

# CONSERVATIVES HOLD RESURRECTION NIGHT

Hon. R. Rogers Enunciates National Policy at Banquet to Friends in King Edward.

OVER 800 PRESENT

Col. John Currie Warns Conservatives to Be Ready for Election Fray.

Last night was a night of political resurrection. Hon. Robert Rogers, ex-Conservative Minister of Public Works, met his political associates and friends over the festive board at a well attended banquet in the King Edward Hotel, and enunciated a Canadian national policy based on the policy of Sir John A. Macdonald, brought up to date. He declared this was the only method by which Canada could take advantage of the commercial and industrial opportunities offered to her by the return of peace.

There was a company of about 800 guests mostly from Toronto, but including Conservative representatives from every riding in Ontario. There were M.P.'s, M.P.P.'s and ward politicians, a Senator, Mayor Church, and most of the City Council.

The King Edward Hotel was taxed to the limit to accommodate the crowd. The large banquet chamber was set aside for the guest of honor, lesser political dignitaries, and as many of the ordinary folk as could crowd in, but every other room on the hotel's first floor had to be utilized and tables had even to be set in the corridors for the overflow. At one end of the banquet hall was a banner bearing the legend, "Welcome the Man From Manitoba," and at the other end a shield carrying these words, "The Liberal-Conservative Party. The Party of Confederation. The Party of the People. The Party of the War. The Party of the Soldier. God Save the King."

Long before Mr. Rogers appeared in the wake of Mayor Church, fifteen minutes late, the gathering was indulging in "Rule Britannia" and "We'll Never Let the Old Flag Fall." When he appeared they cheered and cheered. When the eating was over and the King's health drunk the tables were cleared out and the overflow feasters poured into the banquet hall. There were so many that those in the rear could find standing room only.

The Program Announced.

Mr. Rogers did not declare that he spoke officially in the name of the policy-makers of the Conservative party, but the program he announced contained promises to grapple successfully with the problems of reconstruction, post-war commerce, trade and industries, immigration and land speculation in the West. His statement that "we must have selected immigrants" drew louder and longer cheers than any other utterance of the evening, even his references to Sir John Macdonald. He pointed out the ridiculousness of anyone thinking the Liberal party could handle these problems in the coming days and condemned the Union Government for inaction, not so much by direct assault as by implication. He praised the farmers, the women and labor, and generally seemed pleased at being back once more among "the boys" at the old game. He spoke an hour and ten minutes.

But if Mr. Rogers played his part fittingly and well as the official bomb-opener, Col. John Currie, M.P., grim-faced and pugnacious, suited the role of the angel with the flaming sword, the caller to arms and the herald of war.

"Tell your friends," he thundered to the Ontario delegates, "to get busy together and organize, for an election may come at any time like a thief in the night. Some of the press say, 'There's a murmuring in the mulberry bushes.' If you do not watch out you may be faced with an election before Parliament meets, and the Government that appeals to you for support will be such that you will not know what its policy is. I say to the Liberal Conservatives, 'To your tents, O Israel.'"

No New Party, Says Currie.

Col. Currie told of being present at the birth of Union Government. "We were a militant party," he declared, "and we could have carried the country as a party—(cheers)—but for the sake of peace and unity we said to Sir Robert Borden, 'Go and form a coalition Government,' but there was no power given to form a new party."

He declared that not one word had been said to embarrass the Union Government in handling reconstruction but, he asked: "Are we going to sit down, suck our thumbs and let reactionaries take charge of the Government, and undo all the work our soldiers have done?"

Yet Col. Currie did not seem cocksure of a victory off their own bat. After declaring that "unless there is a political organization that has the welfare of the soldiers at heart then this country is going to have a social breakdown just as bad as that in Russia," he continued later: "The khaki overcoat will be seen on many a tramp going from door to door unless the old Conservative party gets up on its hind legs and says to the old-time Baldwin Liberals, that element in the Liberal party that stands for the old-time whig traditions, liberty and all that sort of thing, 'Come and help us to reconstruct the country as your forefathers did at Confederation.'"

Thereafter, there was a procession of followers each giving a five-minute speech which consisted in the main of such eulogies of Mr. Rogers. The order of their eloquence was as follows: Wm. Smith, M.P.; Major J. I. Hartt, M.P.P.; James Carruthers, of Montreal, Wm. A. Clarke, M.P.; Thomas Foster, M.P.; John Best, M.P.; J. W. Lyop, of Guelph; Senator Bradbury and J. J. Carnick, ex-M.P. Mr. Lyon did forget Mr. Rogers in his enthusiasm for the Hydro and Mr. Smith took issue with Col. Currie on the farmer question, declaring that the reason they were organizing in Canada to-day was because they had been treated as a go-by in the past. But these were practically the only wanderers from the path of praise.

