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SAVE GAS FOR WAR NEEDS

Hughes Cleaver, M.P. Speaks to House

(Continued from last week)

I now come to a subject which I hesitate to discuss, because I frankly admit that perhaps sometimes I myself may have transgressed. The hon. member for Waterloo South (Mr. Homuth), who is now looking so seriously at me, may in a measure concur in that regard. A deliberate attempt is being made at this time to stir up sectional and racial strife, to pit French Canada against English-speaking Canada. I wish to protest against this practice with all the vehemence at my command. It is selfish, it is disloyal, it is doing a lot of harm to Canada's war effort. I suggest that I on my part should search my heart and that every hon. member should search his at this time. I should ask myself: Am I doing anything at which my Conservative friends could take offence? Am I doing anything which will harm the morale of the Canadian people? If I am, then I am being disloyal to Canada. Before saying anything in this chamber or out of it I should ask myself this question: Will what I am about to say help, or will it actually harm, Canada's war effort? I am not suggesting that unfair attacks should not be answered; where the occasion demands plain speaking we should speak our minds. Perhaps in the past I have on occasions been too vehement in my views, but notwithstanding all this I say to myself and to every hon. member: think of Canada's war effort before speaking.

I freely admit that I have already dictated and thrown away two speeches for this debate, and I am not satisfied with my speech to-day; it is not good enough for the times. It is a shame that in the midst of the present life-and-death struggle we should have to take time to discuss anything but the war effort. However, during the few days that this house has been in session and throughout the country, so much has been said about the present government being a single party government, motivated by the party spirit, that I feel I should frankly express my view.

At the outbreak of the war we had in office a government that did not have a mandate from the people to carry on a war. Everyone agreed that there must be a general election, that the Canadian people had a right to elect a government to carry on the war, and that that election should take place as soon as possible. The Canadian war effort had first to be set in motion. That was done, and as soon as possible, having regard to the exigencies of the war, a general election was called.

In that election there was only one issue, namely, Canada's war effort. Both parties were sincerely and honestly in favour of an all-out war effort. Both parties were sincere and honest in agreeing that if a maximum war effort was to be made we simply had to have a united Canada; we had to forget politics until the war was over. The Conservative party thought that the best way to take politics out of the war effort was the formation of a national government composed of leading men of both parties. This suggestion had considerable merit; it was a view honestly reached by the Conservative party, and no one has any right to question their sincerity or loyalty in arriving at that decision.

The Liberal party, though seeking the same end, took a totally different view of the problem. We thought the best way to take politics out of the war effort was to divorce the war effort from government, to let the army heads run the army, the navy heads run the navy, and to produce a list of goods, we thought the best way to take politics out of Canada's war effort was to call in leading industrialists from across Canada, irrespective of political affiliations, and say to them: Look after Canada's war production.

Those two points of view, both seeking the same end, but in method as wide apart as the poles, were placed before the Canadian people. Both were eloquently argued, over the air, on the public platform and in the press. When voting day came, the Canadian people, fortunately for Canada, spoke very decisively; there was no room for doubt. The Canadian people had a right to choose the form of government they thought would be the strongest in time of war, and, rightly or wrongly, they chose a single-party government.

The promise made by the Liberal party has been carried out. I have yet to hear of one criticism, in this house or in the corridors, of political interferences in regard to any of the armed forces. I have yet to hear one criticism on the floor of this house in regard to political interference in letting a war contract. It is a well known fact that well over three-quarters of all army, navy and air force officers are Conservatives. It is well known that a considerably higher percentage than that of the dollar-a-year men in the Department of Munitions and Supply are Conservatives, and they are doing a wonderful job. Take for example, Mr. Allan Timbison, the timber controller. He comes from my home town of Burlington. He was urged to contest the 1940 election as Conservative candidate. He is to-day vice-president of the Conservative association in my riding. Will anybody suggest that he is a political appointee? And he has done a wonderful job for Canada in connection with its war effort. He has made this country a net exporter of dollars in the purchase of timber and lumber.

Every dollar's worth of goods bought for war purposes is bought on competitive tender, and in a type where competitive tender is not possible, is purchased in a businesslike manner from the source that can best supply it. Though hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent monthly, we have yet to hear of any serious misconduct or any political favouritism.

Right here, with all these facts in mind, I propose the following to minimize making the charge that this is a party government motivated by party feelings. The charge is not true. Hon. members who make such a charge are not being fair to themselves or to the Canadian people. It is harmful to our war effort to stir up in the public minds distrust of the war government. We have honestly tried to take politics out of the war effort. If some are still playing politics, I say to the opposition, denounce them; give us the particulars; let us smoke them out and punish them. So far as I am concerned I owe it to the Canadian people to let them know that I personally renounced party politics the very day war was declared. Since September, 1939, I have not made one single political appointment. At the time of the national registration, after consulting with the defeated Conservative candidate I suggested for nomination the president of the Conservative association and the president of the Liberal as-

sociation as the two key men in my riding to take the national registration. These men made fifty-fifty appointments in every ward in the riding; the entire work was done on a fifty-fifty co-operative basis, and not one man accepted one dollar for his work. The national registration in Halton county cost this country nothing except the cost of printing and advertising.

