

The Conservative Party: Whither Away?

By W. R. GIVENS

Mr. W. R. Givens, formerly publisher of the Kingston Standard, and a prominent member of the Conservative Party in Ontario, here sets out his views on Dr. Manion's present campaign.

For the second time within the last dozen years the Conservative Party in Canada has slipped its ancient moorings and, beset by contrary currents, is drifting somewhat uncertainly to an unknown destination, clinging to the hope that that destination will be on the sunny side of the stream. Quite frankly, I think it will be found that here are many Conservatives who feel that this hope will not be fulfilled and believe that as a Party we would have emerged from this coming election much stronger in numbers and more uplifted in spirit if we had held fast to the Faith of the Founding Fathers and remained loyal to the traditions and the principles of their Party. It is the belief of those men—and I share that belief—that we should have emulated the example of the gallant officers and men of the Rawalpindi, held fast to our colors and, nailing them to the masthead, kept them flying to the end, no matter what the odds, so that if we went down as the Rawalpindi we should have won a glorious victory even in defeat.

Evidently, however, we are not made of that stuff and just as evidently, under the new party, our flag hereafter is to be, like Joseph's coat, of many colors. Apparently we are to "turn the Ottawa rascals out" by turning many of our own number out, and thereafter divide Party responsibility with leaders as yet unnamed and unknown, and whose policies likewise are unknown.

Let us look at the record of the past dozen years or thereabouts and note beginning and the continuing of the "drift" which, if it progresses much further, may see Conservatism in Canada in as sorry condition as Liberalism in Great Britain. The first drift began under Premier Bennett, and will likely go down in history as the Oligarchic Drift, since it was in this period that Premier Bennett, chosen as Leader in Winnipeg, decided that the best kind of leadership was to ignore the party which he was to lead—its rank and file, its local leaders, its Parliamentary representatives and even the Cabinet Ministers—and put on an amazing one-man government act, in which he and he only was at once party and leader, with all others but flies on the wheel. The harrowing results we all of us know only too well—not a single Conservative Provincial Premier in the wide, wide Dominion and in the Commons, a mere skeleton of a party. Not only that, but we are left almost leaderless, since under Mr. Bennett's one-man domination no new leaders were developed, while those who might have come along went down to their political deaths in the election holocaust that the Bennett dictatorship precipitated. Like it or not, these are the facts, and there is no gainsaying them.

And now we are in another drift—a drift singularly enough occasioned by the action of the man chosen by the Ottawa Conservative convention to lead the Conservative Party out of the wilderness, namely, Hon. Dr. Manion. That was the mandate, and that only—had the Conservative Party. He had no mandate to hybridize the Conservative with a chameleon color or its tincture from solid Conservative to a sort of crazy-quilt patchwork. Here, again we have a new mandate and one-man dictation, and here again many of the party followers are merely goose-stepping into line, no matter what their personal feelings—goose-stepping just as they did under Mr. Bennett—goose-stepping to another defeat, for it must be clear to any thinking man that if we ever had a chance in this election, it would have been as a vigorous, united, fighting party, and not as one suddenly jumbled together, under the banner of nationalism.

It is quite true, as some contend, that matters might be different if Dr. Manion would tell us who are to be the leaders, with himself, of the new party. Then, at least, we would have some justification or excuse for jumping overboard and taking a chance on the water being warm. We do not know of course, or so we are told—that these leaders are to be "of the best brains and the best minds" of the country. Perhaps even those two political gems of purest ray serenity, Premier Hepburn of Ontario and ex-Premier Duplessis of Quebec, will be included in the Brain Trust—the former whom seems to think his was with Premier King of greater importance than the World War, and the latter who apparently does not believe that Canada should be in the war at all. The mere surrender of some of their long-cherished principles would surely be as nothing to Conservatives, as compared with the blessed boon and privilege of being cheek by jowl with those two distinguished and brainy gentlemen!

