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Our National Crisis: Can We Survive?

(Montreal Daily Star, Feb. 6th)

The session of Parliament that has opened to-day will be the most important in the history of this Dominion—the most important for one crucial reason: because this country is on the verge of disaster, nearer to a smash than it has been, nearer than it was in 1929, when the economic world rocked about our ears and it seemed as if we were plunging directly into the maelstrom.

There are people who will pretend that this is alarmist talk, people who declare that there is no evidence of a national crisis, who point to increased trade as proof conclusive that Canada is all right. Such purblind folk are either deliberately hiding their heads in the sand or else mentally incapable of reading what is written plainly upon the wall. The simple truth is that we are face to face with a crash which, unless it is averted, will blast this country's future and lead us into an economic darkness of such density and duration as to stagger the imagination.

Municipal insolvency. Provincial insolvency. Federal insolvency—that is the triple condition that lies directly ahead of us; and no amount of juggling with trade figures can alter the facts.

The causes creating such hopelessness cannot be overcome by any possible trade improvement. We are in the condition of a hopeless spendthrift. Frankly speaking, the Canadian West is bankrupt. Only the financial resources of the Federal Government can defer collapse. And those resources are being rapidly weakened because our liabilities are so far ahead of our available revenues that unless we call a halt, nothing short of a miracle can save us. Scores of cities and towns from east to west are in a similar condition, calling frantically upon their Provincial governments to come to their assistance, in order that they may continue to function. From the Federal administration down to the smallest municipal body, it is the same story—deficit piled upon deficit, no balancing of budgets, and no relief in sight, save such as is dreamed of by those who mistake the shadow for the substance and who are incapable of realising that the way of reckless extravagance and continual balances on the wrong side of the ledger leads to one and only one thing—Ruin.

Millions of Canadians who are stirred by a real fear of their country's collapse are hoping with a pathetic and passionate sincerity that the Government of the day will display such determined courage, supported by all loyal members of the Opposition, as will make possible a great adventure to rescue the country.

With unity of purpose and action, supported by the strength and goodwill of all classes and all creeds, the blackness of the present outlook may be lightened by some gleam of hope. If ever there was a time when the politicians of Canada should forget rivalry and bend their efforts to save the country, that time is now.

...ness and solemnity of which it is

capable that in view of the known facts, any members of Parliament who dare to place the goal of mere party advantage above the salvation of the State will brand themselves as traitors, beyond forgiveness and deserving of but one fate. Upon their hands will be the entire responsibility for the crash that seems inevitable, and the people of this Dominion will know well whom to blame and how to visit upon them the reward their treachery will so richly merit.

But we refuse to believe that in this momentous hour, when our fate is quivering in the balance, there is not sufficient patriotism, sufficient sense of honour, of decency, of duty, in the Dominion Parliament to ensure a united effort to save the country. The old adage that it is the duty of an Opposition to oppose no longer holds good; the national crisis demands a greater concept of loyalty to the State. Those not of the Government party should halt and reflect before they carp.

Grave decisions have to be made. The Government now in office was sent to Ottawa by such an overwhelming majority as to leave no possible doubt of the alarm of the people. The nation not only asks, but demands, that the Government shall set our tottering financial house in order, shall take such steps as are necessary—no matter how drastic, no matter how fraught with temporary suffering, to pull us up before we plunge over the verge.

Our situation is such that despite the huge Government majority, we can only be assured of a chance of recovery if all parties agree to forget party and to present one common front in the hour of national peril.

It will require courage, great courage, backed by a resolute determination not to be turned aside by any considerations of party interests, local interests, or any other sort of interest save that of the State. Remedial measures will hurt, we shall have to pay the price of past folly. Let there be no mistake about that. But unless we are prepared to do so, there is no hope.

Is there in Parliament to-day—and outside of it—enough love of country to ensure a gigantic united fight to win our way back to prosperity, to sane, economically sound administration? Is there enough courage to do desperate things, to enforce desperate remedies, to the end that eventual salvation may crown such efforts?

That is the question the people of Canada are asking the Parliament of Canada to-day. And the people await the answer with grim realisation that unless it is in the affirmative, this country's future will be such as no man or woman dares to contemplate.

The eyes of the nation are upon the chosen representatives of the people of Canada in Parliament assembled. Their responsibility is great; but so also is their power to shoulder it. There can be no question of evasion. The issue is plain.

They cannot continue to play politics against the security, the happiness, the very life of this Dominion which they are pledged to safeguard.

Religion and Morals

In common with all great prophets and teachers since the world began Isaiah was sure that a vital religion could not be separated from a genuine and honest morality. The one true and accepted sacrifice is a good life, and nothing can possibly be made to take its place. Men have tried all sorts of substitutes, but tried altogether in vain. That truth is as true as it ever was. —The New Outlook.

Religious Forum

THE SOURCE OF TRUE SERVICE

"One morning with a friend I walked out of the city of Geneva to where the waters of the lake flow with swift rush into the Rhone. We were both greatly interested in the strange sight which has impressed so many travellers. There are two rivers whose waters come together here, the Rhone and the Arve, the Arve flowing into the Rhone. The waters of the Rhone are beautifully clear and sparkling. The waters of the Arve come through a clayey soil and are muddy, grey and dull. For a long distance the two waters are wholly distinct. Two rivers are in one river bed, on one side the sparkling blue Rhone water, on the other the dull grey Arve water, the line between the two sharply defined. So it continues for a long distance. Then gradually they blend and the grey begins to tinge all through the blue.

