THE LABOUR PARTY IN PARLIAMENT

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THE Labour Party in Parliament is small. Of that there can be no doubt. Its members joked about its smallness, publicly as well as privately, during last session. But, on the other hand, it is the first real Labour Party that the Parliament of Canada has known.

There have been Labour members before, but they were in Parliament one at a time, and they did not impress themselves on the House of Commons as in any special way representative. I have personally watched the careers of two or three of them. The late Ralph Smith of Nanaimo, whose widow is now a member of the British Columbia Legislature, came to Ottawa first as a Liberal, later as a "Lib.-Lab.", and still later as a Liberal again. He had the labouring man's point of view, but he worked closely with the Liberal government of the day, and was essentially a Liberal. Alphonse Verville of Montreal was elected in the first instance in opposition to a Liberal who ran as "the Laurier candidate", but in his second campaign he was the "regular" Liberal, and an "independent" Liberal had the party machine against him. A. W. Puttee of Winnipeg, who was another of the individual Labour members of Parliament, ran a short time ago in the Manitoba provincial elections as a Progressive, and against Labour candidates.

By reason of the paucity of its membership, the Labour Party at the opening of its career underwent a development that does not often happen to a party except in a cataclysmic general election. In the first few days of the session it doubled its strength. When Parliament assembled, and the whips looked over their lists, there was only one M. P. who was officially tagged "Labour". This was Mr. James S. Woodsworth of Centre Winnipeg. Mr. William Irvine of Calgary East was claimed, when Parliament opened, by the Progressive whip as a menber of his flock. The announcement that there were two Labour members of the House of Commons happened to be made by myself. A day or two later I was in the room of the Progressive whip, who still refused to believe that he had lost one of the "faithful". Mr. Irvine, however, soon made his

position clear, and the Labour Party was formed. In his first speech he said; "I wish to state that the honourable member for Centre Winnipeg is the leader of the Labour group,—and I am the group". The doubt about Mr. Irvine's status was due to the fact that Progressives and Labour had pooled forces in Alberta, the former having named Mr. J. T. Shaw for the west riding, and the latter having named Mr. William Irvine for the east. Both candidates had the united support of Labourites and Progressives. After the election Mr. Shaw aligned himself with the followers of the Hon. T. A. Crerar, while Mr. Irvine went with the Labour Party.

These two members in last session of the House of Commons were the remnant of thirty candidates nominated by Labour in the federal election. Saskatchewan was the only province for which that party proposed no candidates. In the Maritime Provinces there were four, in Quebec six, in Ontario nine, in Manitoba three, in Alberta four and in British Columbia the same number. There were also—according to the Departmental report—twenty-seven candidates who ran under the Farmer-Labour banner, and there was one under the title of "Liberal-Labour"—Captain F. J. Lovelace, of Lincoln in Ontario. There were also five Socialist candidates. Out of this total of sixty-two in whom Labour might be supposed to be specially interested, seven in all were returned to the House of Commons. Five of these allied themselves with the Progressives.

The election might, therefore, be said to have been disastrous for Labour. That party had never fought on so wide a field or on so great a scale before. But, except where it came within the scope of the Farmers' Movement, its "class-consciousness" was swept away by the old party loyalties in every constituency except two. Perhaps it might even be said that there was only one riding where Labour stood entirely on its own feet and won. Mr. Irvine was endorsed by the Progressives. Mr. Woodsworth ran under the party banner without being endorsed outside, and his victory is to be read as one result of the strength which Labour has exerted in the politics of the prairie metropolis since the strike of spring, 1919, and the prosecutions which followed it.

These two men, who have thus stood out as the protagonists of Labour during the last session of Parliament, are in some ways curiously alike and in other ways curiously different. Both belong to what has been called in Russia "the intelligentsia". Both have come to the movement through the door of the ministry and of idealism. Both, oddly enough, started their ministerial careers in the Methodist Church, though Mr. Irvine early left it for the Presbyterian denomination and latterly occupied a Unitarian pulpit.

Both are students by nature, wide readers of history and of economics. Mr. Woodsworth is Canadian born, with three generations rooted in Canadian soil, and he is a graduate of Oxford University. Mr. Irvine, who hails from old Scotia, was educated at Wesley and Manitoba Colleges, Winnipeg. Both are passionately convinced of the injustice of existing social conditions, and both are "Socialists" in a sense, though not Marxians, or dogmatists of any Socialistic school.

When they attack practical problems, the two men however show their different temperaments and different intellectual outlook. The Winnipeg representative is the more practical of the two, though he also has in him a streak of the dreamer. The Calgarian is the more idealistic, devoting himself more to theoretical plans and projects. The Manitoban is the closer, more persuasive reasoner on his feet; the Albertan is the more eloquent, and carries his thought higher into the realm of the imagination.

