

CONSCRIPTION LIBERALS VOICE EARNEST PROTEST AGAINST BORDEN FRANCHISE BILL

Government, They Contend, Has Repudiated Their Independence, and Treated Pledged Word of Canada as Scrap of Paper

(Staff Correspondence of The Globe.)

OTTAWA, Sept. 10.—“Upon this bill I feel more deeply than I can express. Since war has waged I have repeatedly appealed to my Western constituents of alien origin. I have urged service. I have pleaded for patriotic causes. There has been generous response. I have told them again and again—told them with Canadian pride—that Canada and the Empire were fighting for freedom, for liberty, for justice, and, highest of all, for national honor and the pledged word.

“I cannot go to them now. I publish a newspaper in the West. Through my paper and with all my endeavors I have tried to serve these great ends. My ambition has been to create a national sentiment. I broke with my party and voted for conscription. I had confidence that the position I took was right, and that I could appeal with assurance upon that issue to those whom I represent, and for such a noble cause.

“I cannot do that now. This Government has repudiated the pledged word of Canada. It has brushed it aside as a scrap of paper. It has repudiated the independence of conscription Liberalism. Those of us who left our party because we believed it our duty to support the Government in a war measure for the national advantage, find now that this Government is not so concerned in war measures for national advantage as it is in election measures for party advantage.”

Conscriptionist Liberals' Protest.

In one of the most impressive short speeches heard during the present momentous session of Canada's Parliament, Mr. W. A. Buchanan, conscriptionist Liberal member for Medicine Hat, Alberta, this afternoon thus voiced his earnest opposition to the “war-time elections act,” sponsored by Premier Borden and drafted by Hon. Arthur Meighen on the mandate of Hon. Robt. Rogers.

Mr. Buchanan's impressive protest gave the Premier, who was back in the House, and his colleagues an uncomfortable fifteen minutes. For days past the Conservative press has been eulogizing his position, both in Parliament and at the Winnipeg convention, with relation to conscription, and repeatedly has mentioned the young Westerner as a “union Cabinet” possibility.

Mr. Buchanan's protest was voiced with equal earnestness and force by Messrs. George E. McCraney (Saskatoon), Dr. David B. Neely (Humboldt), James Douglas (Strathcona) and other Western conscription Liberals, who spoke against the Government's drastic franchise act. Douglas quoted from The Globe the historic appeal of the South African statesman-soldier, General Smuts, and urged the Government to give heed to higher considerations than mere party politics and the winning of elections at this momentous time in Canadian and Imperial history.

Laurier Amendment Lost, 46 to 34.

Parliament vote on the Laurier amendment of the Government's war-time elections act at 1.15 o'clock this (Tuesday) morning. The Liberals did not attempt to “talk out” the closure rule till 2 o'clock. The Laurier amend-

ment was defeated on a straight party vote of 46 to 34.

Messrs. Guthrie, Turriff, Clark (Red Deer) and Champagne, the members of the Opposition who had previously voted with the Government, were all absent.

Dr. Pugsley's Amendment.

Hon. Dr. Pugsley then moved an amendment protesting against the disfranchisement of loyal citizens, and calling for the enfranchisement of all Canadian women who are British subjects.

Debate Under Closure Rule.

The debate was carried on to-day under the closure rule. Immediately upon the assembling of the House, Premier Borden moved that the House revert at once to the consideration of the franchise bill. “It is a most important measure,” observed Sir Wilfrid Laurier, “and we on this side have no objection.”

Sir George Foster then moved the closure. Upon this resolution the House divided, the proposal being carried on a vote of forty-eight to thirty-three, Messrs. Hugh Guthrie and J. G. Turriff supporting the Government. There were no demonstrations and no scenes, and the House at once proceeded to debate the bill under the twenty-minute closure rule. Lord Northcliffe, Colonel Henderson and a party from Government House occupied seats upon the floor of the House.

Clerk Didn't Know Mr. Bristol.

An amusing incident happened during the recording of the vote. Mr. Edmund Bristol (Centre Toronto) was present for the second time in

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some sessions. The Deputy Clerk, calling off the vote, did not know the stranger, and called him "Mr. Munson." Hon. Robert Rogers, however, remembered the face of Centre Toronto's absent representative, and set the official right.

