

Gadsby Writes About the Debate on Conscription

Criticism of Opponents was Moderate and Sensible---Twenty-Six Liberals Maintained a Grip on the Old Flag---Scraps Between Sir Sam Hughes and Sir Thomas White are Quite Common---Will the Government Muzzle Henri Bourassa?

(By H. G. Gadsby.)

Ottawa, July 19. — For such an important measure the conscription bill passed through the committee stage in short order. All the fighting was done on the general principle of the bill and no more time was spent on the clauses in detail than was necessary to lick them in workable shape.

The criticism of those opposed to conscription was moderate and sensible. The thing, being as it were a fait accompli, they did nothing that would hinder the bill on its way through the House. Their purpose seemed to be to keep the sponsors of the bill up to the mark. The Government, having put its hand to the plow found no desire on the part of the Opposition to let them turn back. Some unkind people have said "that the Government was very much disappointed on this account."

Not to mention the firm clutch twenty-six Liberals maintained on the Old Flag which the Conservative party was trying to wave all by itself the other Liberals joined in an endeavor to make the bill as good a bill as it could be. In short they did not act as was expected and Quebec also fell down on the job. Once the bill passed its second reading Quebec ceased to roar and this also was very disappointing to the Government. The original intention was that Quebec's screams would be heard in the remotest parts of English-speaking Canada.

Mr. Oliver's Criticism.

The Hon. Frank Oliver who has sent two sons to the war — one of whom lies beneath the soil of blood-stained France — is strongly opposed to this conscription measure which the Borden Government introduced to save their skin. He does not believe that a Government which has appointed some hundred royal commissions to avoid certain parts of responsible government is sincere in its dislike for a referendum as an evasion of its duty to the people. Mr. Oliver has been the chief critic of the bill and his criticism has brought out some very interesting facts. For instance the Government has no plan of assigning quotas to the different provinces — quotas which will take into account the men each province has already contributed. The willing horse is to have another load put upon him. Those parts of the country which have sent the most men will be conscripted for more.

Being quizzed on the subject Mr. Seigny calculated that conscription might raise twenty-five thousand men in Quebec of which ten thousand would come from Montreal and one thousand from Quebec City. Mr. Seigny further said that there was a general disposition in Quebec to obey the law. Mr. Seigny's figures are considered very interesting. He is a cool, calm calculator and for the last few months back has viewed the most feverish political questions with the unperturbed impartiality of a man who has a judgeship in his pocket.

Another point brought out by the discussion in committee is that conscription may not end with the drafting of one hundred thousand men. If the war goes on more conscription will be necessary. As the Hon. Arthur Meighen puts it "We shall be in the war more than ever." The added expense of these new levies is causing Finance Minister White much anxiety. Money begins to be tight. Borrowing is not good these days. Cool observers of events say we are not more than a year away from a federal income tax and a land tax. It may even come this session.

Hughes and White.

A lively diversion has been the spat between Sir Sam Hughes and Sir Thomas White. Either Sam is biting Tom in the leg or Tom is biting Sam. The strange part is that each of the gladiators does his biting in the other gladiator's absence. When Sir Thomas is out of the chamber Sir Sam seizes the opportunity to remark that Sir Thomas was one of those who told him to "slow up" on recruiting. And when Sir Sam is somewhere outside the precincts of Parliament Sir Thomas rises to remark that he said no such thing. Absence does not make these hearts grow fonder. It only seems to make them say it a little harder. As far as the rules of debate allow the quarrel has now arrived at the retor discourteous. Though swathed in formal language the dialogue amounts to this — Sir Sam: "You're

a liar." Sir Thomas: "You're another."

Penalizing Clauses.

Another new and interesting phase of the conscription bill are the penalizing clauses which were introduced late in the debate by the Hon. Arthur Meighen. The Hon. Arthur runs to penalties and things like that. Such is his type of mind. The penalties for desertion, however, are not retroactive, otherwise they might reach a few thousand who took leave from Camp Borden and never came back.

