

POLITICS ON BOTH SIDES IN OTTAWA PARTY FIGHT

Both Sides Owe Repentance—Most Prosperous Year in History of Canada.

Special to The Star by Arthur Hawkes.

Ottawa, April 7.—Charity covers a multitude of sins, and economy should begin at home. If economy fails to begin it is not appropriate for charity to commence. That was why the Opposition admonished Sir Thomas White while he was still grieving over his strange inability to interest the House in his second reply to Kyte on fuses and Laurier on shells.

The Business Profits bill, otherwise the baby of the budget, was up for second reading, and Mr. Maclean of Halifax, the standing financial critic of the Opposition, piled line upon line and precept on precept for the behoof of a Minister who is going to spend a hundred thousand dollars urging the struggling people of the country to save the cents while he keeps unnecessary millions in the estimates, waiting for the first chance to blow them in on public works which can be dispensed with, whatever the exigencies of a Minister of Elections, who thinks principle might always be spelt with an a.

Politics Always.

It seems to be a principle of those who imagine that politics is an affair first, last, and all the time of getting your hand as deep into the public treasury as daylight will permit on behalf of your constituency and your reappearance at Ottawa. They assume that the electorate, for whose civic privileges thousands of Canadians have died in Flanders, is like a donkey who is strung along by a bunch of carrots tied ahead of his nose. As long as a post-office is in the estimates it doesn't matter that it is also in the air, for a candidate can show it to a guileless democrat.

Though the war has relegated the 1913 ideas of public expenditures on superfluous works to the company of the late Manitoba Government, twenty-five or thirty millions remain in the estimates as a distinct war measure—a illusory safeguard against voteslides, the real value of which is known to the Minister of Elections and Public Works. He supposes that the voter is too simple to sense the truth, even when men like Maclean of Halifax and Macdonald of Pictou tell him differently once a fortnight through the unimpeachable medium of Hansard.

What a farce it is—the everlasting pretence from the Government side that the increased expenditures on office-holders of the last five years are nothing out of the way. It is unkind to resurrect the speeches of Sir Robert and Sir George in the days of their political adversity, when economy seemed the most glorious Bride than an honorable statesman could covet. The Government forces sit with an air of pained surprise that the Opposition should venture to suggest that outlays have gone up merely that majorities might not go down. Behind their pain is the recollection that a few years ago they used to talk exactly as gentlemen opposite speak, and that the champions of reduction to-day were the stout defenders of increase five years ago.

Both Sides Owe Repentance.

Though the arguments from the economic belligerent conditions of the country are all with the Liberals, it does not alter the fact that both parties owe the country much repentance for the strength which the spoils system has maintained since long before any living statesman's head ached. The war has not produced appreciable affect on the strategy of General Tu Quoque, who is the readiest speaker in the House. It may some day, but you cannot find a member who expects to see it in his time. The money continues to get away, and, according to Mr. Maclean, we impose taxes to procure revenue which we could just as easily save if we would combine patriotism with a little candor and a little courage in dealing with Government services.

The Minister of Finance, says Mr. Maclean, talks about a diminution of Public Works expenditure.

Most Prosperous Year.

Yes, from the preposterous standard which Mr. Rogers set up, like the image of Nebuchadnezzar, to dominate the plain, but last year Public Works took twelve million dollars, as against ten millions in 1912, the most prosperous year in Canadian history. That difference, is equal to one-fourth of what it is expected to come from the business profits tax for this year. Civil government, which includes such living furniture as governors and other functionaries, who need not be largely increased merely because the population has advanced six or seven per cent., cost four and three-quarter millions four years ago. Now it costs seven and a quarter millions per annum. Except to gratify the lust of spending, which seems to be a Conservative attribute—a sort of double portion of Original Sin—what decent reason can there be for enlarging by fifty per cent. this expense of Dominion housekeeping?