Mr. Meighen Canada's Kruger.
Following a telling speech by Mr. J. H. Sinclair (Guysborough), in which he pointed out that "what the Paul Kruger of the Transvaal sought to do in South Africa in 1899 was the Paul Kruger of Manitoba was doing in Canada in 1917," Sir Wilfrid Laurier rose to present his amendment, setting forth that "the abridgement by this Parliament of the electoral franchise now enjoyed in any Province of the Dominion by any class of his Majesty's subjects would be contrary to the peace, order and good government of Canada."

Prussian Measure, Says Sir Wilfrid.
The Liberal leader was in earnest and spoke with much feeling and eloquence. He alluded to the record of Britain herself, to the causes which brought about the South African war, to the position taken by President Wilson and the United States. "This measure," Sir Wilfrid exclaimed, "cannot be accepted by a free British Parliament. We must be advancing, not retrograding. This is not a Liberal measure; it is not a Canadian measure; it is not a British measure; it is a Prussian measure."

Pleads, Hoping Not Too Late.
Sir Wilfrid expressed the hope that it was not yet too late to ask the Government to pause and reflect before taking a step which must have serious consequences. "I have been supporting the Government on the war up to the present session," he concluded. "I am sorry that the occasion arose during this session when I had to discontinue my support of the Government on a measure of great importance. I am sorry that I have again to dissent from the Government upon this measure. But I believe—and we shall all be judged some day by our actions here—that in this instance the Government is taking a step which will cause serious injury to the country. It is actuated by these sentiments that I present my resolution."

Premier Blames Opposition Leader.
Sir Robert Borden in reply to the franchise bill was designed "for a war-time election which he (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) has forced upon this country." (Cries of "Shame!" and "You know better.") He maintained that the standard for the franchise should be service and sacrifice, and challenged Sir Wilfrid Laurier's contention that he was depriving of the women of the five Provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia of the right of franchise. This right, the Premier argued, was not granted by the Provincial legislation.

Women Have Won Franchise.
Hon. George P. Graham, dealing subsequently with the Premier's contention, charged that the Government was deliberately disfranchising thousands of patriotic women who had no relatives to go to the front, but who had sacrificed themselves in season and out for the great cause for which the soldiers were fighting. "If service and sacrifice are to be the standard of franchise," declared Mr. Graham, "these women have won it."

Sir Robert Moves Orders of Day.
Sir Robert Borden, who has been indisposed for several days, was in his place when the House met this afternoon. Lord Northcliffe and Lord Richard Neville occupied seats on the floor of the House to the right of the Speaker.

Sir Robert Borden at once moved "that the orders of the day be now read." The purpose of this motion was to pass over the hour for private bills.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier inquired as to the reasons for this motion.
"Because we desire to proceed with Order Number Two" (the war-time elections act), the Premier replied.
"That is an important order, and we do not object," said the Opposition leader.

Sir Geo. Foster then moved "that the debate on the second reading of this bill shall not be further adjourned."

Closure Carried by 25.
The Opposition challenged the motion, and a division followed. Sir Robert Borden and Sir Wilfrid Laurier were both cheered when they voted. The closure motion was adopted on a division of 48 to 23, a Government majority of 25. Mr. Hugh Guthrie voted with the Government.

Mr. Turriff, after the vote, said: "Mr. Speaker, I was not paired. I intended to vote for the motion, but I was not paying any attention." (Laughter.)

J. H. Sinclair of Guysborough, who continued the debate, said that the bill would improve his own chances of re-election. The giving of the votes to the relatives of soldiers would increase his majority. There were no votes of alien enemy birth in his constituency. Besides, the bill would not appeal to fair-minded people. Mr. Sinclair suggested that the Solicitor-General should change the title of the bill to "the war-times Prussian Junker act." The purpose of the bill was to establish a military autocracy. "We on this side," added Mr. Sinclair, "favor democracy."

Violates Premier's Promise.
He said that the bill will disfranchise one million women, and this despite the fact that the Prime Minister had submitted a resolution to give the vote to women. That was supposed to be the policy of the Government, and this bill was a direct violation of the promise made by Parliament. The Government, Mr. Sinclair said, had scoured the world to secure votes, but was denying the privilege to women. The only explanation of the action of the Government was that it fears the votes of the women of Canada.