The very fact that one hears mention of these two men as among the "best

brains" must surely impress upon Dr. Manion how necessary it is, if his hopes for sustained support, to name the man whom he purposes and who have consented to act with him in the new party—those from Ontario, those from Quebec, those from the Maritimes, those from the middle West, those from the Far West. Manifestly that is not too much to ask, especially as it may not yet be too late to satisfy doubting Conservatives and swing them into line. That certainly is better than asking them to vote blindly, and should produce much more satisfactory results from a Conservative point of view.

Were that done we would not feel that we were like a man buying a pig in a poke, without opportunity to examine the creature. But whether it is done or not, we cannot hope to win the election by abuse or by destructive criticism. To say that the King Government has made a shocking mess of its conduct of the war will not get us anywhere, because any sane man who has studied conditions and followed the doings of government know that is not so. The British Government does not, think so—and our contingents already overseas, and their splendid condition, reinforce that view. Fully as much to the point is the declaration of the last Conservative Minister of National Defence, Hon. Dr. Sutherland, who only the other day, in a statement at Woodstock, deploring the shocking resolution of the Hepburnized Ontario Legislature, said: "I think the Government has been doing everything that could possibly be done—I am convinced of that." Here is an authoritative voice—and a Conservative one at that—which cannot be laughed aside.

Manifestly then, vitriolic impenitent abuse of the King Government will avail or profit little. The Government, to be sure, has made mistakes, but what Government has not?—in any event, to say that it has constantly fumbled the ball, and even has been guilty of criminal negligence, is to make friends for it rather than enemies, because such charges are as propositious as they are partisan. If we cannot be fair, let us at least not be silly.

The overshadowing duty before us at the moment is to do our bit as citizens of the Empire to help win the war—for win it we must. Can we do that better by putting in power a new party whose elements and policies are as yet unknown? Of should we continue in power the King Government, already well along in its war work and in close communion and understanding with the Government of the Mother Country? In other words, can a yet unformed party carry on better than one already in the saddle? That is the all important question for Canada at the moment. It transcends all others and removes it quite out of the sphere of partisanship.

Let Dr. Manion, then, produce his men, and they their policies, their plans and their wars, and thus give the people of Canada a full and fair opportunity to judge of the respective merits of this presently nebulous party and the Liberal Party now in power. Only under such conditions can Conservatives determine whether their surrender to, or merger with, this new party will prove to be best for Canada and the Empire and assure victory over the common enemy that now menaces the world with its brute force.

COMMANDER OUTLINES NAVY NEEDS

Something of the courage and fortitude of Canada's men at sea—something of the winter hardships suffered both by those of the merchant marine and of the navy—and something of their urgent need of knitted supplies and comforts from home, was revealed this week by Commander D. W. Farmer, R.C.N. Naval Branch, Department of National Defence, Ottawa.

Speaking to a largely attended meeting of the Women's Committee of the Navy League of Canada (Ontario Division) in Toronto, Commander Farmer commended the work being undertaken for Navy men by many women's groups in this Province. And from him, the gathering, presided over by Mrs. R. C. Matthews, wife of the Honorable R. C. Matthews, heard first hand of the work of those thousands of Canadians who deserve your moral support and upbuilding in the face of a task of incredible danger.

Under Mrs. Matthews' direction, a women's section of the Navy League came into existence in late October of last year.

The Letter Box

R. R. No. 2, Rockwood, February 18th, 1940.

Dear Mr. Editor: It has always been the practice of political parties in Canada to keep the affairs of Veterans and Soldiers out of Politics, and to adjust any matters relating to them in a non-political way. Both the Liberal and Conservative Leaders in the past have agreed not to use veteran and soldier problems as stepping stones to Political glory. Therefore, I take exception to the Conservative Candidate using these words, "You have seen the treatment accorded our gallant troops and the neglect of their wives, mothers and children."

For the information of Mr. Atkins and the public generally I wish to give the results of an investigation which Mr. Atkins apparently failed to make. In dealing with enlisted men in the forces there are quite a number of cases where the domestic status does not ring true on their papers and these are held up for investigation of such things as Common Law wives, divorce, bigamy separation, non-support of parents, wives, children, and many other things which make up domestic tangles. These things may seem at a casual glance to be of minor importance where subsistence is asked but they involve huge expenditures of public money. For instance, where a boy who has or has not maintained his parents gets killed or wounded involves the payment of pension for periods of years; again where a married man dies on his death or injury pension must be paid and it is possible that taking the extreme of a long living deformity case in one of the children, that pension would be paid for ninety or one hundred years. From this very meagre sketch the public can see that the Government is doing a good job in seeing that all those who draw dependence allowances thoroughly deserve them and furthermore only about 10 or 12% of dependence applications are not granted immediately. Of those held up it has been found 25% are entitled to allowance 25% entitled to part allowance and a little more than 50% not entitled to any allowance.

