

Record Of Failure And Incompetency

Trenchant Review Of Saunders Government's Mismanagement By Dr. W. J. McMillan In Budget Debate.

Following is the speech delivered at the Budget debate by Dr. W. J. P. McMillan, senior Conservative member for Fifth Queens, Dr. McMillan followed Hon. Dr. McNeill in the debate. He began his address on Thursday evening, April 3rd:

Mr. Speaker: I do not intend to be like my hon. friend from Summerside. About two and a half hours ago he intimated that he was going to be brief, that no man should take more than forty minutes to address the House. I do not intend to be as brief as he promised to be. He said he was going to be brief, and he was not brief; which is very typical of the hon. gentleman. He is generally saying one thing and doing another. It is very hard to say anything to him, because whenever he makes a speech, especially when he says something that should be answered, he very conveniently absents himself; which is probably his wisest course.

The hon. gentleman talked this evening about a diatribe that appeared against him in The Guardian. Well if he wants an example of a diatribe, he need only consult his own notes. I do not know whether he expanded them or elaborated on them as he read along; I am inclined to believe that he stuck to them very closely. He has the reputation, Mr. Speaker, that whether he speaks on the Draft address or on the budget, his remarks are the least in keeping with each. The hon. gentleman likes to talk Dominion politics. He went back this evening to 1922, when he led a party from the progressive town of Summerside to Ottawa, and by his influence succeeded in getting a \$10,000 wharf for the Prince County capital. He should have told us afterwards that he was largely instrumental in providing a vacancy for the present Premier of Canada

and in getting him a fine safe: Liberal seat for a time.

After that, when there was a vacancy in the Red Chamber, my hon. friend from Summerside was very insistent that the soft red seat should be given to him. And he was sadly disappointed, Mr. Speaker, because there was a smarter man than he in Summerside—the gentleman who used to occupy the seat that I now occupy, and who is now the Senator for Prince County.

Van Rehearsing

My hon. friend must have groomed himself for that position, because on every occasion, when he begins to talk in this House, his whole subject is Dominion politics. He has not even the modesty of my hon. friend from Montague, (Hon. Dr. Grant) who had the honor of being nominated to contest a riding in this province in the interests of Liberalism; or of my hon. colleague from the city of Charlottetown, (Mr. McLure) who also had had the honor conferred upon him, and those are honors, Mr. Speaker, in being selected to contest a Dominion seat in the interests of either party. My hon. friend from Montague, in speaking the other day, said he was not going to talk Dominion politics, because he didn't know enough about them. But no such feeling of modesty deterred my hon. friend from Summerside. He never got a nomination in a Dominion election; but he is quite willing to come here and discuss the record of the MacKenzie King Government. Perhaps, after all he is wise in doing so, because the record of the Government of which he is a member is so barren that he could find little excuse for prolonging his remarks; and by taking the course that he adopted his own discrepancies are more likely to pass unnoticed.

The hon. gentleman talked about the tariff. He compared the raising and the lowering of the tariff to the motions of the derrick that is raising steel girders on the site of the new hotel in Charlottetown. He says that if the Conservatives come into power they will raise the tariff just like that derrick; but the proper way is not to do that but to adopt the Liberal method and lower the tariff. Well, if they use the derrick down there on the Liberal plan they will never get the structure erected very high. (Applause.)

The hon. member from Summerside made another remarkable statement, that there was no hard coal in this country. He likes also to get at the millionaires in the Conservative party. "Me and Bennett," he says. The peculiar style of grammar that is used on that side of the House is evidently affecting the hon. gentleman, and probably we shall get more expressions of that sort from them before the session is over.

An Expert in Diatribe

But the chief subject of the hon. member's address seemed to be The Guardian. He was very violent in his comments, but not more violent than he was a few years ago, when he used expressions about one of the writers on that paper which only the sanctity of his House prevented from resulting in an action of criminal libel. He wound up his discourse this evening by saying that The Guardian probably caters to the tastes of its customers. He rather complimented the readers of that newspaper, in my opinion.

Of course, the hon. member from Summerside could not keep away from this subject of Prohibition. He spoke about those disturbances in the jails in a way that would imply they were ordinary occurrences.

"Why," he said, "in Auburn Penitentiary, in the United States, they had a revolution; they had practically the same thing in Toronto; so why shouldn't it be so in Prince Edward Island?" There was no reason, so far as the hon. gentleman could see, why Prince Edward Island and especially the progressive town of Summerside, the birthplace of this famous system of Saunders Prohibition, should not be as prominent as the penitentiary towns of the great republic to the South of us. He brought in Toronto, of course, because Toronto is under Government control. The detectives in that city have arrested all but one of the parties concerned in that escapade; so it seems that they succeeded a little

better than the detective that was brought down here by the Government of which the hon. gentleman is a member, and paid \$1400 for services which did not result in the arrest of any one, nor even in finding out the cause of the fire for which he was specifically engaged. The only thing it resulted in was the arrest of the agent himself. He got into trouble, but the other fellows escaped.