Mr. Sinclair approved of the extension of the franchise to the relatives of soldiers, but described the disfranchisement of the alien born as "a vicious provision." The bill, he said, would "brand these people as outlaws and perjured traitors."
Referring to the South African war, Mr. Sinclair raised a laugh by referring to Hon. Arthur Meighen as "the Paul Kruger of Portage La Prairie."

In closing Mr. Sinclair said the Government was afraid to face the electorate in a fair fight.

Denies Disfranchising Million Women.
Dr. Edwards of Frontenac disputed the statement that the bill would disfranchise one million women in Canada.

The right to vote could not be taken away from the women, he said, because they do not possess the vote.

A Slam at Liberals.
Replying to Mr. Sinclair's remarks about the South African war, Dr. Edwards said that the Liberal Government of that day stood still until



MAYOR J. G. KERR
Of Chatham, nominated by the "Win-the-war" party in Kent.

they were forced to act. The policy of the Opposition to-day is to stand still. Had the Liberals been in power, very few soldiers would have been sent overseas, Dr. Edwards asserted.

Dr. Edwards said that the time was not ripe for woman suffrage in Ontario. No one would claim that even the women who have devoted their time to war work have as much right to vote as the relatives of soldiers overseas.

These women, he said, should have the right to see that they are not put to shame by a Government supported by the disloyal elements of the country.
Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who followed, first reviewed conditions which have existed in Canada in regard to the franchise, explaining that up to 1885 the franchise was on the basis of the Provincial list. Then a Federal act was passed, which remained in force until 1897, when it was again decided to adopt the Provincial lists. Everyone, he said, would agree that the Provincial lists have given the greatest amount of satisfaction. In the United States, he said, the principle of State franchise prevailed.

Important Modifications.
The bill now under discussion, while adopting the principle of the Provincial franchise, modified it in some important particulars. In the four Western Provinces, for instance, the Provincial franchise makes no distinction between class and class, but this bill provides that one important branch of the community shall be denied the right to vote.
Mr. Meighen rose to assert that the Provincial lists make some distinctions.

Not so far as British subjects are concerned, Sir Wilfrid replied.
Mr. Meighen observed that in British Columbia, Chinese and Japanese are not permitted to vote.
Sir Wilfrid described this argument as "very specious."

Bill Denies Rights.
He declared that the object of the bill is to deny certain naturalized Canadians rights freely granted to them by the Provinces. There was no reason to believe, he said, why men of German and Austrian birth cannot give an unbiased judgment on the questions of the day. He was not prepared to admit that a man who comes from Europe to establish a home in Canada would prove to be a traitor to the land of his adoption. These men in most cases had left Europe to get away from Governments which would not respect their pledges. They came to a land the Government of which they believed would respect all pledges given.

United States Does Not Act So.
Sir Wilfrid went on to state that although there are in the United States 100 citizens of German birth as compared with one in Canada, the Government of that country does not propose to take for them this humiliating step. It is reserved for the Parliament of Canada to deny to them all they hold sacred, to say to them that the honor of the British Crown which made certain promises to them would not be respected.

Not British Fair Play.
The Government, said Sir Wilfrid, had given to these alien enemies a pledge which to-day Parliament was asked to repudiate. This was not the spirit of British fair play. Who are to be disfranchised? he asked. A few Germans, but those from Austria are not of German origin; they are mostly of Slav origin and thoroughly in sympathy with the aims of the allies in this war.

Women in 5 Provinces Disfranchised.
But this was not all, he continued. The Government coolly proposed by this measure to take away the franchise from the women of five Canadian Provinces—Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. These women according to law had now the right to vote in Dominion elections. This point, said Sir Wilfrid, was, he knew, disputed, but in his opinion women who had been given the right to vote in Provincial elections had also the right to vote in Dominion elections.

Other Women Than Soldiers' Relatives
The Government proposed to enfranchise the female relations of soldiers at the front. He thoroughly approved of this. These women had made supreme sacrifices, but other women who had not the privilege and pleasure of being represented at the front had worked day and night, had done everything short of actually going to the trenches—should they not also be given the right to vote?