Investigators investigating these cases are not working from 9 to 5, but are and have been working night and day. Most of these investigations involve 5 or 6 separate calls for such things as verification of births, deaths, marriage, bank account, employment, court proceedings and 100 and 1 other things which make up the tangles. It has been known for one case to take over 20 different calls for parents with personal incomes of more than \$1,500 per year to claim to be entirely dependent on a son who never did pay even towards his board. I hope that any candidate, Mr. Editor, will take the trouble to be sure he is right before he utilizes the problems of soldiers and their dependents as a stepping stone to a seat in Ottawa.

ARTHUR E. PADBURY.

Dear FREE PRESS: As I read the newspaper these days there is so much interesting material for thought and information, that it seems rather like using good space foolishly for just an ordinary letter. The coming election will require considerable space for debate, and, like all those preceding has little to cause real argument. The situation in the North here is much the same as in Halton County. Both members are Liberal and both greatly respected. But the other parties are beginning to get busy. Two or three have candidates nominated, and workers out working up all the discord they can, influencing the feeble minded and generally pulling the wool. So it would be good for every thoughtful person to study the situation thoroughly and the country's need and not allow speech-making to be the deciding factor on how Parliament shall be administered. Years ago, when the Mail was the Mail and Empire, and the Globe the Globe, both printed in separate buildings in the morning, and the Star and Tely at night, I had time and opportunity to read both sides to all the political discussion and took particular joy in a real argument, and often got the best of it, but I found out that sort of argument made enemies, so now I take no side and don't argue. The job of minding one's own business is a big one, and here in the North, where the winter is so long and severe, it requires plenty of thought to prepare and store up the necessary problems. We've been blessed with a wonderful winter, no bad storms, and very little severe cold. It goes down to 42 below zero two or three times, early in the morning, but then temperature rose rapidly and was milder again. Since winter set in it has never thawed once. Snow came sufficient for good sleighing, after New Year's, so farmers and lumbermen have been able to do all their hauling with sleighs. The gathering of fuel becomes harder each year, as the supply becomes farther away. This year part of it is about 16 miles. So the return trip is a big day's work. We're fortunate to have a nice bit on our own place, but being small, we're trying to save it to grow larger and are getting as much as possible other ways while we can. The boys put in a nice supply of ice this week, from a spring lake just a few miles distant. The blocks were 28" thick, so you'll understand it took some cold weather to make it. We got a small refrigerator last year and had great con-

HEADS SWEDISH ARMY



Chief of Staff of Sweden army is General Per Svanh. Sweden, the war brought home to her by fall of Red bombs on the Swedish town of Pajala, is divided on the question of open military assistance to neighboring Finland. Many observers say if Finland falls, Sweden will be Russia's next victim.

fort with it during the hot weather, and wonder how we had done without so long. While getting the ice home this week the boys broke one of the sleigh runners, and have had quite an experience making a new one. To find a suitable piece of timber took most of a day. They got an ash tree in the river flat. It had a natural crook, but was too large and had to be split. Of course it had to be split and to chisel a straight stick for a sleigh runner out of what was left was some job, which took most of another day, between chisels, but in spite of neither being experienced axemen, or carpenters, they made really a good job and it certainly looks like what it's intended to be. Had there been a saw-mill anywhere within reach, two or more runners could have been sawn out and still would to spare.

