

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1909.

MR. BORDEN AS AN OPPOSITION LEADER.

Of the leaders of the Opposition in the Canadian Parliament Alexander Mackenzie was the first. He had a difficult task from the fact that the elements with which he had to deal were unacquainted with each other and had little natural cohesion.

Sir John A. Macdonald was thereafter leader of the Opposition for five years and they were years of strenuous and aggressive activity. Backed by able lieutenants, with Sir Charles Tupper among them, and with the cry of a National Policy for Canada, he stormed the citadel of power and regained the political ascendancy which he held till his death.

Mr. Mackenzie again became leader of the Opposition but at the desire of his party made way for Edward Blake in 1880. He in turn was succeeded by Mr. Laurier in 1887, who after nine years of arduous work, captured the Premiership in 1896. While leading his party in Opposition he was successively opposed to Sir John Macdonald, Sir John Abbott, Sir John Thompson, Sir Mackenzie Bowell and Sir Charles Tupper.

Robert Laird Borden was elected leader of the Conservative party early in 1901, and has held the position of Opposition leader longer than any other man since the Dominion was formed, with the single exception of Sir Wilfrid Laurier. And he is now a close second to that distinguished leader in his term of office as opposition chief. He is now near the beginning of his tenth year at the head of the Conservative party.

One thing is certain—he has not yet

led his party to victory. The Liberal majority in the Commons, which was 34 in 1896, 53 in 1900, 64 in 1904 was 48 after the general election of 1908. Under such conditions there is a natural disposition in the Opposition party to now become impatient, and to consider rightly or wrongly, as the Liberal party did during its long term in the cold shade, whether a change of leadership might not lead to better fortune.

At least in the opinion of a good many members of the Conservative party, Mr. Borden is not a quite ideal leader. He is admittedly an able and an honorable public man. But he is not magnetic and he lacks the aggressive spirit of the greater popular leaders. And he has made mistakes. It was a mistake to consent to the salary grab. It was a mistake to accept a salary for himself in connection with that questionable transaction. It was a mistake at least a tactical one, to swallow the Government's navy policy at a gulp.

In these matters Mr Borden seems to have given more general satisfaction to the ministerial party than to many of his own party. The latter have little hope that he can lead them to victory while Sir Wilfrid Laurier lives and he is still as vigorous as ever. Forceful and trenchant opposition has been seldom more needed at Ottawa, while Mr Borden seems unequal to the task and yet the Conservative party has not a better man in its ranks in the federal arena. That fact alone may keep him in the leadership until the next election, but not longer according to the present outlook.

IS OTTAWA UNDULY FAVORED BY THE GOVERNMENT?

A section of the Conservative press contends that this is so, and for the corrupt purpose of influencing the electors there to support the Government. This does not apply to the original grant of \$60,000 a year for beautifying and adorning the national capital, to which both parties were agreed. But now this grant is to be increased to \$100,000 a year for ten years, and this promise is made on the eve of a by-election in Ottawa.

It is also proposed to make a further grant of \$15,000 a year to the city, in consideration of which the city agrees not to tax the income of the civil servants there including the ministers of the crown. In other words the country is to pay the taxes

of the Government officials, provided they live in Ottawa. This does not apply to the Government officials who live elsewhere than in Ottawa. They must pay their own taxes.

But this is not the whole story. There were some complications before the general election of a year ago. Ottawa sends two members to Parliament. Two Liberal candidates were duly nominated, but for some reason both were induced to retire and Sir Wilfrid Laurier and another were chosen in their stead. Then a promise was made to increase the salaries of the civil servants in Ottawa. (They have votes) This has since been carried out and these favored officials are each getting \$150 to \$200 a year more than before.

Sir Wilfrid and his Liberal colleague were both elected in Ottawa by good majorities, the Premier being also elected for Quebec East, his old seat, which latter he decides to retain. That makes the vacancy of one seat in Ottawa. The Conservative contention is that the increase of pay to the officials a year ago, the now promised increase in the grant to Ottawa from \$60,000 to \$100,000, and the paying of the civil servants' taxes are mainly election bribes pure and simple. This may be a partisan view, but the case seems to be one calling for explanation and defence.

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THE BRITISH BUDGET PASSED.

LONDON, Nov 5.—The House of Commons passed the third reading of the Finance Bill by 397 to 149.

The scene in the House was a memorable one. Seldom has there been a larger attendance of Members and Peers, and the diplomatic galleries were crowded to their utmost capacity.

Chancellor Lloyd-George, Premier Asquith and Balfour, leader of the Opposition, all spoke during the evening, and tense excitement prevailed throughout.

All present appeared incensed with historic character of occasion.

Premier Asquith, closing debate, said it was incumbent upon those who objected to the Government's taxes to provide some alternative scheme to meet the Nation's necessities. Where was this scheme? he asked. Sooner or later Mr. Balfour must show his hand, and it would have to be a hand that would set the game of the tariff reformers.

The Government might well rest themselves in patience. There were only two issues before the House: Budget or Tariff Reform.

The Division was then taken and the announcement of the vote, showing the Government's majority to be larger than was expected, was greeted with long Ministerial cheers.

Bill formerly passed, on 1st reading in the House of Lords today. Debate on second reading which will determine its fate will begin Nov 22nd.

SHRUBB TO THE TRACK AGAIN.

TORONTO, November 4.—All Shrubbs is at his home here for a few days. He has races in view at Covalt, Fort William and elsewhere after which he will return to the Pacific coast to keep the engagements which were cancelled when his troublesome leg played out. Shrubbs hasn't done any running for six weeks and feels fit now. He wants to meet Hans Holmer in a series of races at ten, twelve and fifteen miles.

THE WAR GAME IN THE CHOIR.

The high soprano started out, With might her rush to stem And with a battle-cry advanced Upon Jerusalem.

The alto met her on the road, Engaged her in a "scrap," The tenor on the double-quick Came up to fill the gap.

Around the theatre of war The steady basso boomed; Then all of them fell to at once, Jerusalem was doomed.

The city was about to fall, Her glory proud to doff, When higher powers intervened And called the fighters off. —New York Sun.

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