The measure, said Sir Wilfrid, was one which could not be accepted by a free Parliament. It was not a good measure; it was a retrograde and German measure.

Effect of Forsaking Pledges.
"Do you believe," said the leader of the Opposition, "that after the war is over, when we send our immigration agents to Europe to ask for immigrants, they will get them if we pass this legislation? Do you believe that immigrants will be disposed to come to a country where we forsook our pledges? No, they will go to the United States, where they are assured of their rights as citizens."

No Disfranchising in United States.
Sir Wilfrid said that the United States had made more progress for war in six months than Canada had in three years, yet no one thought of disfranchising any citizens, although the country was overrun with spies.
Sir Wilfrid closed by moving an adjournment, declaring that the bill should not be read a second time, because it constitutes an infringement of Provincial franchises, and is "con-

trary to the peace, order and good government of Canada."

Sir Robert Takes Issue.
Sir Robert Borden, who followed, took issue with Sir Wilfrid's statement that the United States had done more in six months than Canada has in three years. Had she done as well as Canada had done at the beginning of the war she would have five hundred thousand men ready for the trenches. The leader of the Opposition would not propose to place Canadian citizens of alien enemy birth in the firing line. It would be unnatural and cruel to do so. If disposed to take that course the military authorities would object. He did not for a moment challenge the loyalty of these men, but no one could doubt but that they have some sympathies for relatives overseas. If citizens of alien enemy birth cannot be called upon to fight, they should not be given the right to exercise the franchise. Sir Robert said he had seen letters which made him believe that a large number of these men would be glad to be dropped from the voters' lists at the present time.

As to Women's Franchise.
He denied that the bill before the House would deprive women of their votes, although it would extend the vote to the relatives of soldiers.

"We are coming," he said, "to the point where women must have the same right to vote as men, but there were certain considerations which must first come under review. Citizenship of married women, he said, is dependent upon the citizenship of husbands. Therefore, an alien woman who marries a British subject becomes a British subject. The women of this country, he said, are fully alive to this consideration, more particularly as a British-born woman who marries an alien loses her citizenship. Therefore the naturalization laws must be amended before the franchise can be extended to all women. This could not be done this session. Sir Robert said no one would deny the right of female relatives of soldiers to vote. The principle adopted by the bill, as explained, was "service and sacrifice." The women relatives of those who have died and who will die, and of the thousands who are prisoners of war in Germany, should above all have the right to a say in the affairs of their country.

Mr. W. A. Buchanan of Lethbridge followed Sir Robert.

Not Disfranchisement, Says Meighen.
Hon. Arthur Meighen said that the members of the Opposition seemed to be laboring under the impression that this was a disfranchisement measure. It was not. In fact, he declared, it was the widest enfranchisement measure ever passed by a British Parliament since the Reform bill, when population was considered. The Government's only motive in introducing it was to safeguard the franchise at a time of danger. He failed to see why the Western conscriptionist Liberals should be dissatisfied with the bill. It applied to them in identically the same way as it did to Conservatives.

Fair and Proper, He Claims.
With reference to the enfranchisement of female relatives of soldiers at the front, Mr. Meighen said the Government had done what was fair and proper under present conditions. The service of women whose relatives had not gone to the front could not be classed with the sacrifice of those who had sent husbands or brothers. How could the Government, asked Mr. Meighen, enfranchise all those women who had done some service? The line had to be drawn somewhere.

Never Saw That Pledge.
Mr. Meighen said Opposition members seemed to think that Canada had pledged herself to give the vote to immigrants coming from Europe to this country, and that pledge implied that it should not be taken from them under any circumstances. He said he had never seen this pledge.

Mr. W. E. Knowles—Does not the naturalization law include this pledge?

An Abnormal Measure.
Mr. Meighen replied that in his opinion it did not. He admitted that this was an abnormal times, but it was suited to abnormal times. The Opposition members argued that these aliens had never made trouble, but in his opinion it could not be argued that they were in sympathy with Canada's aims in the war. The franchise of peace time was a franchise of peace service. The franchise of war times should be that of war service. Why, asked Mr. Meighen, if both parties were so desirous of winning the war, was the leader of the Opposition so anxious to have those people vote who didn't want Canada to win the war?