

Four Federal Ministers To Resign From Cabinet If Duplessis Party Wins

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Quebec Election is "Act of Sabotage," Lapointe Says - Fears Seeds of Division Sown

Rt. Hon. Ernest Lapointe, Federal Minister of Justice, held the spotlight to-day in the centre of Quebec's political stage as leaders of the three provincial parties prepared to resume their campaigns after the Thanksgiving holiday.

Mr. Lapointe followed Works Minister P. J. A. Cardin into the fight with a broadcast address from Ottawa last night in which he said that victory for the Union Nationale Government in the Oct. 25 elections would be the cue for him and his fellow ministers from Quebec to resign from the Dominion cabinet.

Mr. Lapointe, who will be followed into the campaign by Postmaster-General C. G. Power, charged that Premier Duplessis asked the Quebec electorate for a verdict against the Dominion Government in a "definite and clear-cut vote of want of confidence." He labelled the election a "national act of sabotage," and claimed that "methods of gangsters" were being practised in the campaign.

"LIKE DRUNKEN SAILORS."

The Minister of Justice challenged Mr. Duplessis to present a true picture of the situation. Mr. Lapointe said the real reason for the election was the unfortunate financial position of the province. He accused the Union Nationale Government of spending provincial funds "like drunken sailors."

He said the campaign already had "sown the seeds of conflict and division which may have irreparable consequences." While elsewhere in Canada, spiritual values had been placed at the service of the state, in Quebec an election took the state to task.

To a Duplessis charge that a "vote for Lapointe is a vote for conscription," the Minister replied that he opposed conscription now as he had in 1917. Mr. Lapointe replied to another Duplessis accusation that provincial autonomy was threatened by declaring that he always had been an upholder of provincial autonomy.

The Cabinet member expressed confidence that Quebec would not "render a verdict which will be acclaimed in Berlin and Moscow on election night."

DUPLESSIS TO SPEAK.

Premier Duplessis is scheduled to speak to-night at a rally at Sherbrooke, where Hon. J. S. Bourque, Lands and Forests Minister, is seeking re-election.

Adelard Godbout, Liberal leader, who made a whirlwind tour of the Lake St. John district Saturday and Sunday, spent yesterday in his home constituency of Ileslet, where he conferred with his organizers. This afternoon he is slated to address a meeting at St. Prosper in Dorchester County.

The Action Libérale Nationale chief, Paul Gouin, will inaugurate his Montreal campaign with a north-end rally to-morrow night. He has held only one public meeting so far, at l'Assomption, where he was invited to present himself as a candidate.

The Union Nationale and the Liberals are moving almost neck and neck in the selection of candidates for the 85 constituencies to be contested in the election. The government has named 70 candidates and the Liberals 69. Thirty-four A.L.N. color-bearers have been named so far. Besides an Independent Conservative, there are also a National candidate and a representative of the C.C.F.

Says Shameful Lies Are Campaign Basis

"Cowardice on my part would be to remain in the cabinet in spite of Quebec's wishes," Mr. Lapointe said in his address. "I repeat it. If the people of the province prove by their votes that they believe the atrocious calumnies and the shameful lies which are the basis and substance of Mr. Duplessis' campaign, how could we be expected to continue to represent them and to speak for them at the council of the nation? I leave to my Quebec fellow-countrymen the responsibility of this important decision and I will accept it.

"But I have faith in my province. I am confident that it will not render a verdict that will be acclaimed in Berlin and Moscow on election night."

(The three other Quebec cabinet ministers are Postmaster-General Power, Works Minister Cardin and Hon. Raoul Dandurand, minister without portfolio and government leader in the Senate).

APPEALS TO REASON

"Nazi and Communist agents have stirred up dissension in all the countries of America. Quebec will not allow itself to be influenced by such propaganda.

"By your verdict I will abide," Mr. Lapointe concluded his address.

