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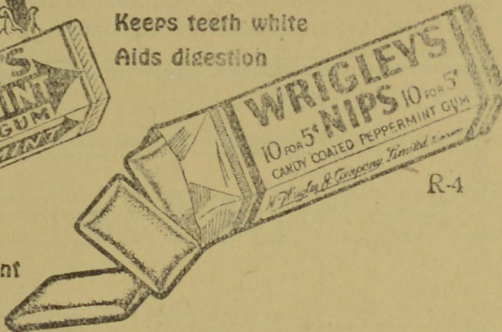
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After Every Meal

WHY CARTWRIGHT DID NOT BECOME FINANCE MINISTER IN THE LAURIER CABINET

Mr. W. T. R. Preston, an Ontario man well known as a Liberal organizer, has written a book entitled "My Generation of Politics and Politicians". Referring to the early days of the Laurier Cabinet he says:

When Laurier came to power one of the first difficult situations to grapple with was the Finance Portfolio. Mr. Preston discusses the situation as follows:

"Right at the beginning came trouble over the portfolio of Finance. Sir Richard Cartwright was inevitably marked out for it, not only through his services, but by his abilities. For years he had made the subject of finance peculiarly his own. The financial policy of the old Tory administration had been subjected to his criticism, which was as merciless as it was brilliant. The banking and manufacturing interests which had grown accustomed to a hot-house atmosphere of mutual consideration (extremely mutual) under the old regime, felt uneasy at the prospects under a Finance Minister of Cartwright's more rigid principles. This uneasiness was reflected all over the country. There was an agitation to persuade Laurier to dispose otherwise of the portfolio, and backstairs influence within the party itself to the same end.

"I was well aware at the time that the chief party Whip, James Sutherland, had been scheming to get rid of Sir Richard Cartwright; either to force him out of public life or to destroy his influence over Laurier. If he could succeed in this it would leave him in absolute control of the party interests in Ontario.

"It is within my personal knowledge that Sutherland canvassed Liberals to persuade Laurier not to make Cartwright Minister of Finance, and that he arranged deputations to visit Laurier with that object in view.

"Circumstances were too strong for

Laurier. Cartwright did not get the portfolio of Finance. It had to be given to another, against whom there would be less deep-seated opposition. I was the one who had to tell Cartwright so. I went to Kingston with a heavy heart, dreading to inflict this blow upon one of the finest souls I had been privileged to meet during my whole life. Cartwright expected the position. No one knew better than he how well he was fitted for it. The memory of the deficits in his department under Mackenzie's administration had always rankled, impossible as it would have been for any Minister of Finance, at that time, to have produced a surplus out of such conditions of depression as existed in 1872. He had never forgiven the bitter taunts of his enemies then. Now, he expected to triumph, to show what he could do. Instead, came the shattering of the hopes and dreams of his whole life.

"My interview with Sir Richard was the most poignant I ever experienced, he was stunned, utterly broken. Only upon one other occasion have I seen a strong man give way to emotion: I never want to see it again. Yet then, and afterwards, Laurier had a no more loyal or unselfish friend. Of this metal, pure gold, was Sir Richard Cartwright.

Secret History of the Time.

"This is a plain statement of some of the secret history of that time. After the publication of my recollection of the events of that period, I had some correspondence with Sir Wilfrid on the subject: a portion of one of his letters reads:

Ottawa, Jan. 1, 1915.

"My dear Preston,

"In the first place, please accept my very sincere wishes for the coming year. May God bless you and all your own . . .

"What is true, however, as you will know, is that all the business men, banks included, and above all, and more insistently than all others all the business men, I repeat, deprecated the idea of Cartwright as Finance Minister. I was never approached by any official delegation, but in my rooms in the Windsor there was a constant stream of old friends, and old foes also, who one and all had sung, and the burden of that song, I may say, was that if Cartwright was NOT at the head of the Finances of the country the new administration would be received by the community with respect and good will . . .

"In all these stormy discussions there never was an unpleasant word between Cartwright and me. He certainly felt mortified that he did not get the Finance, but after I had given my reasons, which are not at all what you suppose, he took Trade and Commerce in his usual manly way.

"With regard to Sir Oliver's statement about himself, what he says is exactly true. As you are aware, even previous to the elections it had been understood that in the event of our being victorious he would join the new administration. At my request he met me in Montreal, and when I asked him what portfolio he wanted, he answered 'Justice.' To this there was no objection, far from it, but I told him that I understood his wish to be to see the Government fairly launched, and to then leave us to become Lieut.-Governor of Ontario a few months hence, and that it would be awkward to have a change so soon in such an important department. All this he acknowledged, but he stated somewhat warmly that he could not accept any other department than Justice.

