

Hon. H.R. Emmerson's great Speech in the Budget Debate

Declares That Protection is the Soul on Which Corruption Grows--Our Whole Body Politic is Menaced by It--Struggle Between the Classes and the Masses is of Long Standing

(Ottawa Citizen.)

On Friday night, during the budget debate, Hon. H. R. Emmerson varied the monotony of the House of Commons by courageously and earnestly telling some home truths. In its House report on Saturday The Citizen had to limit Mr. Emmerson's remarks to a rather brief reference. Because of the sincerity of the speaker and the significance of his contribution to the budget debate, a more extended report from Hansard is printed today. After mentioning that he could not recall having taken part in a budget debate before, Mr. Emmerson continued:

"I would not participate in this discussion were it not for the fact that I think the time has arrived in Canada for those who have convictions to give expression to their views. The time has come and I think I am not extravagant in stating that the struggle has begun. History tells us that there have been cycles of stress and struggle between

the classes in every age and every land. Two thousand years ago there was such a struggle and it was a struggle of the classes against the masses.

"Down through the history of every age these struggles have been recorded, and while the contestants have had different names, the struggle has been the same. We have had it in Canada. They are having a struggle today in Great Britain. There it has been a contest between the aristocracy and the democracy. In Canada, in the early days, there was a struggle of the people against the family compact. It was the fight for responsible government, and in every one of the four original provinces of this dominion that struggle went on. It is upon us today in a different form. It is a struggle between the interests and the great class of the people. It is all very well for us to laugh and say that there is no power that controls in Canada today. We know that it is true that even in the matter

of legislation, as every hon. member has realized in his experience, there are interests that control and influence in a mighty degree, almost in a paramount degree in Canada, even in this Parliament.

DELEGATIONS POWERLESS.

"We see occasionally immense delegations travelling to Ottawa, interviewing the government. They are heard with consideration, with courtesy and with respect. But, sir, these delegations are powerless to influence the occurrence of legislation and governmental action. We saw here the other day, on the floors of this parliament, an immense delegation with respect to a great transportation scheme. Were they misled? Did they return to their homes with the thought that they had made an impression upon the government or even upon parliament? If they did they deceived themselves because we know that the question is subject to the control and influence—perhaps I should not use the word dictation—of certain interests that are considered rival interests. If it comes to a struggle then, I wish in no uncertain way to assert my views, to pronounce myself and to cooperate, as I believe, with the great masses against the classes in Canada.

CALLING THINGS PROPERLY.

"It is very easy to be placed on the wrong trail and follow it until it leads away from the right one. I think that has happened in Canada. The trouble is that we have not cared to call things by their proper names. Ambition is what we choose to term that insensate lust for material prosperity which is the maggot at the heart of such success. Protection is the soil on which corruption grows. Our whole body politic is menaced, mentally, socially and morally—politically speaking—by corruption. It is the gathered force, the concentrated intensity of all the accumulated greed for power and pelf. Like the heavens mentioned in the 115th psalm the idols of the votaries of this system are silver and gold and the work of men's hands. For all these reasons and because of their greed, the manufacturing and industrial interests are the enemies of democracy. The big interests started to gobble everything in sight like the swine, and while they gobble democracy goes to smash. I do not think that democracy is merely an enchantment, nor do I think it should stand still, limp, flaccid and sluggish. Rather should it go forward. This contest is one that is not to be determined suddenly and the forces that are arrayed against each other are very different in character—the one organized and powerful, the other disorganized and not having at its back the influence, the power and the men to carry on the struggle. But that struggle must be determined by the earnestness of the people and by the sincerity with which they enter into the struggle. I, as one of the people, realizing the conditions, can honestly say that I shall attempt to take my part in the struggle."

REFERS TO MINISTER'S SPEECH.

Continuing with a reference to the able speech of Hon. W. T. White,

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minister of finance, Hon. Mr. Emmerson said:

"But it was a very excellent speech while there was much about the difficulties that had surrounded him during the past year, he apologized and explained as best he could the fact that Canada's growing trade was declining, that Canada's borrowings were increasing, that Canada's credit abroad had suffered, that Canada's rate of interest on English debts was being increased, that Canada's public debt was again growing alarmingly, that Canada's customs revenues have declined and that Canada's expenditures were increasing."

