

Our Letter from Ottawa

BY AGNES C. MACPHAIL, M.P.

By motoring seventy miles over skiddy roads, I managed to catch the Sunday night train back to Ottawa. I think the Owen Sound-Toronto line must be about the last one in the Province not having a Sunday night train. Wouldn't it be a good idea to do as is done from Huntville down, eliminate the Monday morning train and run one Sunday night instead. There must be great numbers of people in Toronto who would like to come home over the week-ends if they could be back to work for Monday morning. The train is so much safer and more comfortable in winter weather. I felt I was travelling de luxe when I got on the parlour car at Oro Station. The train doesn't whirl around on the ice, at any rate. The subject is very much on my mind, since I have to do the driving stunt again this Sunday.

This week was pretty much devoted to a discussion of Canada's foreign policy, need of amendments to the B.N.A. Act and estimates. Mr. Woodsworth's resolution asked that Canada remain neutral in case of war, regardless of who the belligerents might be, that no profit be made out of supplying war munitions and materials and that the Canadian government should make every effort to discover and remove the causes of international friction.

Mr. Woodsworth, while taking a very strong stand against war, said he did not consider himself un-British, a do-nothing pacifist or a total isolationist. In the British House, different groups might have very different ideas regarding military defence and yet none would be thought too unpatriotic. Rather they considered it desirable that all sections of the community should be heard from. That, he thought, ought to be the practice here.

Concluding a condemnation of imperialism, Mr. Woodsworth said: "I have nothing whatever to say against that country which we so affectionately term 'the motherland' but I think we in Canada must be very careful lest we lead ourselves to carrying out the policies of a few great industrial and commercial and financial groups in the motherland. I am getting somewhat tired of being told that we in this country are unpatriotic because we do not jump when Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Chamberlain or some one else tells us to do so." But, do we not?

The Prime Minister, in replying, was very critical of Mr. Woodsworth's speech. He didn't like the construction of the speech to start with, thought, in fact, it should have been turned quite the other way around, with the discussion of the causes of war and their removal coming first. When on this line he stressed the trade pacts Canada has made under his leadership and the removing of irritations between Japan and Canada, and Russia and Canada. He could not, he said, think of any case in which the present government had created friction with other nations.

Mr. King was in agreement with Mr. Woodsworth so far as the desire for peace was concerned, but he said he felt Canada should, in a world armed to the teeth, spend money on defence. But he assured the House that the estimates had not been framed with any thought of participation in European wars. The manufacture of munitions ought to be carefully watched in order to prevent exorbitant profits, but should not, Mr. King thought, be a publicly owned enterprise.

He would not bind himself in advance to a neutral position but would leave the decision to be made at the time by Parliament.

As I pointed out later, unless we make very careful preparations for neutrality, no decision will be necessary—events will decide. "If we wait until the last moment to make our decision we shall not decide for neutrality because there will be the pull of the military caste, of sentimental imperial ties, and many other things influencing us. If, then, we are going to consider it, we should consider it now."

I could not bring myself to agree with Mr. King's professed faith in the British government as a 'peace-fier.' He said if at the moment the Spanish civil war has not grown to proportions involving the whole of

Europe and possibly other parts of the world as well, too much credit cannot be given to Britain. While I have great faith in the masses of the British people, I have little or none in the ruling caste, and said that I could not feel that they would consider what was good for Canada any more than they would consider what was good for the masses of the people of Great Britain. They were motivated by their own peculiar interests. Mr. King's speech made in Geneva in September was, I thought, a particularly courageous and clearheaded utterance. The one made in the House the other day was much more political in character.

An illuminating debate on the need of amendments to the British North America Act was introduced by the Rt. Hon. R. B. Bennett on going into Supply. He called the attention of the House to the fact that there is a sharp conflict at the present time between Legislatures and Parliament over the exercise of sovereign rights. "The exclusive powers exercised by the Legislatures of the provinces on the one hand, and by this Parliament on the other, have come in conflict so frequently and so sharply with respect to national questions, that I think it is time some remedy be applied."

At the end of a very fine speech he suggested the calling of a constitutional convention which would represent not only the parties in power in the various provincial governments, together with the ruling party in the Dominion House, but a gathering representative of the Legislatures and Parliament. In fact, such a conference as formed the B.N.A. Act in the first place. Mr. Bennett felt that the matter was urgent, the democracy would not continue unless it became as efficient at least as a dictatorship, which it could not "if nine different areas had nine different sets of laws dealing with problems that are national in their scope."

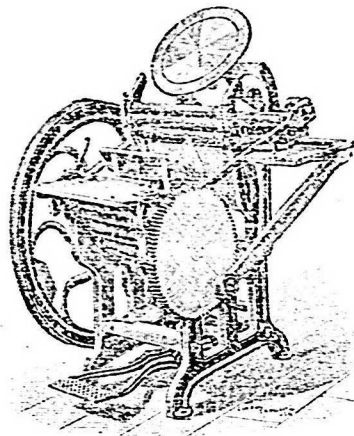
Last week Mr. Walter Tucker, Liberal, made a speech which I wish every one could read, on the use of the credit of the nation. He showed by many examples that when the government gets in a tight corner it does finance by drawing upon our national credit. During the Great War we issued sixteen million dollars worth of legal tender against Dominion Railway Securities. The railways had needed money and had come to the government asking that they back a loan, which in the ordinary way would be made by the banks and on which the railways would pay interest to the banks. The government of that day, Mr. Tucker said, thought they would try an experiment and instead of guaranteeing a bond issue and making themselves liable to pay interest on it, they said to the railways: "You deposit your bonds with us and we will print sixteen million dollars worth of money and lend it to you." That is the railways paid their interest to the government rather than to the banks and this interest has, up to date, amounted to two million dollars and nothing disastrous has happened as a consequence.

The Bank of Canada is not making use of its gold reserve to issue the amount of money which it could issue under the international agreement of 25 per cent. gold coverage. That is the only quarrel Mr. Tucker has with it. It has on hand, according to the last statement, 179 million dollars worth of gold. On the strength of that it could issue 716 million dollars worth of legal tender and still be within what is recognized all the world over as a safe limit. Mr. Tucker wants to know why we go on borrowing and paying interest when we have the machinery and the gold to issue interest-free volume of money. The money is needed to put the unemployed to work and to make effective the demand of the Canadian people for goods and services.

Mr. Dunning followed and opposed vigorously any such suggestion. But as a back-bencher said to me—he was a Liberal too—"I couldn't see that Dunning answered Tucker."

AGNES C. MACPHAIL
House of Commons, Ottawa, Friday, January 29th, 1937.

GET YOUR PRINTING IN MARKDALE



JOB PRINTING

We aim to satisfy our customers by giving first class printing and prompt service. Our prices are lower than those in the larger centres.

WE PRINT:

Posters Sale Bills Dodgers
Letterheads Envelopes
Statements Tags Bill Heads
Circulars Tickets Booklets
Business Cards Society Stationery
Wedding Stationery Invitations
Cards, Etc., Etc.



ADVERTISING

Brings Business

The average man or woman appreciates an invitation. An advertisement is an invitation to the public to patronize a particular store or business establishment, and the great majority of people respond to such an invitation. Improve your business during 1937 by consistently inviting people to patronize your business. This can be done at reasonable cost through the columns of this paper, which goes into almost every home in the Markdale trading territory. No other newspaper can render this service.

PHONE 15

The Markdale Standard