

VETERAN OF HOUSE WARMLY APPLAUDED BY EVERY MEMBER

Spontaneous Ovation Is Accorded J. A. Sangster, 72-Year-Old Liberal

MINISTRY IS UNDER FIRE

For a few brief moments yesterday all semblance of party politics disappeared from the floor of the Ontario Legislature. This unusual state of affairs was occasioned when J. A. Sangster (Liberal, Glengarry), the veteran of the House, rose from his seat to participate in the debate on the motion to adopt the Speech from the Throne. With every member in the chamber applauding or pounding his desk, the ruddy-faced, bespectacled 72-year-old Liberal was accorded an ovation which surpassed that given any one during the present session. The applause was spontaneous, prolonged and hearty.

Charges Maladministration.

But it did not unsettle Mr. Sangster. Without comment, and speaking in his accustomed unorthodox manner—talking rather than making a formal address—he commenced his criticism of the Henry Administration. Reading a newspaper clipping to support his charges of maladministration of relief works in Northern Ontario, and stating that rural Ontario was not receiving its share of the benefits of Hydro-Electric power, the old gentleman with the boyish manner made his criticism in a gentle, but sincere way.

Others to take part in the debate were Frank W. Wilson (Windsor East) and C. A. Seguin (Russell), Conservatives, and W. J. MacKay (Liberal, Bruce South). The two former spent most of their time in attacks on Mitchell Hepburn, M.P., and Hon. Harry C. Nixon, Ontario Liberal and Progressive Leaders. They flayed them for putting up a campaign of "villification," and warned the people of Ontario from putting on them the responsibilities of office. Mr. MacKay saw in the present method of handling relief an interference by Provincial authorities in the duties of municipal Councils.

Mr. Sangster, who followed Mr. Seguin, commenced by stating: "I am going to try to speak about the business of this Province. I hope I will not have to stoop to villifying any one in this House or outside of it. If I do I will beg your pardon." He was referring to the addresses of the two Conservatives.

Trying to Do Too Much.

Increasing taxes, particularly those in rural parts, would stop only when the Governments quit assuming the functions which did not belong to them. "We are trying to do too much," he said. "I do not think that these 'wonderful visions' we have heard about are in the best interests of the country. Some one had a vision that would turn all our forests into pulp and paper and employ every one. For a short time it was all right, but the end was disastrous. The people who went from the farms to work are now on relief."

Governments should be able to say "no" to requests, he said, as the increase in taxation was serious when the production values fell off. Rural taxes were now fourteen times what they were fifty years ago, while the value of field crops were now \$12,000,000 less than they were then.

Dealing with the question of redistribution, Mr. Sangster suggested that city ridings might be of 100,000 population. "I am not clamoring for my own seat, but it is only fair that the rural parts should not lose the small representation they have," he said.

If the Province wanted to save money, it could better save it by doing away with the Highway Commission, the members of which went around investigating the roads of the country. The 20 per cent. the counties have to pay toward highways would pay off all their debts, he estimated.

Frank W. Wilson, Windsor East, referred to the proposed amendments to the Moratorium Act. Exemption of goods which could not be seized in case of dispossession might be widened, so as to leave people in such circumstances more necessary articles.

Attacks Relief Line-Ups.

"Then there is also imprisonment for debt. I know that it is not called that; it is called contempt of court. But that is something which should be done away with. It happens in courts where only small amounts are involved," he said, and also deprecated the fact that people have to line up to get relief supplies. Some method of obviating this should be found, he said, as it added to the distress of many thrifty hardworking people who, through no fault of their own, had to accept relief.

"The honorable member from Brant (Mr. Nixon) is still on his perennial subject of the Hydro," continued Mr. Wilson. "Last year he pounded away for a Commission, and though it was predicted that it would prove to have been unnecessary, he is still not satisfied. And one of the Judges, Mr. Justice Riddell, was appointed to a very important Commission by the Liberal Government, and was at one time mentioned as a Liberal leader for Ontario."

Who Gave Authority?

"I would like to know where Mr. Hepburn and the member from Brant got the authority to shift the Liberal House leadership. Where did the extra-mural leader get the authority to appoint a new intra-mural leader? No Liberal or Progressive convention ever approved of it. Did the Liberal convention which elected Mr. Hepburn expect him to deliver the Liberals in the House over to the member from Brant with his party of five?" Mr. Wilson asked.

True democracy could not exist where Dominion or Provincial Governments exceeded their power over municipal systems, declared Mr. MacKay. "If any one of our systems goes beyond its authority, or dictates to the lesser ones, it interferes with our personal responsibilities. There never has been a time when our Legislative Assembly and local municipal governments were so interlocked as they are at present," he said. "One cannot move without interference with the other, and citizenship becomes disrupted, and people blame the various governments for reverse conditions."

Uncontrollable Taxes.

"We have some evidence of distrust in the non-payment of taxes, or of paying them under protest. One reason for this is that the major portion of our local taxes comes from a step further away from our citizens than used to be in former years. County taxes are so interlocked by the Legislative Assembly that they are mostly uncontrollable by County Councils, the very opposite from where they should come from for economy. The closer the administration of expenditures is to the people, the more cheaply always is the service."

"It is an established fact that under the past system of grants to teachers when they were underpaid by school sections, trustees raised their salaries, and it is just as true that it brought into the profession a greater supply of teachers than the law of supply and demand required. That same system was also tried on county and township roads, but had altogether a different effect. It, too, created a great army of men who gave up their farm activities and went in pursuit of higher wages. But they were supplemented by road machinery which could do cheaper work, and this great army of road builders became discontented with the drudgery of their farm work and many of them are now on relief," stated Mr. MacKay.

Mr. Seguin spent most of his time assailing Messrs. Hepburn and Nixon and asserted that they were partly responsible for the absence of Premier Henry and Provincial Treasurer Dunlop. "They were responsible in this: that they added to the burdens of men already carrying heavy responsibilities by bringing into public life a new method of attack, a campaign of vilification and abuse," he said.

"But the campaign has not been carried on in this House so much as it has been outside by the Liberal Leader and his lieutenant. Who is directing the force of this Opposition?" he asked. Mr. Sinclair might be on the Conservative benches, he said, "because that is where Mr. Hepburn would have him."

Even Mr. Nixon did not have the courage to stand up in the House and repeat some of the statements made by Mr. Hepburn, he said.