

Some Ottawa Glimpses

Special Correspondence by H. F. Gadsby.

Party System vs. Coalition.

Ottawa, December 16.—The coalition talk which panic-stricken Conservatives were indulging in a fortnight ago seems to have ebbed. The stout hearts in both parties have apparently decided that it is better to stick to the good old way of doing things—namely a government that takes responsibility and an Opposition free to criticize briskly. The zealous of the Anglo-Saxon race in the party system both for the solution of intricate problems and prompt action thereon. A better method of thoroughly winnowing a question has yet to be discovered than the party debate.

It is quite true that the Borden government does not line up to its full measure of responsibility—it has distributed a considerable amount of responsibility among ninety Royal Commissions—but heaven knows there is enough left for it to be responsible for even after the Commissions are subtracted.

Paper shoes, battle chargers with the heaves, the fuse contracts, the Bertram Shell Committee, Colonel John Wesley Allison, W. F. Garland, M.P., Arthur DeWitt Foster, M.P., Camp Borden, Sam Hughes's forty per cent. tariff, an abbreviated British Preference, the high cost of living, due largely to its friends, the food monopolizers, and many other things too numerous to mention. The Borden Government does well to follow the good old British custom of taking the full blame for its crimes and not trying to share it with the Liberals. It is rather late in the day to think of immunity baths. It would take more than a coalition to wash out the Borden Government's guilty stains.

The common sense of Canadians all over the country favors the idea that when a Government makes its bed it should lie in it until it is time to get up—which in the Borden Government's case is October, 1917, or as soon before as they may find convenient. It is worth remembering right here that the Borden government may find it convenient to go to the country before next October, when its extension expires. Those who heard the debate in the House of Commons on parliamentary extension will recollect that Sir Wilfrid Laurier gave Sir Robert Borden two opportunities to declare that there would be no election during the extended period, and that Sir

Robert Borden chose on both occasions to ignore the suggestion. He did not give a direct answer, for that matter, even a tacit promise. He allowed the country at large to believe that his honor was so staunch that he would not think of having an election while the Government was on parole, so to speak, but, at the same time, he had mental reservations which he might use if necessary.

These mental reservations are now being employed, and rather cleverly, in an argument something like this: "If early in the year 1917 the Opposition does not agree to a further extension which will carry us over to October, 1918, by which time and perhaps long before, the war will be over, then we shall have to go to the country, and the Opposition will be guilty of bringing on a war-time election." Thus does sophistry weave its veil of deceit around the fact that the Borden Government's idea of a coalition is something to postpone its own doom while at the same time it defers the bright prospects of the Liberals.

Of course nobody will be responsible for a war-time election except the Borden Government, which issues the writs. It is a responsibility which it was not particularly anxious to avoid in the fall of 1914, when Mr. Rogers was yammering for the verdict of the people. He was not the only cabinet minister who was yammering at that time. They were all keen on getting a snap verdict that would put them out of the people's reach for five years, and the thing that prevented them was not the fine scruples they posed as possessing, but a gentle, albeit firm, intimation from the financial institutions of Canada that they could use their vote and influence against the Borden government if it attempted an election at a time when everybody was in a blue funk and the business of the country had the "jumps."

That feeling has disappeared long ago. Everybody knows who will win the war now—though it will be a work of time. Confidence has been restored, and business is going ahead as usual. Moreover—the people have grown used to war-time elections, there having been five already since the war started, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Manitoba, and British Columbia—and the chances are that they would not object to another, especially if it threw

an incompetent government out and put a good one in.

At all events the people are not thinking much about coalition just now. Those who have spoken for it may be divided broadly into three classes—disinterested altruists who make the mistake that a coalition is doubly wise, embittered persons who were not able to do what they liked with one party and would consequently bedevil both, and wily schemers who would besmirch the Liberal party with the Borden government's lurid past and its still more lurid future. None of these people deserve any sympathy except the disinterested altruists who really think that coalitions are a good thing.