At the head table were: Mayor

Church, chairman; Hon. Robert Rogers, Col. John Currie, M.P.; G. W. Reynolds, Ald. H. H. Ball, Ald. C. E. Blackburn, Ald. Sam Ryding, A. C. Pratt, M.P.; E. B. Ryckman, Thos. Hook, M.P.P.; Major. J. I. Hartt, M.P.P.; E. E. Wallace, W. H. Knowlton Wm. Wright, ex-M.P.; Lieut.-Col R. C. Levesconte, Dr. H. W. Burgess, B. McCaulay, Dr. Edmund, W. W. Hodgson, C. E. Boyd, John Laxton, J. J. Gilmour, Con. W. D. Robbins Thos. Foster, M.P.; J. Bowman, M.P.; John Best, M.P.; W. A. Clark, M.P.; Lieut.-Col. James Arthurs, M.P.; Wm. Smith, M.P.; J. J. Carrick, ex-M.P.; Senator Bradbury, Geo. Wright, and Frank Stanfield, M.P.P., for Truro, N.S.

"Hon. Mr. Rogers is one of the most popular men who ever sat in the House of Commons," asserted Mayor Church, chairman, in opening the proceedings. "He deserves well by the citizens of Toronto because of his magnificent work on their behalf in connection with our harbor improvements. He is the man who introduced good business methods into the Public Works Department at Ottawa."

When the song "He's a Daisy" and the cheers had subsided, Mr. Rogers thanked the gathering for the reception they had given him, which more than compensates "for all the worry, all the labor, all the just and unjust criticism I might have received in the past." Service to Toronto was a sincere pleasure to him, and no thanks were required. He was much indebted to Mr. Boyd Magee and the committee who had worked to make the meeting such a success.

#### Lasting Love for G. O. P.

He was not vain enough to regard it as a personal compliment, but as "an evidence of your lasting interest in that grand old party which has contributed to every movement controlling the sound development of the country, and which was always ready to do its duty to Canada in every national crisis.

Never before in the history of Canada was such unrest evident as exists to-day. "It is very evident," he continued, "that the different schools of politics have not been performing their proper functions of late. History tells us the disorganization of party is the origin of faction. Faction is quick to breed intrigue, which is followed by disturbance and unrest.

"As for the school of Liberalism, it is not possible for them to render efficient service, at all events at present, in the reconstruction and restoration of confidence in our country. As for the school represented by that army of gentlemen learned in the law, who gave their services in the Government of the country a year ago on certain terms and conditions—conditions that they themselves made abundantly clear were only for the duration of the war—well, now with peace here, we must expect that this army of learned gentlemen will retire to the lucrative practice of their own profession." (Laughter.)

#### Talks on Soldiers' Problems.

The presence of so many delegates showed their interest in the old party "that will not fail to-day in the great work of reconstruction."

After asking God to bless the women of Canada, Mr. Rogers paid a tribute to the loyalty and determination of the soldiers at the front. They had not only earned the gratitude of their fellows, but fame for all time. "There must be no ingratitude towards them," he went on. "These men of our armies must at all times be our consideration. We must consider the all-important question of demobilization. This must not be long-drawn-out by legal technicalities, but must be carried out by business methods to get them home as quickly as we can. They must be settled in a way to make them independent. Canada is strong enough and big enough to see that none of the disabled men stand on street corners—(cheers)—and to see returned men treated generously, not only in our pensions, but in the private life of the country."

After touching on the work of the British navy and America in the war and hoping for a lasting peace, Mr. Rogers continued: "Once again we must take up the general rebuilding of our country. We now know what real unpreparedness for war cost us. Surely we will not lose again by unpreparedness for peace. An epoch faces us which promises huge prosperity for Canada. Are we prepared to grasp our opportunities with strength, determination and decision? Are we ready with definite plans by which the fruits of victory may be directed for Canada to the common good? If we are ready in this regard we can then feel sure strides will be made in the next few years which will lause the emergence of Canada to the status of a great nation. Why are we unprepared when thousands of our bravest and best have died fighting? Why are we unprepared in this great city with hospitals and convalescent homes? We must not forget that the best men of Great Britain and the United States, not fighting, have been preparing plans for the rebuilding of their respective countries."

Mr. Rogers recapitulated the extent and resources of Canada in territory, minerals, water power, railways, forests and inland waters and declared the people were responsible for developing and managing them. Courage, determination and, above all, common sense were needed in the work.

It was necessary to get the industries dislocated by the war and its subsequent stoppage back to normal and ready for enhanced development. "We must see that there is no gap in industrial activity," he declared. "Under our new opportunities we should know what article we have been paying others to make for us which we could probably make ourselves. Our manufacturers should seek efficiency in every branch.

#### National Policy Announced.

"We must be ready to develop a tremendous export trade. We must consider plans for Canada's development under all conditions. This great work can, I believe, be accomplished for the common good through a progressive Canadian national policy. It is just 40 years ago now since a national policy was first adopted in Canada under the guiding hand of him whose name should never be mentioned in any Canadian assembly without a feeling of reverence and respect, Sir John A. Macdonald. (Cheers). We will be told that a progressive Canadian national policy is the same old policy. The answer is that it is Sir John A. Macdonald's policy brought up to date as he would have brought it had he seen the wonderful opportunities peace is presenting to our Dominion.

