

OH! MR. SOLDIER, ETC.



Will Borden Government Ask For Another Reprieve?

Majority in the House and Senate to Keep Itself Indefinitely in Office---Anxious to Avoid an Election That Will Send It Back to the Tall Grass---Parliamentary Term Expires in October.

(By H. F. Gadsby.) ... Ottawa, April 15.—The Toronto News, which invariably presents the strongest meat of the Borden government's word, reverts to the question, Can the government, by making use of its majority in the Commons and Senate, extend the life of parliament after its life has expired?

To put it in another way, the question is, Can the Borden government dispense with the unanimous consent of the Canadian Parliament and the subsequent ratification by the Imperial Parliament—both of which are required under the British North America Act—and keep itself indefinitely in office by means of its party majority in both Houses?

Put a third way, the question is, Can the Borden government play hob with our national constitution whenever it likes, for the purpose of dodging a general election that is going to send it back to the tall grass?

While the News lacks the nerve to say plain yes, and indeed, it argues that there is danger in any precedent

which conflicts with the language of the constitution, it hints that "great emergencies may override all regulations and conditions."

Tories Believe in Class Rule.

In other words, the News, having inside information, wouldn't be at all surprised if the Borden government tried it on as a last desperate measure to stave off the impending doom.

The News does not forget that the Borden Government is a Tory government, and that a Tory government believes in the ruling class ruling with as little interference from the ruled as possible. In October, 1917, at which time its year's extension lapses, the Borden government will have done its worst for the common people for six years. Taxes were never so high, food never cost so much, graft was never so prevalent or so outrageous, as it has been under the Borden government.

The government that was responsible for paper shoes, Sir Sham Fuse, Col. Allison, the Ross rifle, and a hundred other scandals, now shapes up

to ask another year's reprieve, and if it is refused, to sandbag the constitution and steal one.

As another famous Tory said, "What is the constitution between friends?" In its less excited moments the News is wont to expatiate on the benefits of Confederation, and to relate the long struggle that led up to that consummate document, the British North America Act. But the first time the Borden government runs into the British North America Act, the News is prepared to kick the wily out of it—out of the British North America Act, not out of the Borden Government.

Canadian Home Rule.

Another interesting paradox is the News' attitude on Canadian home rule. Ordinarily the News is prepared to sacrifice large quantities of Canadian home rule to an Imperial Council on Downing street. In fact, a centralized Imperial government with the great autonomous overseas status whittled down to Ontario size, is its heart's desire, as it is the Borden government's. But when it's a case of keep-

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ing the rotten Borden government in office, the News is all for home rule.

"Perdition take the British parliament," says the News in effect. "We will do our own extending." Such is the logic that emanates from the knightly editor of the Toronto News. The suggestion is so hostile to the Canadian constitution that it might well come from Sir John Willison's employer, Lord Northcliffe, who doubtless argues that the way to link the Empire together is to undermine the constitutions of the overseas dominions and then hand the weakened remnants over to a strong central government at Westminster. In short, the News aims to do two things: To violate the constitution, to keep the Borden government in, and incidentally to weaken the constitution so that Canada can be handed over to the centralizers. This is the ripe fruit of the Borden government's administration—that the British North America Act is treated as a scrap of paper.

An Impudent Suggestion.

It is worth noting that the News experiences a sense of shame in making this impudent suggestion, and tries to tie it up with the impossibility of registering the soldier vote if a general election takes place. Its argument is, in short, that the British North American Act ought to be assaulted at home because our soldiers are fighting for it abroad. The News freely admits that it was in favor of the Soldier's Votes Act—as indeed everybody was—and that it argued strongly, from the precedent of the American Civil War, that the vote could and should be taken.

It now admits quite as freely, that the vote cannot and should not be taken, but it does not give the real reasons. The News says it was difficult, if not impossible, to poll the British Columbia soldier's votes in France, and that it would be more difficult to poll the overseas soldier's votes in a Dominion general election. In 1915, the News thought, as the

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