

NO ELECTION FOR SOME TIME

Sir George Foster's Speech
Suggests February as
Likely Date

SPEAKS IN WYCHWOOD

Bitter Attacks on Sir Wilfrid
Laurier — Recruiting
Reviewed.

A general election will not be held until February. That was the inference to be drawn from a remark made by Sir George Foster, Minister of Trade and Commerce in the Borden Cabinet, at a largely-attended meeting of Wychwood Conservatives, held last evening in the hall of St. Michael's and All Angels' Church, St. Clair avenue. Wychwood is in the new Federal riding of North Toronto, which is represented by Sir George in the House of Commons.

The Minister's statement from which the inference is to be deducted was: "We shall take up four months, maybe five months, in preparing for carrying on and deciding this election in Canada. Is it possible that the Government can give that thought and that support to the progress of the war that it could give if there was no contest at the polls?" The holding of a general election, for which Sir Wilfrid Laurier was to blame, meant that the Government and the country would have to mark time in its war work "for four or five months."

Scores Sir Wilfrid.

Sir George announced at the outset that he was not going to make a partizan speech, and while he did not make an offensively-partizan address he certainly did not spare Sir Wilfrid Laurier, whom he described as the leader "who rallies all the forces that are against conscription and against war-winning on his side."

An interesting point in the Minister's speech, which occupied an hour and a half, was his reference to casualties and recruiting. He said that in two weeks, from September 1 to September 15, over five thousand casualties had occurred in the ranks of the Canadian army at the front, and in the same period only 584 recruits had come forward. At that rate, he commented, "it will only take eight months of that kind of action, or inaction, to wipe out every division we have in France or Flanders."

In opening, Sir George said he had not made a partizan speech since the war commenced. "This war is not over," he asserted, launching into a review of the situation in Europe.

(Continued on Page 6, Col. 4.)

wanted to give the voluntary system a thorough trial. He believed the majority of the British-Canadian people in the Dominion, who wanted to support the boys at the front, were in favor of the measure. Twenty-seven of the leading Liberals in the House had voted for it, he said, amid applause. Most of the nations of the world were in favor of it, all the big nations engaged in the present struggle had adopted it, including Great Britain. In the face of that preponderance of opinion in favor of it, why did not Sir Wilfrid Laurier loyally, strongly and actively fall in with it?

Sir Wilfrid Against Bill.

Twenty-seven Liberals in the House of Commons had voted for it, and he believed the vast majority of the Liberals of the country were as much for war-winning as the Conservatives. (Applause.) The trouble was that the leader of the Liberal party was opposed to it, and the question was between the body of war-winning Liberals and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, "who leads all the forces that are against conscription in this coming contest." Did they want a man for Premier who "rallies all the forces who are against war-winning on his side?" (Loud cries of "No.") He said that Laurier relied upon a united Quebec. That was one of the sources of the power behind him that "makes him against conscription and allies him to the anti-conscription forces. I think he will be disappointed in the Province of Quebec. I don't believe the Province of Quebec will stand behind his colors in that respect. He expects also that the French-speaking people outside of Quebec will largely vote against conscription. He may be deceived in that to a certain extent." But there were other elements on the side of Sir Wilfrid. Bourassa, and Lavergne, and their disciples, were preaching constantly that not another man, or another dollar should go from Canada to support Britain in this war. Every alien enemy, and every man of enemy sympathies, with few exceptions, was with Sir Wilfrid, and every Hun sympathizer from Berlin to the trenches and from Berlin to the Kamerouns wished success to Laurier and his campaign in Canada. (Applause.) Every slacker, every lover of ease, and every coward, if there were cowards in this northern climate every man Jack of them was behind Laurier.

Government Behind War.

The Government had been and was now a war Government and had put its best force and power behind the war. Against all the mistakes—and they did not amount to much even when they were summed up—from August, 1914, until the present day, the Borden Government had been a war Government through and through. (Applause.)