Mr. Lapointe said he wished to appeal to the heart, conscience and reason of Quebec. His long mandate, 36 years, as a member of parliament relieved his speech of the nature of a personal appeal. He was performing his duty only.

Canada entered the war willingly as a free nation to bring her support to the two great peoples that gave her life and liberty and whose existence was the guarantee of world order, he said. Canada fought with them against Nazism and Bolshevism, "those two monstrous ideologies." The battle against them was one for civilization.

Neutrality for Canada was impossible. It would mean Canada's harbors would be closed to the armed ships of Britain, British sailors seeking refuge in Canada would be interned. There would be armed struggle against the soldiers and sailors of the King if they wished to violate our neutrality.

"I ask you in all sincerity: Is there a single one of my compatriots who believes that such a state of affairs is possible?"

NATIONAL SABOTAGE

The last word in any policy rested with necessity. In Canada compromise was necessary. French Canada respected the wishes of the Anglo-Saxon peoples in Canada and they in turn respected Quebec's opposition to conscription.

"It is to that stand that we won the opinion of Parliament and it is in that way we maintained Canadian union," he stated. "Our people everywhere loyally accepted the effort. It refused to accept as a policy in international relations the selfish words spoken by Cain: 'I am not my brother's keeper.'

"They realized that Hitler's barbarism, broken treaties, sacred pledges trampled underfoot constituted threats to world civilization.

the repercussion of which would not fail to reach us."

Canada prayed for the re-establishment of peace and justice, he said. "But in Quebec, Mr. Duplessis has ordered an election! And what an election! A fight in which he already has sown the seeds of conflict and division which may have irreparable consequences. Elsewhere all spiritual values have been put at the service of the state. In Quebec, an election takes the state to task.

"At a time when the public must be reassured Mr. Duplessis strives to frighten them. This electoral adventure is an act of national sabotage. Disunion has already crept into his own cabinet. How can he ignore the effect his words and actions will have elsewhere?"

His Only Contribution Is "Weekly Outburst"

Mr. Duplessis said he was out to defend provincial autonomy. But Quebec knew that he, Mr. Lapointe has been during all his parliamentary life a champion of provincial autonomy. As recently as 1935, he had challenged federal legislation on the ground it infringed provincial autonomy.

The Privy Council subsequently upheld this stand in regard to half dozen "extremely important social measures" enacted by the Benne administration. Against these measures Mr. Duplessis, though Conservative leader in Quebec, never protested.

The Quebec Premier refused to co-operate with the Royal Commission on federal-provincial relations though it was concerned with financial relations between federal and provincial governments.

"The only co-operation we have received from him in the past three years has been a weekly outburst in a press interview every Monday," Mr. Lapointe said.

The Quebec Government had not co-operated with Ottawa in respect to unemployment. Letters from the Minister of Labor went unanswered for months. Quebec delayed negotiation of an agreement.

POINTS TO ONTARIO

Mr. Duplessis complained bitterly of the War Measures Act. He never complained of it before the present election though it was enacted unanimously in 1914. One of Mr. Duplessis' ministers, Hon. Thoma Chapais, also a member of the Senate, supported all measures enacted at the September session of the present Parliament.

"All the other provinces have accepted the war measures, promised their co-operation and have given it loyally. The Premier of Ontario Mr. Hepburn, has come forward generously extending his hand to the Prime Minister of Canada and placing at the disposal of the Dominion Government all the resources of Ontario.

"By contrast, Mr. Duplessis chooses to call an election."

It was claimed by Mr. Duplessis that the Federal Foreign Exchange Control was a measure of centralization and assimilation and was a reason for an election.

"I do not hesitate to say that the true reason of this election is the unfortunate financial situation in which his government finds itself. They have spent provincial funds like drunken sailors." The funded debt of the province had increased from \$149,746,000 on June 30, 1936, to \$285,000,576 on March 31 last.

