

Will the Tories Sacrifice The Minister of Militia

A Deep Gloom Has Been Hanging Over Room 16 at Ottawa Since Mr. Kyte Made His Charges--Many M. P.'s Sorry They Did Not Follow the Example of Hon. Mr. Broder and W. F. McLean--Sir Wilfrid's Speech Caught the Galleries.

(By H. F. Gadsby.)

Ottawa, April 15.—Certainly a deep gloom has been cast over this community. It can be cut with a knife—this Stygian melancholy. It hangs like a fog in the halls and lobbies, in Green Chamber and Red. But it settled thickest in No. 16, the Conservative caucus room.

Gone is the light word, the sparkling anecdote—Col. Hugh Clark has not told a new story for a week—the cheerful banter, the merry quip, the loud laugh that speaks the peaceful party mind. Gone—all gone. Instead, the long face, the bated breath, the whispered fear. Our old friend, R. E. Morse, is in their midst and he looks like making a good visit.

The strikers all came back but four. They were glad to be pleased with a Royal Commission that would find out as little as possible—any old excuse for falling out of bed and falling back again. But now they are not so glad.

The biggest gallery of the session greeted Sir Wilfrid's speech on blood-stained graft, a gallery more than half women, which shows that the better half of the world is thinking.

When Sir Wilfrid proclaimed that the object of all good patriots was to demand an account of every dollar drawn from the treasury and every drop of blood shed on the battlefield, the gallery which had sons and brothers, husbands and sweethearts on that distant, dangerous field, showed signs of deep emotion and the strikers realized that stop-gap measures were not enough.

They realized that the widows and orphans whose tears moistened the millions so lightly looted by Col. John Wesley Allison and his pals took a different view of these things from the party politicians.

In short they saw that their party game was a long way behind public sentiment and they would have to catch up or be left out in the cold at the next general election.

Mr. Broder's Stand.

They were sore, then, and are sore now that they did not go the limit like the Hon. Andrew Broder, W. F. Maclean, Mondou and Lamarche, who said by their votes that they would rather be right than hide bound.

Andy Broder, honest Andy, as he is called, has had a run in with Col. John Wesley Allison before now, and knows just what to expect from this gentleman with the pious name and the predatory instincts.

Mondou and Lamarche dis-

played the ultimate courage of their convictions and W. F. Maclean went the length of standing by a week-old editorial of the Toronto World which is almost revolutionary in W. F.'s case.

On the whole No. 16 is wapped in profound regret that it didn't show up better on division. Nelson's maxim was that the boldest measures are the safest and who are they to go behind the ripe wisdom of that great leader? If safety first is the line to take, why didn't they take it? If Mark Twain was prepared to sacrifice all his wife's relations why shouldn't the Conservative party in the House of Commons be prepared to sacrifice Major General Sir Sam Hughes?

Has he any more right to escape complete investigation than the Duke of Marlboro who was one of the examples cited by Sir Wilfrid Laurier?

The Acting Ministers.

Sacrifice Sir Sam? Would he be the only sacrifice? Aye, there's the rub! There's the consideration that gives them pause. Wouldn't it mean the sacrifice of the whole government?

Time was—and not so long ago at that—when the cabinet ministers were making free use of detectives to hang something on each other. How far did they succeed?

It is all right for the cabinet to profess collective ignorance of Sir Sam's doings, but the fact remains that in the War Lord's various absences, Sir Robert Borden, Hazen, Kemp, and Longheed served as acting Minister of Militia and must have had a peep into the abyss. How much did they see? How much did they shut their eyes to? Senator Longheed, for instance, was acting Minister of Militia at the very time the fuse contracts were handed out to the American Ammunition Co. and the International Arms and East. Co. How little does he know about it?

Did nobody but the Shell Committee examine the contracts by which \$23,000,000 worth of fuse orders and advance payments of over \$3,000,000 were slipped along to a couple of mushroom companies in the United States for which a professional soldier of fortune like Allison was the agent and of which a railroad wrecker like Benjamin Franklin Yoakum was leading member? Did nobody but the shell committee inspect the pledge of the Guarantee Trust Company of New York for these two companies, a pledge with this clause as a joker—"that this company shall not be held responsible otherwise for the

non-performance of this agreement due to any cause beyond its reasonable control?"

