emphatically upon the question of inflationist policy, which, in one form or another, has been a threatening issue all session.

In Conservative circles, the inclination is to credit the veteran Henri Bourassa with having displayed considerable more political sagacity in his vote upon the currency issue than did his fellow Quebec members on the Opposition side of the House. The viewpoint may be partisan, but the Government supporters believe that, with the disrepute in which radicalism is held by French-speaking Canada, the Quebec Liberals did not behave wisely in lining themselves up in support of a proposition so largely sponsored by the Woodsworthian element in the Chamber.

The other vote in this division which attracted interest, in addition to that of the Quebec Liberals, was that of W. H. Moore of South Ontario. Mr. Moore is rated as the best economist on the Opposition side of the House, with a practical balance outweighing the greater fluency on the subject of some of the Progressive members. His support of the Government's monetary policy was regarded as significant.

The net effect of the Government's victory was to widen still further the steadily widening breach between it and the Opposition. Except for Messrs. Bourassa and Moore, the vote was on straight party lines, which emphasized the Conservatives as the champions of

a stable currency, worth 100 cents on the dollar, while the Opposition groups, without distinction as to Labor, Progressive, or Liberal, came out openly as the advocates of currency experimentation.

Yesterday's sitting of the House at least had the virtue—in addition to liveliness—of having few moments of indecision. New propositions were brought forward in considerable originality. They were all dealt with briskly. If the House did not vote them down, the Speaker ruled them out. Hon. Mr. Black ruled first and the House talked over his rulings afterwards. None of them, however, despite some questioning by the Opposition fell by the wayside.

The breeze over the motion of Mr. Hepburn to discuss the Sun Life Company evoked some turbulence. In order to comply with the rules of the House in seeking to interject at the present stage of the session, Mr. Hepburn was required to place in the hands of the Speaker a statement setting forth his reasons for contending that the matter was out of urgency. He did so, and desired, before being ruled out of order, to read his factum to the House. This Hon. Mr. Black refused. The result was that when Mr. Hepburn was refused permission to proceed and the ruling was appealed, there was some complaint among the Opposition that they could not vote intelligently, as they did not know the facts which had prompted the West Ilgin member to raise the issue. The reply of the Speaker was that the rules, not he, were responsible for the circumstances under which the vote was taken.

The House was afforded during the sitting an interesting opportunity to study the contrast between the sensitivity of a private member and a Prime Minister to personal attack. J. A. Bradette, of North Temiskaming, came into momentary prominence in debate a few days ago when Armand Lavergne attached the adjective "flour-flusher" to him. Yesterday on grounds of decorum, consideration for the literary quality of Hansard, in fact upon

PREMIER BENNETT HIT OUT FROM THE SHOULDER IN CLOSING DEBATE ON THE TRADE PACT

It is doubtful if the Prime Minister ever faced an easier task than that which he performed so efficiently and so annihilatingly last night in his closing address on the Ottawa agreements. He had, when he introduced the resolution approving the agreements, given the country a very full statement of his reasons for recommending approval. All that remained for him to do in closing was to pillory the attitude of the Liberal Opposition—to paint in vivid colours its utterly shameless reversal of Liberal policy for nearly four decades, its open desertion of what was the first and possibly the most valuable major contribution of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to Dominion and Imperial progress, its consequent flouting of the Laurier tradition and leadership and its direct departure from Mr. King's own attitude in 1923.

Loss of Prestige

If Mr. King suffers in prestige from so crushing an exposure, he has only himself to blame. Notoriously, the Liberal party was gravely disunited on the question as to what should be its attitude toward these agreements when it assembled in Ottawa for the present session. It caucussed on the subject—if all reports are not unfounded—with considerable anxiety,

every ground except the accuracy of the expression, although the House was probably intended to take it for granted that that was disputed, the Temiskaming member sought to have the term ruled out of Parliamentary debate as an injustice to the person to whom it was applied. Premier Bennett, on the other hand, listened with indifference to the recent shocking attack made upon him editorially by a Vancouver paper. It was read by a Western member and treated with contempt of silence by the Prime Minister. Mr. Bennett was not even moved to comment when the Western member, Dr. T. G. Donnelly, added to his own inspiration that the Prime Minister had "the nerve of a brass monkey" and that the Vancouver editorial was calculated to "take the shirt off the Tory party."

divided opinion and honest doubt. Many members of that party seem to have remembered their own past, distant and recent, and felt they should support this splendid fruition of the Laurier programme. But the will to oppose prevailed. It was decided to fight. This was bad enough; but when it developed that the fight was to be conducted—not with heavy artillery, none of which could be discovered—but by sniping operations against this and that detail of the bargain, the Prime Minister could only feel that his policy had been justified by the feebleness of the attacks made upon it.