Hon. T. R. Lucas, Attorney-General of Ontario, and his Worship Mayor Church of Toronto spoke briefly. Hon. Thomas Crawford, M.P.P., presided, and among those on the platform were Col. W. K. McNaught, Rev. W. J. Brain, rector of St. Michael's and All Angels' Church; Mr. Norman Sommerville, Mr. J. R. L. Starr, ex-Ald. George H. Sweeney and Dr. Forbes Geoffrey, M.P.P. (West York).

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(Continued from Page 1, Col. 5.)

"This victory is not won, the enemy is not conquered, and it is vital to the future peace of the world that the enemy be conquered, that the victory be won and that the war be finished by means of a total, and not a partial, victory. (Applause.) I want to warn myself and you all that if this war closes with the Germans dominant from the Baltic Sea to Mesopotamia, through Austria, the Balkans and Turkish territory, that all it means is this: there is more or less of increasing menace of another world-war to which the present war will not be comparative in its extent or significance. The job should be finished now." (Loud cheers.)

Stick It Out.

"Stick it out, stick it out, until the war is absolutely won," was the oft-repeated advice which Sir George gave. That was our duty in common with the duty of all the other participants on the allied side. There had been three years and one month of war and the enemy held nine-tenths of Belgium, a large strip of the best part of France, all the territory which at times had been wrested from the Russians and from the Roumanians on the Eastern front. General Haig made an advance on an eight-mile front of a mile in depth, but from the North Sea to Switzerland that Western front stretched for five hundred miles, and it was many miles till you got to the eastern boundary of Belgium and the eastern boundary of France, and then it was many more miles to Berlin and the centre of German power, "and every mile is a mile for defence and strenuous fighting." Italy stood before Austria as she had stood for eleven, twelve, thirteen months, with a small gain of territory. The Balkans were quiescent. He did not enumerate these things to be pessimistic, but to show that the war was not over by any means. Then he turned to the brighter side of the picture, declaring that "every month that the war runs on, provided that we endure to the end, brings the final result all the more surely to its close. It is the sticking to it. It is the indomitable resolve to see it through which lightens up the other side of this picture." With a union of all that was best in the wide world fighting against the Central powers' victory was as certain as anything could be,—if we stick to it.

Up till to-day 453,000 Canadians have donned khaki, and more than three hundred thousand of them have gone across the sea, said Sir George.

Voluntarily recruiting and selection of and the only method of securing reinforcements was by selective conscription.

Partizan Strife.

Until recently there had been unanimity in Parliament with reference to carrying on the war and the methods of raising reinforcements, but lately, to a certain extent, party strife had broken out and the country faced an election, "which bids fair, unless the people of this country make it different, to be a partizan and party election pure and simple." (Cries of "Shame.") Now, whether we are Liberal or Conservative, do we think that that is the best position in which Canada can be placed in the midst of this war? In war-time was a party election that would divide the country in bitter strife a good thing for the people of Canada to engage in, and practically throw down the tools at the trenches until that war (the election) was decided? Why has the election not been avoided? In 1916 the Opposition had agreed to an extension of the lifetime of Parliament, but in 1917 there was a different spirit in Parliament, and the leader of the Opposition declined to agree to a further extension of a year, declined the offer of a fifty-fifty union Government, declined everything in the way of united action "and force an election on this country." The Conservative Government did not want an election in war-time. They did not want it, not because they feared to face the electors, but because they thought they had better business to do to carry on the war. (Applause.)

An Earnest War Effort.

When Sir Robert Borden made the fifty-fifty offer he did not make it because he felt himself or his Government relatively weaker than the members of the Opposition, but because he felt he needed more strength of the nation, best behind the war and behind the war unreservedly. It was a genuine, honest, earnest war effort, in which the members of the Cabinet were behind Sir Robert Borden, and they supported him to this day in his efforts to form a union Government. Their resignations were in his hand to this hour. "And if he puts some body else in the position of Minister of Trade and Commerce, then I am out, but I am still a supporter of Sir Robert Borden." (Loud and continued applause.)

Sir George conceded that perhaps the Government was a little tardy in introducing conscription, but the