"I went to the guide book and maps to find out something about this river that kept on its way undefiled by its neighbor for so long. Its source is in a glacier that is between ten and eleven thousand feet high, descending from the gates of eternal night, at the foot of the pillar of the sun. It is fed continually by the melting glacier which in turn is being kept up by the snows and cold. Rising at this great height, ever being renewed steadily by the glacier, it comes rushing down the swift descent of the Swiss Alps through Lake Geneva and on. There is the secret of purity, side by side with its dirty neighbor.

"Our lives have their source high up in the mountains of God, fed by a ceaseless supply. Only so can there be the purity, and the momentum that shall keep us pure, and keep us moving down in contact with men of the earth. We must keep closer to the source than is the Rhone at Geneva, else the streams flowing alongside will unduly influence us. Constant personal contact with Jesus is the beginning ever new of service."—S. D. Gordon in Quiet Talks on Service. w3

Miss Macphail Writes From Ottawa

A full House gathered the day after the formal opening to pay loving and sorrowful tribute to King George V. The Prime Minister and Mr. Bennett reviewed the work of the late monarch both as a sovereign and as a man and expressed in the form of a resolution the genuine sorrow which members of the House of Commons feel, which resolution will be forwarded to Queen Mary. Mr. Woodsworth, Mr. Blackmore, leader of the Social Credit Group, and Mrs. Black also made speeches of tribute and condolence. A resolution expressing the loyalty and affection of Canadians was passed and is being forwarded to King Edward VIII.

The opening was quite unlike any other I have seen. Papers in the Capital city carried the heading "Court mourning worn by ladies adds to general colourful note". And as an explanation of this curious statement: "Black gowns form vivid contrast to uniforms of officers and members of the diplomatic corps, and the purple of the Church dignitaries."

If black was mourning for women why was scarlet and ermine mourning for the judges of the Supreme Court? Why, too, was the gold-embroidered Windsor uniform of the Prime Minister an adequate expression of the grief of the first citizen? It was said the judges had "weeping cuffs", and I dare say they had, but from my position at the bar of the Senate I could not see them.

Contrary to the opinion expressed by society writers, I did not think the dominant note of dull black added to the dignity and beauty of the opening pageant. Many women were unable to attend because of the extra cost involved by the requirement of all black clothes. Of the four young ladies who were to have

...the occasion. The same problem evidently faced many women, or at

any rate that is my explanation of the empty seats on the floor and in the galleries.

The new House met in the forenoon of the 6th to elect a Speaker. It was known beforehand that the Government had decided to place the Hon. Pierre Casgrain in the Chair and with their enormous majority of 111 or 112, anyone they chose would undoubtedly be Speaker, though in theory the Speaker is chosen by the members of the Commons. Ordinarily the Opposition agrees with the Government choice, making the election of the Speaker a purely formal procedure, but in this case Mr. Bennett and Mr. Woodsworth opposed the selection of Mr. Casgrain as Speaker on the ground that before his appointment he had, in a most arbitrary fashion, assumed the duties of Speaker and had exceeded his authority even as such by dismissing some hundred and twenty employees of the House of Commons, some of whom have served for many years. But after administering a stern rebuke the motion passed "on division".

By the length of time it took to read the Speech from the Throne I expected a rather extensive legislative program, but a later examination of a printed copy of the speech did not reveal much. Parliament will be asked to approve of the Canadian-United States trade treaty and of a national commission on unemployment and relief. The Bank of Canada is to be slightly reorganized giving the Government a larger interest in its ownership; relief camps maintained for single unemployed men are to be closed as soon as conditions permit; amendments to the British North America Act are to be considered and consideration is to be given to new financial relations between the Provinces and the Dominion. Railway legislation will be brought down affording the Government a greater measure of authority in the operation of the Canadian National system.

Though the legislative program seems short the session is not likely to be. With more than a hundred and fifty new members we are assured of many resolutions and much speaking.

It is a strange looking House, with Government members sitting both on the immediate right and the immediate left of the Speaker and the forty Conservatives taking exactly four double rows of seats behind and about Mr. Bennett. The C.C.F. group sits to the left of the Conservatives and the Social Credit group to their left again. Mr. H. H. Stevens occupies a front bench on the right of Mr. Woodsworth and I on his left. I would like to have sat between Mr. Stevens and Mr. Woodsworth but it could not be arranged.

Senator Cairine Wilson gave a small but very enjoyable tea party the day before the House opened, to which Mrs. Black and I were invited. We had a happy hour visiting before the fire in the beautiful drawing room. The Senator had had a birthday the day before and she had saved some of her birthday cake for the tea party. Charlotte Whitton, the recognized authority on child welfare, and Winnifred Kydd, the retiring President of the National Council of Women, were two of the interesting and congenial group. It is delightful for me to have Mrs. Black in the House and to find her office is opposite mine.

AGNES MACPHAIL
House of Commons, Ottawa, Feb. 6th, 1936.

We are no longer so much inclined to feel that if something is foreign and unintelligible, it must be good.—Lawrence Tibbett.

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A. F. & A. M.—Hiram Lodge No. 490, G.R.C., Markdale, meets in the Masonic Hall, Reburn Block, at 8 o'clock p.m., on the second Thursday in each month. Visiting brethren cordially invited. W. J. Halbert, W.M.; A. E. Colgan, Sec.

R. B. K.—Victoria Preceptory No. 282 meets in the Orange Hall, Markdale, at 8 o'clock p.m., the third Thursday in each month. Visiting brethren always cordially welcome. G. W. Littlejohns, W. P.; A. E. Colgan, Registrar.

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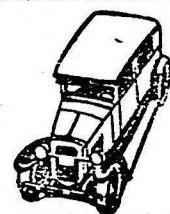
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