In this connection let me make a suggestion in regard to the plebiscite. Halton county is going to take the plebiscite vote in the same way; it will not cost this country one dollar in Halton county except for printing and advertising.

As I have heard over the radio and read in the press the many ill-adviced, unfair and bitter attacks which are now being made, I have asked myself this question: Do these men know that they are doing exactly what Hitler would want them to do? Just today with this idea: What would I do if I were a paid German agent hired by Hitler to try to thwart this country's war effort?

In the first place, just as soon as a campaign was launched for voluntary enlistments, I would immediately sponsor conscription. I would tell all the evils and weaknesses of voluntary enlistment, and I would be all out for conscription. Why? Not because I wanted men; not because I wanted to help the war effort, but because I wanted to harm the war effort and dry up voluntary enlistment.

In the second place, when a victory loan campaign was announced I would at once charge the government with reckless and extravagant expenditures, with throwing away money in taking a plebiscite, and so on. I would charge them with anything that would undermine public confidence in the government.

In the third place there would be only one thing I could do, other than blow up a factory. I would try deliberately to undermine public confidence in the government by bringing about disunity among the people. I would charge the government with complacency. By doing this I would hope to alienate from the government all the impulsive and restless people who are never satisfied, no matter what is being done, unless they are doing it themselves.

Then I would take the other tack. I would also charge the government with being too ruthless and too energetic in the prosecution of the war. I would charge it with interfering with business; I would charge it with doing public business by order in council. I would charge it with failing to trust the people. By doing all of these things, as a paid agent of Hitler I would hope to overthrow the government and so disturb the public mind that unity would be lost.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, is carrying a terrific load. The ministers of the five war departments are working to the extreme limit of their strength. Where, I ask, would you find a better man in Canada than Hon. J. L. Ralston, Hon. C. G. Power, Hon. Angus Macdonald, Hon. C. D. Howe and Hon. P. J. Thomson? I sometimes wonder if the Canadian people realize the load these men are carrying, and the load being carried by our Minister of Finance (Mr. Blisley), the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Galt), and every other minister of the crown.

What about this complaint about "the leadership"? What man in Canada to-day other than Mr. Mackenzie King could have organized our war effort so successfully as it has been organized? What other public man in Canada to-day holds the confidence of all groups as he does? But, Mr. Speaker, the results speak far more eloquently than I can speak, so let us look at the results. What of Canada's morale? Are the Canadian people tired of this? They are paying heavy taxes; they are making no profits; we are interfering with the private business, but notwithstanding all this what do we find instead of being tired of the war? The Canadian people to-day are demanding still greater war effort. If these results do not prove mastery leadership, then I do not know what leadership means.

The load being carried by the Prime Minister to-day in directing Canada's war effort is not by any means his sole task. It is fortunate for Canada, fortunate for the British commonwealth of nations and indeed for all the democracies of the world that at this time Canada should have as Prime Minister a personal friend of the President of the United States, a friend and foe alike agree that this fortunate circumstance has, during both peace and war, served as a valuable liaison between Great Britain and the United States. It is strange but true, Mr. Speaker, that no really great man is universally recognized as such during his lifetime. I believe history will record the fact that in our present war leader we have the greatest statesman Canada has yet produced. I do not for a moment expect my hon. friends of the opposition to concur in my views; but I do say in respect of the views they hold of the Prime Minister that he was chosen by the people of Canada to lead our war effort. And health permitting, he will lead Canada until victory is won.

Now just a word about conscription and the plebiscite, and I am through. We had conscription for ten months of the last war, and the total number of troops raised during that ten months' period was less than 85,000. If any hon. gentleman wishes to check that up I shall be glad to give him the reference. During the past seven months of this war we have had voluntary enlistments at the rate of nearly 20,000 a month. As long as voluntary enlistments can be maintained at this rate, conscription could do more harm than good to Canada's war effort. During this period when conscription is unnecessary many people are opposed to it; and I want to say that they are not all in French Canada, as some would lead us to believe.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): Then why the plebiscite?

Mr. Cleaver: If the hon. gentleman will just possess himself in patience for a moment, I am coming to that. If the time ever comes when voluntary enlistments fail to supply our needs, all Canadians, French Canadians and the British stock, will support conscription; make no mistake about that. Forcing the issue now, before it is necessary, will do untold harm. My hon. friend shakes his head and says as sincere in my views as he is in his.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): The Minister of Justice does not take that stand.