The stock I mentioned in a previous letter have all done well; all fattened, and one cow gave us twin heifers. One calf was very weak and there came a bitter cold night, and it got chilled and gradually weakened and died. But the other four, three heifers and a male, are strong, healthy fellows. We let the children name them. So, twins are Polly and Molly, and others Jack and Jill. Our Chief is not like the one Mrs. Clarke speaks about. He's quite gentle, and no one has yet had to run for dear life when he was loose. But the best of them need watching, for so we won't be reckless. Lumbering is almost finished, the men and teams are coming back from camp. This industry is becoming mechanized too. Trucks and tractors are being used to a greater extent each year to haul the logs, which make horses less valuable. This, in turn, makes less hay and grain necessary, and as a consequence surplus is harder to dispose of. Hay was never so cheap in this country before. \$7.00 per ton has been the average price paid for pressed hay, either delivered or F.O. B. freight car. So it has barely paid for hauling.

Milk producing is on the increase as the northern towns grow. Kiriland Lake, Rouyn, Noranda, and others farther east and north take tremendous quantities daily, by both train and truck, and \$2.45 per cwt. is average price. This is one industry that is protected from southern competition. Shipping rates are prohibitive. But for most other produce, such as butter, eggs, meats and vegetables, competition is keen, and prices are kept too low for this country, where we have a short summer season, and long cold winter. Poultry have been almost a loss this year, owing to low prices. Eggs have retailed for weeks at 25c and buyers paying only 18c to 20c per dozen. But, after all, we in Canada have lots to be thankful for, having such a comfortable, care-free country to live in, and are ready and willing in every way possible to help and strive for peace, even though obliged to provide for war.

Respectfully yours, R. W. JOHNSON, R. R. No. 1, Thurlow.

LAST-MINUTE RUSH LOOKS FOR DRIVERS

March 31st is Set as Deadline for 1939 Plates and Licenses. No extension of time will be granted beyond March 31st for use of the 1939 plates and licenses.

In making this announcement, J. P. Bickell, Registrar of Motor Vehicles, urges all motorists to secure their permits and licenses immediately. While many car owners throughout the Province have already secured their new 1940 plates, records show that there are thousands who face the prospect of finding themselves in the last-minute rush unless they act without delay. Officials at the Motor Vehicles Branch declare that the motoring public could easily avert the inconvenience and annoyance of waiting in a crowd. "It's a job that will take a few minutes now but it may take hours later on," one official stated. "We have the plates and licenses ready; it's now up to the motorists, but March 31st is positively the deadline."

OVERSEAS MEN GO TO SCHOOL

Every opportunity will be given officers and soldiers of the C.A.S.F. to avail themselves of educational facilities provided by the Canadian Legion War Services, Inc., and the Canadian Association for Adult Education with the stipulation, however, that their military duties must not be interfered with.

Courses are divided into main groups: those continuing normal education and leading to entry into university and those of vocational nature for civil life. Courses are divided into periods of four weeks. At the end of each period credits are given for permission to complete the course. Certificates of matriculation or proficiency will be given successful candidates and will be kept in the Records Office of the Defence Department in Ottawa. They will be available on discharge.

LEAP YEAR GETS FOUR DAYS MORE

The decision to introduce Summer Time in Britain this month—February—instead of in April, gives British factories approximately two days more daylight than they had last year.