The most interesting penalty of all is that leveled at newspapers which publish "any editorial article," correspondence, or other matter intended to influence any individual to resist or obstruct the operation of the act. This amendment of Mr. Meighen's does not even look innocent. So far the censorship in Canada has been a comparatively lenient and enlightened institution but this penalizing clause can easily become an instrument of abominable tyranny. There is a rancorous type of mind which would read "influence" into the most helpful criticisms from the other side. There are members of parliament who are constantly in a rage at the other fellow's party literature. With such a clause as Mr. Meighen is introducing we might find these bigoted persons — especially if they were on the government side — clamoring to shut off all criticism in the Liberal press and being able, perhaps, to get away with it.

Bourassa's Tune.

It is all very well to set the tune the newspapers are to play but will Devour play it. Mr. Bourassa, who is the Borden Government's confidential man in Quebec, has been playing a little tune of his own in Quebec for some years now. Will he stop playing simply because his partners at Ottawa give him a little love tap? Will Mr. Bourassa shut up or will he go to jail for five years? That is the question. There is only one answer—he will do neither.

Mr. Bourassa is artful enough. He has evidently been tipped off that Mr. Meighen's gag clauses were coming along. At any rate he has been singing low fort he past few weeks. He is not counseling resistance to the law. What he is saying is this: "I told you a long time ago that, if you once admitted the principle of Canada's participation in England's wars, you would be conscripted. And now you see that I was right." And there Mr. Bourassa lets it rest—nuff said. You can't put him in jail for saying: "I told you so."

DRIVING MISHAP AT MARYSVILLE

Marysville, July 25. — Mrs. P. G. Smith, who has been visiting friends at St. Stephen, and Mr. Joseph Robinson of St. Stephen, arrived here last evening having been called by the serious illness of their mother, Mrs. Joseph Robinson, who suffered a paralytic stroke at her home yesterday afternoon.

The ladies of the Gibson Memorial Methodist church held a food sale on the lawn adjoining the parsonage last evening. A considerable amount was realized which will be devoted to church work.

What might have been a serious accident was narrowly averted last evening on Bridge street, when a car driven by a well known Fredericton merchant struck a bicycle, the rider escaping injury by leaping from his wheel, which was destroyed. The accident was apparently not the fault of either party but was due to a mix-up in passing another vehicle.

Mr. Henry Hanson who recently underwent an operation at Victoria Hospital is rapidly recovering.

Russia is considering a scheme for the universal conscription of women's labor.

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CANADIANS SILENCED A BIG GUN OF THE GERMANS

Airman Dropped Bombs on a Monster Which Was Making Trouble---Has Not Since Been Heard From---British Airman Fought Five German Machines Single Handed.

(By Stewart Lyon.)

Canadian Army Headquarters, July 24.—The artillery duels still continue on this sector of the western front by day and by night. The amount of munitions used must be prodigious. The enemy who for some time past has husbanded all shells above six inches calibre, presumably because of his increasing scarcity of war material, began on Sunday to bombard points fully twenty miles back from our front with fourteen inch gun which throws a shell weighing about three-quarters of a ton. Our airmen quickly located the monster. The gun position was raided by aeroplanes on Sunday afternoon, when a number of 250 pound bombs were dropped upon it. Several were seen to fall close to the gun which has not been fired since.

The gallant lads of the aerial service will thus save towns and villages far behind the front from bombardment with shells each of which is capable of grinding a house to powder. They have had more than their full share of fighting in the air. The German airmen have been making several endeavors to destroy our artillery observation balloons and in protecting them the aviators of our fighting squadron are sometimes kept very busy.

Five to One Scrap.

A British airman engaged five German fighting planes on Sunday and destroyed one. He got away himself without injury.

The battles during the past few days are summed up in the official statement last night that "German aeroplane activities completely failed



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to stop our reconnaissance, photographic and artillery work in spite of all the enemy's efforts."

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Successful Raid.

The raid of yesterday on German dugouts along the Avion-Mericourt railway is now known to have been even more successful than first reports indicated. The number of pris-

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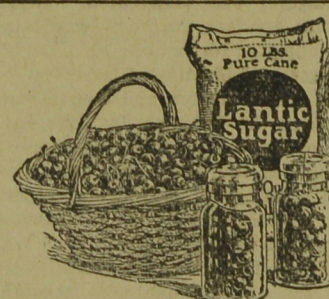
Oners taken was fifty-one instead of sixty, but the enemy's casualties in killed and wounded was extremely heavy. Our losses were light. Two German attempts at raiding the north end of our line last night failed. The raiders suffered heavily from our machine gun fire which was promptly turned on them.

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