SCORES MISSTATEMENT

The hon. member declared, among other things, that the Attorney General has been doing his work so well that there are no longer any criminal cases in this Province. He said that at the recent sittings of the Supreme Court white gloves were presented to the presiding Judge, and that the papers found fault with this. I suppose he was referring again to The Guardian. Well, now, d'd it? I do not know what column of The Guardian he found that in. I read The Guardian myself, and I know that they found no fault with the fact that gloves were presented to the judge; but I do know that there was a letter written by an ex-Judge, complaining that it was not right, that the Sheriff should be put to the expense of buying white gloves for the Supreme Court judges. If the hon. gentleman will go and talk over the matter of white gloves and their expense with the gentleman who has retired from the Queens County Court Judgeship probably he will be better informed the next time he endeavors to criticize The Guardian for making such a statement.

HON. DR. MCNEILL: I didn't say it was The Guardian.

DR. MCMILLAN: What did you say?

HON. DR. MCNEILL: I said a paper. I didn't mention any paper.

DR. MCMILLAN: What paper was it, then?

(No answer.)

DR. MCMILLAN: That's one insinuation that we have nailed down. (Applause.) He said, also, that the members of the Opposition were the chief aiders and abettors of the law violators in this Province.

HON. DR. MCNEILL: I didn't say the like.

DR. MCMILLAN: I took your words down as you said them. You said they were aiding and abetting the law violators of the Province and that their press was doing the same.

HON. DR. MCNEILL: I didn't say the like; I said the supporters—I didn't say the members.

DR. MCMILLAN: What is the difference between the "supporters" of the Opposition and the members of the Opposition?

HON. DR. MCNEILL: There is a lot of difference.

DR. MCMILLAN: So on this side of the House we had better close our mouths and not make any criticism because, if we do, we are "aiding and abetting the violators of the law in this province, according to my hon. friend from Summerside! Well, I want to tell the hon. gentleman this, that we are not trying to aid and abet the worst law violators in this Province. In other words we are not trying to aid and abet the Government of this Province, who are the chief violators of the law. Those gentlemen who are sitting on the Government benches are violating the laws of this Province; they have laws on the statute books which they violate every day. And we are not saying anything to aid and abet them, you may be sure! But we are trying to give honest criticism, in order to point out where the trouble lies, and to assist in carrying out the laws of the Province. (Applause.)

The hon. member from Summerside was not content to attack the Opposition press. He had to reflect on members of previous Legislatures in this Province. He has been sitting there, he said, for four weeks, and during the time that this House has been in session he has not seen anyone under the influence of liquor. Isn't that a wonderful thing? He was surprised that we were not drunk. Did he think we were like the inmates in the Summerside jail? But he said, you couldn't say that about the members of this Legislature if you went back one hundred years, nor even if you went back a few years. That is pretty high class criticism, isn't it? If he wanted to reflect on the personal habits of the members of the Legislature, he might have confined himself to the present generation.

The hon. member talked about legalized beer sales in other provinces how they had to legalize the business in order to compete with the bootleggers; and he got back, at last to the Summerside "underworld." That was what he called it. It would be a good thing for the hon. gentleman if he could legalize that "speakeasy" in Summerside, that we have heard so much about in this House.

HON. DR. MCNEILL: It is closed up.

DR. MCMILLAN: It was closed up on the day that the Premier delivered his budget speech, probably as a special tribute to the Prohibition law; and it was opened the next morning. Closed for one day, and reopened?

HON. DR. MCNEILL: No s.r.
DR. MCMILLAN: Yes sir. So much for the speak-easy in Summerside. My hon. friend professed to know something about the poor fellow that was dismissed from the Summerside Police Force and was taken on as a Prohibition Inspector. The hon. gentleman wouldn't recommend this man to the Prohibition Commission, he says, because he never interfered with anything like that. Well, there are some stories to the contrary, that he has been very fond of "interfering and telling officers of the law" if they do such a thing, what is liable to happen.

DOGGING THE ISSUE

We all know something about the Prohibition Act under the present Government. We know just how much it is enforced. My hon. friend from Rustico (Hon. Mr. LePage) spent a lot of time on this subject this afternoon. He took us to British Columbia to Saskatchewan, to Ontario, to Quebec, to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; to all those provinces that are going to Hell just as fast as they can go, according to his ideas; but when it came to Prince Edward Island, why, the hon. gentleman never even landed at Rustico. He left the Island absolutely alone. He was not as successful in landing here as many of the rum cargoes were that landed right in his own district. (Applause.)

The hon. member from Summerside boasted of the progress we were making under Prohibition. He made a comparison, also, with reference to the Opposition which I could not quite catch; it was something about a child that was not recognized by either its father or mother; something unusual in his experience. I think it was Government Control, that he was referring to. It certainly was not Prohibition, because if it was Prohibition the child would surely make to the hon. gentlemen from Summerside as its father, or would make to the hon. gentlemen from Rustico as the mother. (Laughter.) And I am sure neither the father nor the mother of the Prohibition child would repudiate it.

That is the mythical child. But I will tell the hon. member from Summerside about children that he does not know anything—not mythical children but real, flesh-and-blood children. Those are the children that are left, helpless and uncomfortable,



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