Amazing Absurdity

That the Laurier Liberals should oppose the crowning achievement of establishing intra-Empire preferences right in line with the policy inaugurated by this great leader was in itself an amazing absurdity which delivered them into Mr. Bennett's hands. And Mr. Bennett's hands are not a comfortable resting-place for any public men whom he strongly suspects of insincerity. In order to oppose the Ottawa agreements, the Liberals must contend (1) that preferences should be one-sided, (2) that the policy of giving Canadian preferences is turned from a good into a bad policy if the United Kingdom gives preferences in return, (3) that a preference on Canadian wheat in the British market is a bad thing, (4) that they have just found this out since the Conservatives were successful in securing such a preference, (5) that they were wrong when they themselves wanted it but could not get it, (6) that the policy of lowering tariffs is not a good policy when applied between different members of the British Empire, (7) that Laurier was wrong, and (8) that King was wrong only nine years ago. But why continue the list of "lost causes"?

A Challenge

Mr. Bennett delivered a very effective challenge to a number of private members on the Opposition benches when he dared them to report to their constituents that they voted against preferences which would help local activities in their own ridings. Mr. Hsley of Hants-Kings had already taken this argument to heart and refused to vote against a preference in the voracious British market on Nova Scotia apples. Others will undoubtedly find themselves similarly embarrassed when they return home for the Christmas recess. They would, of course, have a noble and convincing answer if they could plead that they had stood by their principles in spite of political danger at home; but what can they plead when what they did was to desert their principles apparently because they had been carried to a successful issue by their successful political opponents?

A Strong Case

The fact is, of course, that the debating case for the treaties is overwhelming. They ought to have been adopted unanimously by the present House of Commons. It is quite conceivable that members may find details which they would prefer to see changed. It is also quite conceivable that the Ministers might agree with them—may, indeed, have fought for these very changes at the Conference, only to be denied by the British delegation. The heirs of Laurier should have said that the principle at all events was sound. But they have chosen to revivify their own economic kith-and-kin. By this action, they have successfully delayed the adjournment of Parliament, they have prolonged the debate, they look like compelling closure. But they have put themselves in an impossible position before a depression-ridden country, looking for relief in any direction; they must have disgusted much of their own following which still stands on Liberal principles and remembers Laurier; and they cannot have failed to antagonize every section of our people who may hope to profit by the British preference.

When a man praises buttermilk, he means good buttermilk, of which there is not enough.

Morality is not a matter of geography. It is a matter of an innate sense of decency; even savages have some.

It takes just one season for a man to learn whether he certainly likes gardening.

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"Schools closed Thursday and Friday on account of York-Sunbury Institute."—headline. The small boy wouldn't care if it met every week. If you don't care, you won't have "nerves." Ambition is a permanent determination, pep is a briefer enthusiasm.

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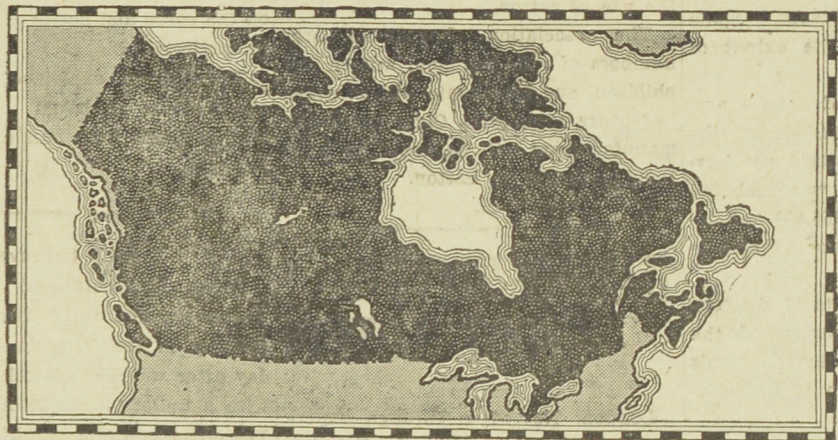
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