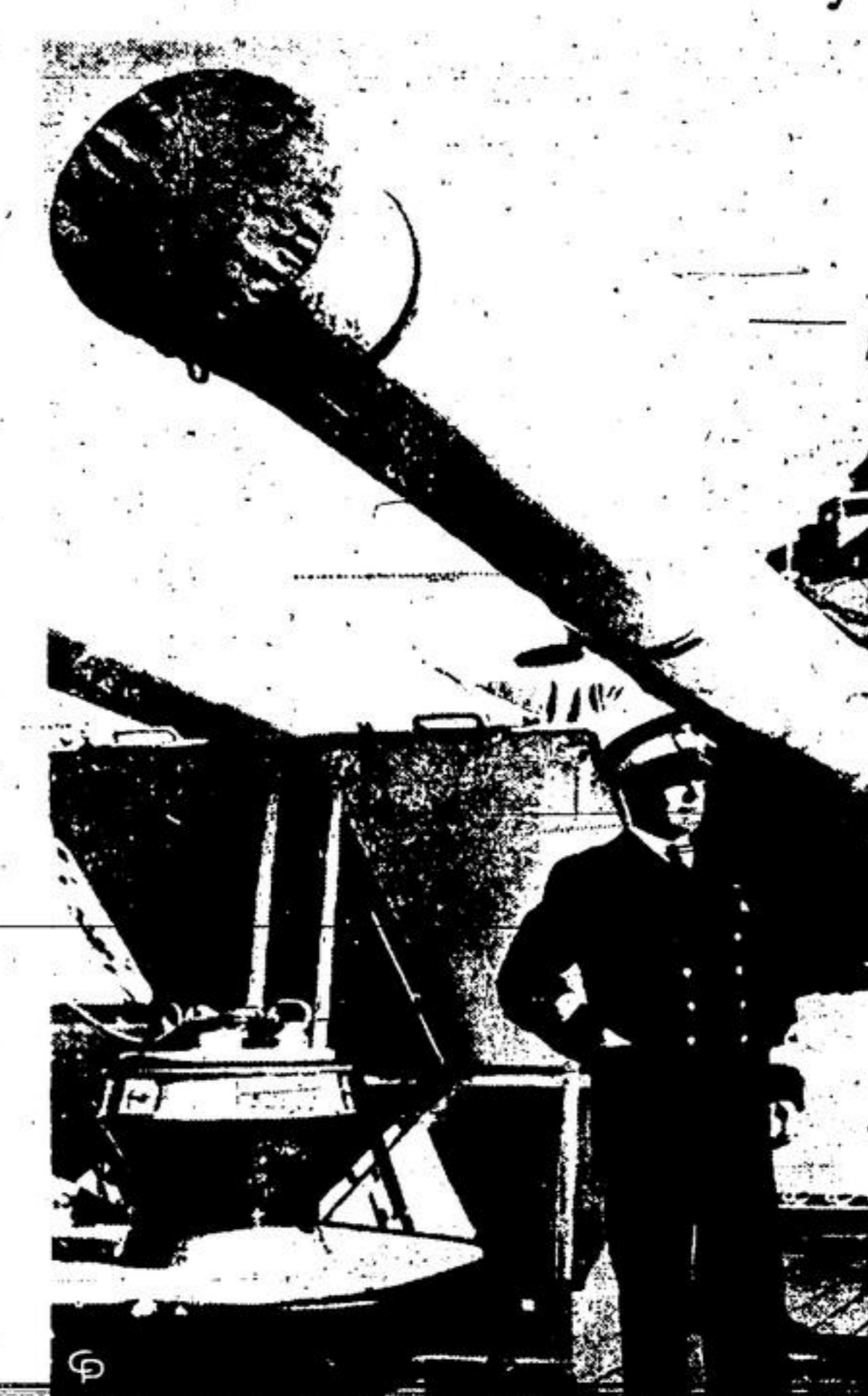
If, as is expected, the Government extend Summer Time, as they did last year, from October to November, a further two days' light will be added to the year's total.

In short, the 366 days of the present Leap Year will have an extra four days of light.

Under the new arrangement, the black-out will not be enforced before half-past six in the evening. A factory's lighting costs will accordingly be less and in many cases there will be a cut in the time which workers have to spend under artificial lighting. Those of them whose hours have been altered by the black-out will not return to a more normal working day.

The lack of the transport services will also be notably easier and the total effect of the additional light saving is expected to give smoother working to British industry as a whole.

He Heads Swedish Navy



Admiral Gosta Ehrenswart, Chief of the Swedish Royal Navy, is pictured aboard the Sweden flagship. Sweden is bolstering her military might, just to make sure she will not be caught napping, as Russia battles her neighbor, Finland. Swedish military authorities have already issued instructions to all anti-aircraft units in the country to fire upon any military planes seen flying over Swedish territory. The orders followed the bombing of the town of Pajala by Russian planes and brought indignant demands in the Swedish press that a protest to Moscow be followed by insistence on compensation and assurance against similar repetition.

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OXYDOL pkg. 9 1/2; 21; 59c	LIFEBOUY Carbolic Soap Cake 7c	POLIFLOR Floor Wax tin 29c, 49c
		Palmolive Soap 2 cakes 11c

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