Take immigration. It has fallen practically to nothing since the war began. There is a superfluity of employes in every branch of that department. But there is practically no reduction of expenditure. The Militia Department needs many more employes than it did two years ago. They might have been drafted, to some extent at least, from other de-

partments, like Dr. Roche's. Has it been done? Not on your life. Last year only 1,425 immigrants landed at Halifax. The Halifax busy immigrant season in the best times lasts about two months. In this leanest of all years, when everybody knew that immigration was almost as dead as Queen Anne, the Government had four quarantine doctors, whose salaries totalled \$4,200. Two of them were now reported to be at the front "with pay."

We do well to care for our Indians. But we need not coddle political partisans on the plea of coddling the red men. Last year an Indian inspector was appointed for Nova Scotia, where the Indians are few and far between. The existing inspector did not know how to kill time. A second was created to help him find a way. When in Parliament it was asked how this costly excrescence landed upon the pay-roll nobody knew. The Prime Minister and his friends, to judge by Mr. Maclean's recital of the facts, were like the disciples on a memorable night when they asked, "Is it I?" The only thing not in doubt was that the man was drawing his pay. He is drawing it now. And in Nova Scotia swarms of doctors hold Government appointments as medical advisers to Indians whom they never see.

Post-Office Increase.

The Post-Office, too, has increased in costliness far more than rural mail delivery and other necessary expenses warrant. The Postmaster-General's excuses do not go. The staffs at Montreal and Quebec, for instance, have been enlarged out of all proportion to the increase of business. The system of tendering for mail carrying contracts has been abused by the reduction of prices to party friends that the public has lost all confidence in the departmental method of doing business.

And so Mr. Maclean might go on. But what's the use? The leopard cannot change his spots. The Conservative cannot get over the office-holding itch.

Sir Thomas favored the House with one of his copious replies. He does not mind threshing old straw, and he threshes very well. He makes a plausible defence as to large expenditures. There was a heritage of commitments from Sir Wilfrid which could not be repudiated. He avoids the question behind the Maclean complaints, which involves the re-

spectability of party conduct and the notion that public office is a party cinch. He says there has been an increase of work in practically all departments since the war began, which is true enough, only it does not dispose of the orgle of appointments which preceded the war.

National Vitalities.

Incidentally Sir Thomas emphasized afresh his conviction that the immigration, land settlement, and increased agricultural production are the vitalities of national salvation after the war. One could not help thinking how happy in those regards the Government would have been if it had begun a policy on large lines four years ago, when they were new to office.

Incidentally, also, the Finance Minister told of the burdens that fall on his own department as a direct consequence of the war. He is doing many times as much work as before the war. His henchmen work after nights as well as days. He managed a financial institution before he was compelled to make speeches to inquisitors across the floor. On his experience he declared that if an outside concern had as much increase of toil to deal with as the Government had, it would have enlarged its staff more than he has done.

The note of interrogation in a hearer rose at once, suggesting that the statement was quite true, and that it probably meant that the Government departmentalists had too little to do in the piping times of peace. It is not worth while elaborating the idea, because everybody knows that immense, devoted, ungrudging service has been rendered the country by its salaried servants during the war. And Sir Thomas is no laggard for the public weal. He works before he takes the exercise of threshing the threshed.

CANADIAN WEATHER REPORT.

Pressure is low off the Atlantic coast and near the Gulf of Mexico, and high over Ontario and the Western Provinces. Local snowfalls have occurred in Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. The weather is cool over the greater portion of the Dominion.

Lower Lake Region and Georgian Bay: Fine and cool. Saturday, north-easterly winds and cool.

Ottawa and Upper St. Lawrence Valleys: Fair and cool to-day and on Saturday.

Lower St. Lawrence Valley, Gulf, and North Shore: North-easterly to northerly winds; fair and quite cool to-night and on Saturday.

Maritime Provinces: North-easterly winds; a few local showers, but generally fair and cooler. Saturday, northerly winds; fair and cool.

Lake Superior: Fair and quite cool to-day and on Saturday.

Manitoba: Fair and cool.

Saskatchewan: Fair and cool to-day; higher temperature on Saturday.

Alberta: Fair and mild.

Newfoundland: Fresh to strong north-easterly winds; cool, with local



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