CREDIT WRECKED

A few years ago Quebec's credit was the best of all Canadian provinces, Mr. Lapointe said. To-day the Quebec Government had to go out to Canada to float a loan and "to accept the unbelievable provision that the principle and interest of its bonds shall be payable in United States or Canadian funds, at the discretion of the bondholders. This could be costly with United States funds at a premium.

"I challenge Mr. Duplessis to give the electors a true picture of the situation. I ask him to state, among other things, how many million dollars in unpaid warrants are in the hands of contractors for provincial works who have not yet been paid in cash. I also ask him to state what amount he will actually require to meet his commitments between now and the end of the current year.

"Since autonomy has been made an issue, allow me to point out that there is no surer means for a province to lose her autonomy than to be incapable of meeting her obligations and to find herself in a position verging on bankruptcy."

It was not true that the Foreign Exchange Control Board prevented Mr. Duplessis obtaining other funds from the United States. The United States' Neutrality Act prevented it.

Terms Paul Gouin "Great Blunderer"

Complaint was also heard from Mr. Duplessis concerning censorship. Censorship was necessary in time of war. All nations used it.

"This measure applies equally to everyone," Mr. Lapointe said. "The speech I am delivering at this very moment was submitted to the censorship bureau."

Mr. Duplessis' refusal to submit a text to the censors before delivering a radio address was "mere childishness." The speech of Paul Gouin leading the L'Action Libérale Nationale party, a few days ago showed that censorship did not hamper criticism of the Dominion Government or its members.

"Allow me to say a few words with regard to Mr. Gouin, the great blunderer. He shoved Mr. Duplessis into power unwittingly, and just as unwittingly he is now endeavoring to keep him there. Fortunately, the utter insignificance of his movement renders him (Mr. Gouin) harmless."

Never before had Quebec played a more important part in the councils of the nation.

"Far from being assimilators, my colleagues from Quebec and I have acted as collaborators and associates. We have cultivated the friendship of our colleagues from every province and we have obtained that which was ever beyond the reach of insulters and bullies. Our mother tongue, the French language, has never occupied a more honored position than at present."

CONSCRIPTION ISSUE

It was a "fantastic assertion" by Mr. Duplessis that a vote for Godbout (Adelard Godbout, Quebec Liberal Leader) and for Lapointe would be a vote for conscription. In the first Great War, Mr. Lapointe had strongly supported the government's war efforts until 1917, at which time he fought with all his soul and might against conscription. Mr. Duplessis was not at his side.

"I am opposed to conscription to-day just as I was then," Mr. Lapointe said.

that I would not be a member of any government which imposed conscription and that I would never support such an administration. The Prime Minister has stated that the present government would never resort to conscription."

Mr. Lapointe said that he believed he had persuaded his English-speaking fellow-citizens that Canadian unity demanded the nation refrain from compulsory overseas service.

"Mr. Duplessis says that we are standing for conscription. You know that this is not true. He knows that it is not true. We are the bulwark standing between you and conscription. We are the wall protecting you and even those who are insulting us in the ranks of Mr. Duplessis' army."

FRENCH ARE ENLISTING

Mr. Lapointe said he wished his compatriots to be treated as equals and they were. A French-Canadian was a deputy minister of militia. A French-Canadian was in command of Montreal military district.

"When one recalls the last war and the treatment that was meted out to us, it seems to me that the importance of the recent changes cannot fail to be recognized. Furthermore, as you know, our young men

have enlisted, even enthusiastically, and recruiting has been going on in a more than satisfactory way."

Did not Mr. Duplessis see that "his insults, his language, his vituperation are the best arguments that can be used by advocates of compulsory service, of conscription? Defending a cause in such a way is betraying it, indeed."

Attempts to break Canadian unity were "fratricidal and criminal."

"We must have tolerance and mutual respect. Such is the necessary discipline that should be maintained through the loyal will of all Canadians. This firm belief has compelled me to take up Mr. Duplessis' challenge which is fraught with danger. He is asking you for a verdict against us, a definite and clear cut vote of want of confidence."

#147 was European 1939

Canada parliament cabinet Lapointe