The advisability of coalitions is a moot question. What has happened in England since the war started is far from proving that coalitions are all that they are cracked up to be. Somebody—I think it was Sir John Willison, said—that government by coalition in England has been a government by crises. It is a good saying and worthy of all acceptance. It is almost good enough to have been said by Lord Northcliffe as by Sir John—it sounds like him. The British coalition government has developed neither the wisdom, the strength, the courage nor the prompt decision that was expected of it. Every month has seen a new face, perhaps two new faces or more in the Cabinet. Resignations and rumors of resignation are the order of the day. Half the time, according to its critics, the government totters and the other half potters. This is probably overdrawing it, but it indicates the British frame of mind toward coalitions. Some fruits of coalition may be mentioned—the bungle at Antwerp, the disaster in Gallipoli, the vacillating policy toward Greece. The Tories who don't mind the voters being shot, pulling one way, and the Liberals, who would save the citizen army for another election, pulling another.

As a matter of fact England is in sight of a new political party—young blood and the democracy—and a general election that will put the old stagers out. The coalition government would never have lasted as long as it has if Premier Asquith had not been at the head of it, an imperial harmonizer, a trained placater with a large experience of driving wild horses for some seven years. In short, Premier Asquith has succeeded in keeping a coalition government together for no other reason than that he was a seasoned coalitioner long before the war started. One needs to have practice to do what Premier Asquith has done. And even at that the coalition experiment is in sight of failure—and Englishmen are looking again to strong party government as the remedy.

Excuse for coalition there certainly was in England—its closeness to the war, the imminence of the danger. On the other hand, Canada is three thousand miles of blue water away from the struggle, which should be far enough off to insure clear thinking and both parties are united to do anything that will win the war. There is no necessity for a coalition to placate the ruffled feel-

ings of a privileged class, like the English aristocracy, which objected to paying for a war that they didn't help to manage. Over here rich and poor, we all do our bit and say not a word about it. If the government fails to make good, so much worse for Government. We are far enough away from shot and shell to change the Government without feeling the jar.

Moreover, if Premier Asquith—the Sledge Hammer is what they call him—is not able to make his coalition toe the mark what success do you think Premier Borden would have at a similar job? Premier Borden who, as Sir Sam has revealed, can't keep a Cabinet all of one party complexion from gouging each other's eyes out! There have been three coalitions in the history of Confederation, the coalition Cabinet clergy reserves, the coalition to carry Confederation, the coalition cabinet that put the machinery of Confederation into operation—and Sir John Macdonald was in all of them. Smooth and skilful compromiser, as he was, jolly, good fellow and busy mixer, Sir John Macdonald found that coalitions were the devil's own job. Get Sir Joseph Pope's life of him, read Sir John's remarks on coalitions and then ask yourself what kind of fish Premier Borden would make of it.

H. F. GADSBY.

Odd and Interesting Facts.

Hamburg has an experimental plant that obtains power from the ebb and flow of North Sea tides. Russia's population will be 600,000,000 by the end of this century if it maintains its present rate of increase.

To prevent skidding and slipping in damp weather the streets of San Francisco are sanded by a machine mounted on a motor truck. The net investment of the United States reclamation service at the beginning of the present fiscal year was approximately \$100,000,000.

The first sewing machine of which there is authentic record was patented in England in 1755, eighty-one years before the first American machine.

The Egyptian vulture was the chief scavenger of the land of Pharaoh.

Cost of government meat inspection in the United States is said to amount to 4 cents per capita annually.

New Fur Tams.

New fur tams which the wholesale fur people are showing suggest the four-and-twenty blackbirds baked into a pie of the nursery rhyme. They are in the stage of when the pie was opened the birds began to sing. In the centre of the top of each fur tam are set a number of little ermine tails, the black tips, like heads, standing out in all directions. The tams are of moleskin, some with a white head band; beaver; and of mixed furs, but all with the little ermine tails.