"On this I told him that we would let the matter rest until tomorrow. This I said in order to prepare for a disappointment another friend who had set his heart upon the Department of Justice, and whose heart would be broken if he did not get it. This friend was also at the Windsor. I sent for him and I told him that in view of Sir Oliver's great authority and reputation as a jurist he must make way and accept something. He certainly was most chagrined. He commenced to argue and remonstrate, and upon my remaining firm he ended by saying, 'I suppose I must give way.'

"The following morning I saw Sir Oliver again, and arranged four things:—

"(1) That he would be called to the Senate.

"(2) That he would be leader of the Government in the Senate.

"(3) That he would be Minister of Justice.

"(4) That he would be Lieut.-Governor.

"The work of Cabinet making is not an easy one, but I think I succeeded fairly well.

"I read your book these last few days. It is remarkably well written. On this, every one agrees.

"Again God bless you, and believe me ever,

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) WILFRID LAURIER.

Forming a Policy.

"Laurier called his Cabinet together to formulate a policy. An evening was spent in an informal discussion. Cartwright wanted a reduction in the tariff and a British preference. Fielding, Davies and Fisher were for Tariff Reform, but wished to move cautiously; Mulock wanted a government telephone service and reduced postage; Blair suggested a thorough overhauling of the Intercolonial Railway, coupled with an early extension to Montreal; Tarte had large ideas about deepening the upper reaches of the St. Lawrence, to take the biggest ocean liners to Montreal; Clifford Sifton supported increased transportation facilities as a means of enlarging the gateway to the West, but above everything he desired a vigorous, wide-flung immigration policy to speed up the population of the prairies.

"He alone saw clearly, that the problem of the future of Canada was bound up in the development of the western territories. His convictions were based on a personal knowledge of the possibilities of the West, backed by undaunted courage and intense driving power. Laurier told me afterwards that Sifton was given carte blanche by the Cabinet to go ahead, in the early stages of his administration. It was in the course of this conversation that he made the remark: 'Sifton is the ablest of my Cabinet. His immigration policy will make this country and strengthen my government. You will live to see him Prime Minister.'

Problem in London.

"A problem of no trifling importance faced Laurier and his colleagues immediately on taking office. Sir Donald A. Smith had been appointed High Commissioner by Sir Charles Tupper a few months previously. After his defeat Tupper advised him to hang to the position, but Sir Donald cabled his resignation to the new Prime Minister. . . . The question was whether he could be chaired or muzzled. Laurier was firm that Donald A. was less dangerous in London than if in Canada. Therefore he was confirmed in his position. He casually intimated to the press that he would not accept a salary, but did not say so officially. His cheques were sent regularly. After his death they were found very carefully taken care of, among his valuables, and, of course, were duly presented to the bank for payment."

The 1911 Debate.

"It may be as well to state," remarks Mr. Preston, "that there would have been no '1911' if Laurier had taken Sifton's advice. Without hesitation or reservation, I can say that had Sir Wilfrid taken Sifton's advice, which was given in a friendly spirit in London in the summer of 1911, no dissolution of the House of Commons would have taken place that year. Laurier could have taken up any course he desired with respect to the Reciprocity Treaty, and he would have had ample time to put his house in order before facing a General Election two years hence. This particular incident was discussed quite freely by Sir Wilfrid, and his colleagues then in London, Fielding, Sir Frederick Borden, and Hon. Sidney Fisher, with myself, after I had, with Laurier's permission, intimated to Sifton a dissolution was porable."

Bill—That's a terrible fit. What's the matter with your tailor?

Tom—Nothing. You see I'm a bit ticklish!

Guest—There's a fly in my ice cream.

Waiter—Let him free and teach him a lesson. The li' rascal was in the soup last night.

"Do you know anything about driving a car?"

"Yes, I've often listened to my wife drive."

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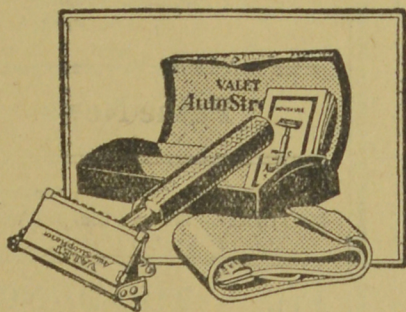
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