At a later stage, interrupted by a member, Hon. Mr. Emmerson said:

"My hon. friend in stating to the House that the word 'adequate' was merely a pretext is certainly giving an illustration of the meaning of protection as it has been defined by one very eminent authority. That definition of protection is as follows:

"Protection in politics too often means all for party, nothing for the people; all for policy, nothing for principle; all for office, nothing for honor; all for power, nothing for progress."

THE TAXPAYER EASY.

Further excerpts from Hon. Mr. Emmerson's significant speech are as follows:

"My hon. friend knows that taxing is an easy business, but as the Hon. Edmund Burke says:

"Any projector can contrive new impositions, any bungler can add to the old, but is it altogether wise to have no other bounds to your impositions than the patience of those who are to bear them?"

"It is all very well for us to try to ignore as of very little importance, the fact that the cost of living is increasing month by month, as official figures prove. It is true, this increase in the cost of living has taken place in all countries, but that increase is not so great in Great Britain as in protectionist countries and nowhere has that increase been so great as in Canada."

GROWTH OF TRUSTS.

"Trusts and combines have grown to such enormous proportions that the people realize their existence and power. . . . These trusts are growing year (by year, there is) the coal trust, the steel trust, the millers trust, the farmers' trust—there is a trust in almost every direction. I believe that protective tariffs stimulate the growth of trusts in Canada. The very object of protective tariffs is to protect the industries of the country. And for a time it may succeed, while competition can be maintained. But the time comes when these men are not content merely with an adequate profit; their greed—for they are but human—urges them forward to seek more and more at the expense of the consumer. The time has come in Canada, in my judgment, when some changes should be made to prevent the coming together of these interests. If the tariff of today helps the trusts and combines to wring undue profits out of the people, then, though as a Liberal I for years supported the tariff, I say, for one, let us eliminate from the tariff every vestige of protection."

STRONG FREE TRADER.

"I am an out-and-out free trader, and I wish circumstances permitted the adoption of free trade. I am today where I have always been. This Canadian confederation was launched on the basis of indirect taxation; I quite understand that, and we have continued that policy. But if you could change the policy of indirect taxation and adopt a direct taxation then indeed you could have free trade. Speaking for myself, if a plan were proposed which would actually bring that about, I would hold up both hands for it."

"They had in the United States in the year 1828 a tariff which was known as a tariff of abomination. It was so called because it had no beginning, no end and no plan. It certainly had no traceable plan. There was a general scramble and everyone who had scrambled hard enough had to be taken care of in the schedule. Hence, it was not an equitable system, but it fully exemplified that definition of protection which characterized it as—at best an endless screw and you never know when you have done with it. By protecting one industry you directly or indirectly hurt all others and you therefore have to protect them too. By so doing you again damage the industry that you first protected and have to compensate it, but this compensation reacts as before on all other trades, and entitles them to redress and so on ad infinitum."

PROTECTION WEAKNESS.

"The effect of protection in every country and upon every class is to weaken its will and narrow its enterprise; it teaches the classes to look outside of themselves. We have as a result the constant application to the government and to parliament for endowments and bonuses and subsidies. We need not go outside of Canada for an illustration of this."

"This country and the United States are familiar with the expert lobbyist whose business it is to deal with subjects of this kind and they

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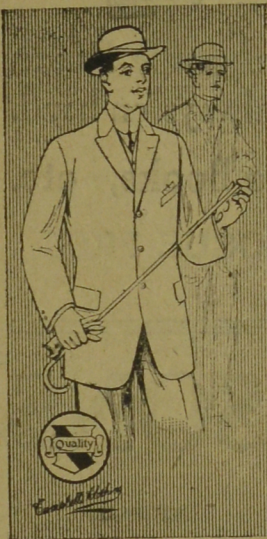
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