Mr. Cleaver: This may be a long war. Voluntary recruiting may become inadequate. The government realizes that the time may come in the future when conscription may be necessary. At the general election of 1940 both major parties solemnly pledged themselves against conscription. Looking to needs which may arise in the future, the government is asking the people by a plebiscite, to cancel this non-conscription pledge. This is a democratic means of seeking the cancellation of a pledge made to the electors. The pledge was given to them, and only they can release the government from it. Every loyal Canadian who wants an all-out war effort in the final analysis must support the plebiscite. The Duplessis rebellion in Quebec are opposed to any

Get Ready to buy the New Victory Bonds.

war effort at all, and of course they will vote against the plebiscite; but the loyal French Canadians and they form a large majority will carry the plebiscite in Quebec. As to the rest of Canada, there are some disgruntled politicians who wish to embarrass this government. There are some selfish business interests who do not like to pay taxes, who yearn for the excess profits which they enjoyed during the last war. These people, in baffled rage—there is nothing else to call it—today making statements of which I predict they will very soon be ashamed. The great middle class of this country will once again assert themselves, and will carry this plebiscite with a splendid majority.

The resolution I am about to read, which was passed at a caucus of Ontario Liberal members held yesterday, gives our answer to one public man in Canada to-day who thinks he is thinking but is only rearranging his grudges:

Whereas the Liberal members of the House of Commons from the province of Ontario, in caucus assembled, desire at this time to reaffirm their loyalty to and their confidence in the leadership of the Right Honourable W. L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada;

And whereas the Premier of Ontario, Mitchell F. Hepburn, for some years has directed his efforts toward embarrassing and insulting the Prime Minister of Canada;

And whereas Mitchell F. Hepburn, the Premier of Ontario, is now endeavouring to discredit and to undermine the present government of Canada by indiscriminate and ill-considered criticism of the measures taken for the effective prosecution of the war;

And whereas he is presently seeking to defeat a minister of the crown who would be helpful to the government and to the Canadian people at his critical time;

Now, therefore, the Liberal members of the House of Commons from the province of Ontario desire to re-affirm their loyalty to and their confidence in the Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King as Prime Minister of the Liberal party.

It is with regret that the said Liberal members of the House of Commons record their disapproval of the actions and the words of this man and express the belief that he no longer represents liberalism in the province of Ontario.

Mr. MacNichol: Was that endorsed by all the Ontario Liberal members in the House of Commons?

Mr. Cleaver: I cannot invite my hon. friend to caucus; I think he would be out of place. I cannot break the confidence of Mitchell F. Hepburn and leave him in suspense.

Mr. Cleaver: I cannot help thinking what a wonderful thing it would be for our country's war effort if the stephens and the Drews of this country could have a change of heart, and would use their time in coining such phrases to help instead of harm his country's war effort.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): Then why the plebiscite?

Mr. Cleaver: If the hon. gentleman will just possess himself in patience for a moment, I am coming to that. If the time ever comes when voluntary enlistments fail to supply our needs, all Canadians, French Canadians and the British stock, will support conscription; make no mistake about that. Forcing the issue now, before it is necessary, will do untold harm. My hon. friend shakes his head and says as sincere in my views as he is in his.

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Mailing List Corrected.

This week THE CHAMPION'S mailing list was corrected up to FEB. 11. We now request that ALL who have recently paid their subscription will please examine the LABEL on their paper and satisfy themselves that it is CORRECT. If an error should appear, notify us AT ONCE, when we will adjust the same. THANK YOU

Halton Garage Operators' Association

The regular monthly meeting of the Halton Branch of the Garage Operators' Association was held in the Farmer's Hall, Milton, February 3rd, at 8.30 p.m. Owing to the extreme cold weather, the attendance was small, but the members present enjoyed the program as good, if not better, than any held for some time. The meeting was opened with the President, Mr. A. C. Patterson, in the chair and who called for the minutes of the last regular meeting. The treasurer, George Dolby, then reported on the finances of the club, reporting some \$60.00 on hand. Some discussion took place re delegates to be appointed to attend the Provincial Council in 1942 but the appointments were held over to a later meeting. Accounts were read and ordered to be paid.

Eddie Edwards, salesman for Motor Magazine, called in at the meeting on his way through and was asked to address the meeting. He gave some very well chosen remarks on selling Preventive Service to the car owners. He advised that the public will have to be educated to take better care of their cars as for a long time the program as good, if not better, than any held for some time. The meeting was opened with the President, Mr. A. C. Patterson, in the chair and who called for the minutes of the last regular meeting. The treasurer, George Dolby, then reported on the finances of the club, reporting some \$60.00 on hand. Some discussion took place re delegates to be appointed to attend the Provincial Council in 1942 but the appointments were held over to a later meeting. Accounts were read and ordered to be paid.

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