How far does Sir Thomas White's contention go that Major General Sir Sam, as shown by his ratifying letters, was acting for His Britannic Majesty in these matters? How far, on the other hand, prevails Sir Wilfrid Laurier's argument that he derived his whole force and authority to ratify contracts, not as Major General, not as Sir Sam Hughes, not as both put together, but as Minister of Militia for the Dominion of Canada?

Such are the thoughts that rankle in No. 16 and cause it serious intestinal disturbances. It's all very well to sing "Down among the dead men let him lie," but there are a whole lot of live one who will trip him up if he is caught at it.

This is no song for dropping spirits. Some suggest a coalition government, the idea being to present the Grits with a share of the blame, but there is no hope in that direction.

Others favor the Royal Commission on the principle of the man who sold a 2.10 horse that couldn't do it under 3.10 and then chided the purchaser for being in such a deuce of a hurry that he couldn't wait a minute.

Sir Sam and Allison.

But when all is said and done, the talk comes back to Sir Sam Hughes and his soul-mate, Col. John Wesley Allison. Last session the War Lord's critics were calling him Sir Sham Shoes—this session he goes by the name of Sir Sam Fuse.

It is agreed on all sides that his friendship with Col. John Wesley Allison is one of the greatest, most passionate and most expensive affinities of history. Not David and Jonathan, nor Orestes and Pylades, nor Damon and Pythias, ever cost their country so much money. George Kyte has already advertised some of the gallant charges made by Col. John Wesley Allison, with Major General Sam the force in reserve, and there are said to be more where that came from.

This naturally keeps No. 16 guessing. Is Col. John Wesley Allison to be the only goat or is Sir Sam to go out along with him into the wilderness?

Moreover, is Sir Sam satisfied to have it that way? So far any speeches which would indicate that Sir Sam is to be the goat have been framed with the idea of not letting him know about it. Any absent treatment Sir Sam has had from his colleagues in the cabinet has been very delicate—hardly hard enough to break an egg. Which of course is as it should be, because no man must be convicted before he is tried, especially if he is too respectable to be guilty. On the whole, it would suit the cabinet better to have the wicked Grits dislodge Sir Sam. This would avoid hard feelings and mutual recriminations in the Conservative ranks.

An Honorary Colonel.

Sir Sam has now reached his native shores and Col. John Wesley Allison has been heard from. The Colonel is as near Ottawa and the Public Accounts Committee as Carolina. That will probably be the Colonel's orbit until Parliament prorogues and the Royal Commission begins.

It will not be necessary to extradite Col. John Wesley Allison for perjury. He is an honorary colonel of Sir Sam's

own coinage, made so, as Sir Sam has stated, because honorary colonels are under military regulations and can be ordered about by their superior officers.

Consequently the Colonel can be ordered home—one word from Ottawa and he does as he pleases. This means, of course, that, orders or no orders, he will come to Ottawa to vindicate his honor, because—well because somebody put the honor in honorary colonel.

Besides, he is not afraid of Royal Commissions, having already had experience of the Davidson Commission, where three kinds of evidence, all different, were tendered on that little matter of the Colts revolvers which were sold wholesale to the Canadian Government for \$4.50 each more than the retail trade could buy them for, in lots of two.

No shot ever fired by a Royal Commission has even hurt Col. Allison's feelings. He is brave accordingly.

Bennett is Cheerful.

The only really cheerful soul on the Government side is R. B. Bennett of Calgary, who played safe in his last speech when he hinted at dead reputations, post mortems and things like that. His idea seems to be that the Government is dissolute enough to call for dissolution. As Katisha observes in the Mikado, "there is fascination frantic in a ruin that's romantic, and I think I am sufficiently decayed."

At the back of R. B.'s speech there was probably the reflection that the remains have been kept too long already. At all events nearly all the Conservative colonels in the House have blossomed out once more in khaki. The intention may be to give the Government a military funeral.



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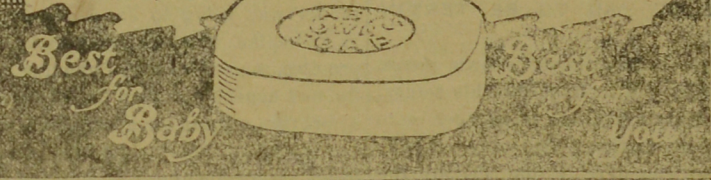
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