"Canada's future depends on the safe and sound exercise of the old

inherent right to regulate our fiscal policy according to the needs of our own country. Look at the wealth and efficiency of the United States! See what a national policy has done for them. In Canada we must hold fast with both hands to a progressive Canadian national policy. There must be no compromise."

Mr. Rogers foresaw a great commercial struggle in the near future. "What position would Canada find herself in," he asked, "if she did not use the same weapon those she is contending against are using? The policy should be broad enough to guarantee our agricultural and industrial development, and the labor interests of our country. There should be no lack of good will between the Provinces. This is an opportune time to make clear that democracy is the achievement of what the Canadian people want.

#### Seek Selected Immigrants.

"I believe we should bring our new markets home to our producers. The best man is the man who comes here to work and build up our nation. That is why so much depends on our immigration policy. First we must have selected immigration. Loud cheers, which broke out again and again.) We should be prepared in every desirable country in the world to attract desirable immigrants to our shores. It will do us no more good to grapple under the problem of immigration when it is too late than to grapple with the problems of making war when the war is on.

"If our immigration work is systematically and thoroughly done we can make the country so prosperous that it will not feel the burden of the war debt. 15,000,000 will carry lightly the burden that 8,000,000 would have to carry, who see no chance of natural growth. All the provinces offer wide fields for new and happy homes.

"In the western Provinces, thousands of acres of virgin soil be idle because rich speculators and corporations make no pretence at development. This must be remedied. Speculators and corporations must be given a chance to convert their large holdings into cultivated farms. This would not only protect our own land settlers for the future, but would avoid unnecessary delay and expense. We must not allow returned soldiers to take up homes in that territory unless we have them protected against exploitation, and manipulation. This we are prepared to do and will do.

"This is a critical time. We must not fail. We must rise and prove ourselves worthy of our great country."

#### Slams for Union Government

"Every riding in Ontario is represented here to-night," asserted Col. John Currie in his vigorous address. "And to my mind it is the biggest dinner of a political nature that has been held in any man's honor for many years. Like a good Canadian, Hon. Robt. Rogers came to the aid of the Conservative party when the reciprocity pact was foisted upon us and he fought magnificently.

"If the Military Service Act had been properly enforced no word could ever have been said against it. Unfortunately that Act was not administered in certain parts of the country as it should have been. The new Government, when it came into power, after falling asleep on the job for a number of months, had to have their attention called to it in the House of Commons, after rioting had taken place in certain parts of the country, the only places which placed a blot on the escutcheon of our Dominion. The Government found themselves confronted with a great offensive last spring, and were compelled to change the Military Service Act and bring in what was raw conscription upon young men of certain ages."

#### Laurier's "Crocodile Tears."

He justified the existence of the War Times Election Act with the assertion that without it Canada and Britain's enemies would have carried the country, and brought Canada into disgrace by a withdrawal from the war. "There would have been rioting and bloodshed," he said, "for I, for one true Britisher, would never have stood to see that. You will see a great number of crocodile tears shed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier over the people disfranchised, but not a single man whom it disfranchised if they had been in their own country would have had the vote anyway unless it was under the new regime of the Council of Soldiers and Workmen. Because of the War Times Election Act this country is again in the hands of the British, and will remain there for all time.

#### Present at the Birth.

"I was present when Union Government was born," he went on. "We could have carried the country as a party, but for the sake of peace and unity we agreed to a coalition Government, but I want to say, and members here will back me up, that there never was a word said or any permission given to form a new party. Take that! Members here to-night will tell you that no such thing as the formation of a new party was broached or heard tell of. The Conservative party agreed to it in their unselfishness, they gave up

their offices and gave up everything for the sake of the war cause. None of those who came in had anything to give. Yes, one or two Ministers from Ontario brought in a Liberal seat. But nothing really has been given to this day.

### Let Them See Germany.

"Some 'people,'" he continued, "have a desire to hurry our boys back and dismiss them with a meal ticket. Now, I want to say that those boys have a desire to see the other side of the Rhine. Don't rush them. Let them get a glimpse of it.

"Party truce is at an end. We have that on the word of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, although, of course, he did not make the truce. But we have it on the word of Mr. Fielding. He was one of the men present when the truce was made. We are facing the greatest problems that ever confronted any country, and are we going to sit down and suck our thumbs and let the reactionaries run the Government? There never has been any historian of any note but who has said that a national party Government is the best system. If you do not have it you are going to have faction, a lot of men binding themselves together for selfish purposes." Farmers, he said, were unpatriotic when they banded themselves together for unpatriotic purposes.

### Smith's Hopes Fade Away.

Wm. Smith, M.P., South Ontario, said he did not know any body of men who had more right to band themselves together than the farmers. He had hoped that the present Administration would have the initiative to deal with reconstruction, but his hopes were falling.

Major Jas. Hartt, M.P.P., East Simcoe, said that on behalf of the ten members of the Legislature who went overseas he extended to the honorable gentleman from the West the warmest welcome.

Jas. Carruthers of Montreal said there never was a man in the Cabinet who gave better satisfaction than Hon. Mr. Rogers.

Thos. Foster, M.P., W. Clark, M.P., J. W. Lyons and Senator Bradbury also spoke.