Some men are born small, some shrink and some others never find out how small they really are.

Letters To The Editor

The High Cost of Living and the Remedy.

Kingston, Dec. 15. (To the Editor): The Government and the City are both playing into the hands of the companies who are making millions out of contracts for war supplies. Is it not enough that we are giving the best blood of our dear ones without having to give our last dollar for the necessities of life. In order to keep pouring it into the coffers of our multi-millionaires packing house companies for instance, the Government passes a measure prohibiting dressed meats from coming from one Province to another without the Government stamp. Why—to protect the packing house. The stock must come alive, be killed by the packing houses and sold by the packing houses, with all the extra packing house expenses and profits attached before it reaches the consumer.

Let us get back, at least until after the war, to the old times, and allow everyone to ship their goods to market to be sold in open competition. We have our City Inspectors to look after the interest of the consumer. How long will the public be buncoed with the Ad. "Our goods are all Government stamped" etc. etc. Why, don't they tell the public that they are paying from 2 to 5 cents per lb., extra for the stamp. How did we live before we had the Government stamp? Our children had enough to eat then of good wholesome food, better than it is now, as it was killed at the barn door in its prime, whereas now it is brought hundreds of miles in cars full of fever, penned up three or four days after landing before being slaughtered, with all the consequential expenses having to be added to the cost to the consumer.

Let the public wake up, and dictate to their servants, the City Fathers and the members of Parliament that they wish to have something to say on these questions—vital questions surely. Today they are agitating to still further strangle the public by having a law passed that no stocks shall be allowed to come to the city except alive to be killed at the abattoirs. How long will the public stand for such daylight robbery: surely not long after getting the key to the problem. The retail butchers are being squeezed to death by these same interests, while the public have been blaming them for charging such prices; half of them are not making ends meet but hoping against hope that something will be done to relieve the pressure. Success in the past, however, has so strengthened the nerve of the big interests as to demand still more. Surely they are overstepping the mark now.

FAIR PLAY

All our thoughts are original—either with ourselves or others. Some beauty is skin deep and some is put on with enamel.

Doctor Tells How To Strengthen Eyesight 50 per Cent. In One Week's Time In Many Instances

A Free Prescription You Can Have Filled and Use at Home.

Philadelphia, Pa. Do you wear glasses? Are you a victim of eye strain or other eye weaknesses? If so, you will be glad to know that according to Dr. Lewis there is real hope for you. Many whose eyes were failing say they have had their eyes restored through the principle of this wonderful free prescription. One man says, after trying it: "I was almost blind; could not see to read at all. Now I can read everything without any glasses and my eyes do not water any more. At night they would pain dreadfully; now they feel fine all the time. It was like a miracle to me." A lady who used it says: "The atmosphere seemed hazy with or without glasses, but after using this prescription for fifteen days everything seems clear. I can now read fine print without glasses." It is believed that thousands who wear glasses can now discard them in a reasonable time and multitudes more will be able to strengthen their eyes so as to be spared the trouble and expense of ever getting glasses. Eye troubles of many descriptions may be wonder-

fully benefited by following the simple rules. Here is the prescription: Go to any active drug store and get a bottle of Bon-Opto tablets. Drop one Bon-Opto tablet in a fourth of a glass of water and allow to dissolve. With this liquid bathe the eyes two to four times daily. You should notice your eyes clear up perceptibly right from the start and inflammation will quickly disappear. If your eyes are bothering you even a little, take steps to save them now before it is too late. Many hopelessly blind might have been saved if they had cared for their eyes in time.

Note: Another prominent physician to whom the above article was submitted, said: "Bon-Opto is a very remarkable remedy. Its constituent ingredients are well known to eminent eye specialists and widely prescribed by them. The manufacturers guarantee it to strengthen eyesight 50 per cent. in one week's time in many instances or refund the money. It can be obtained from any good druggist and is one of the very few preparations I feel should be kept on hand for regular use in almost every family." Sold by Geo. W. Mohr.

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