It was Irvine who presented to a surprised House of Commons a plea for re-organization of both our political and our financial machinery. It was Woodsworth who moved to wipe out of existence some bad legislation that had been put on the statute book during the panic over the Winnipeg strike. Irvine compared the three larger groups in the House to the Hegelian trinity of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Woodsworth appealed to the ill success of Labour in the last federal elections as evidence of the lack of perspective displayed by the Minister of Finance in saying that "Labour has come to a sense of its power." Still, it is not rashly to be concluded that the idealist has no capacity for practical problems; for it was Irvine who brought Parliament face to face with conditions in the coalfields of Nova Scotia, and tripped up the Minister of Labour in his analysis of the facts. Nor would it be well to forget the strain of idealism in Woodsworth, that comes out in his passionate pictures of the wrongs of the unemployed and in his hatred of militarism. Nevertheless, it is accurate to say that a perusal of their records in Hansard does indicate special devotion in the one man to practical questions and in the other to problems in which theory is as yet predominant.

Each of these two representatives of Labour made one or two subjects peculiarly his own during last session. The outstanding effort of the member for Calgary was his exposition and defence of the Douglas credit scheme, while a close second was his plea for recognizing groups in our political machinery. The *quondam* editor of the Winnipeg strike paper devoted much of his energy to getting certain changes made in the

parts of the Criminal Code which relate to sedition, but he also put forward a proposal for a tax on capital, and secured from the government an admission of federal responsibility in dealing with the problem of the unemployed.

I cannot here take sufficient space to enter into the intricacies of the Douglas credit scheme, which I confess seems to me to be built upon insecure foundations. But I desire to call attention to the attitude which Mr. Irvine took up towards this ambitious project. In the course of his speech on the budget he said:—

> Before giving an outline of a system which is known as the Douglas system, which I do not contend is the only possible way, I want to state that there are in connection with this system certain fundamental principles which I claim to be undeniable, and these I want now to emphasize. The details of working them out, as given by the Douglas system exponents, may or may not be practicable, but I will leave that to the government to find out.

The first "fundamental principle" cited by Mr. Irvine was the Douglas definition of credit as "the correct estimate of ability to produce and deliver goods as and when and where desired." The second was that "credit is a community-created thing"; and from the second he deduced the third, that "if credit is a community-created thing, then it is only reasonable that it should be community-controlled".

I have pointed out how Mr. Irvine took care to state that he was not committed to the Douglas scheme as "the only possible way". Indeed he expressed that reservation twice in his speech. But I am inclined to think that the followers of Douglas would not feel any uneasiness over his orthodoxy. They would feel quite confident, I fancy, that he had "the root of the matter" in him. For instance, he said later on in his speech:—

> This is not a time for more self-denial; the more of that we do, the less business there will be and the more stagnant our industries will become..... We are short of money because the bankers have control of the money, which after all is but the shadow of the reality, which is the actual wealth of Canada. They control the money, and it is little of it indeed that we have at this time. But we have abundance of wealth, and I urge that we should issue our own money to ourselves, as we now authorize the bankers to issue for themselves. If we do this, our problem will be very largely solved.

Mr. Irvine did not get a very serious hearing for his exegesis of the Douglas scheme. When the Hon. A. K. Maclean poured ridicule upon it, the House laughed heartily at the witticisms. Mr. Maclean said:—

> The honourable member for East Calgary a few days ago presented to the House some scheme which I understood to mean that—if put into operation—it would within a year or two wipe out the public debt, and would practically avoid the necessity of further taxation. If the honourable gentleman can produce such a scheme and make it practicable, I am sure there is nothing this country would not do for him. Personally, I would favour withdrawing from the British Empire altogether and establishing a new kingdom here, and I would consent that he be placed upon the throne and the crown placed on his head.

Now, all this is very good fooling. It was natural enough for the House to laugh at it, and to laugh with Mr. Maclean at Mr. Irvine. But it is not at all certain that such cavalier treatment of the Douglas project will get us very far towards its rejection, and towards a solution of the problem which has given the scheme such a hold upon the imagination of a large group of people. They may be idealists and dreamers, but they have a sincere desire to solve a difficulty that is becoming more urgent all the time. It is to be remembered that these are the views of a man who has a constituency behind him, and it may not be amiss to add that the other member of the Labour Party is in sympathy with the general ideas expressed by his colleague. He too has the backing of many thousands of constituents.

In fact, this is a suitable place to call attention to the radical financial proposal made by Mr. Woodsworth, a proposal which—like the Douglas scheme—has its roots in a growing distrust and dislike of "the money power". He was discussing the heavy burdens imposed on the Canadian people by the national debt, and he made the following declaration of faith:—

> Personally, I see nothing for it but repudiation or a capital levy. Some people do not like that word "repudiation". In the case of those who own large fortunes which were made during the war, I take it that it would be a highly just thing to repudiate. It would simply be the country taking back what the country ought never to have given away or allowed to be taken away. We do not call it repudiation when a man has stolen a large amount and the State comes along and takes it back. I recognize, of course, the practical difficulty that a certain amount of this money has shifted from one person to another, and that we cannot very well, in all cases at least, lay our hands on the war profiteers. But we can place our hands on those who to-day have the ability to give, and a just system of taxation surely ought to be placed on ability to pay.

There is no use in blinking the fact that arguments such as these make to-day a strong

If they are founded on bad economics—as I think they are, in part at least—they will have to be met by a clear exposition of the realities of the case. Ignoring them will do no good. Laughing at them will do no good. Either of these courses only increases the suspicion in the minds of the "Have-Nots" that the "Haves" desire to avoid the issue. The only way to calm such suspicion is to explain clearly the error in these proposals, and to see that the grievance which lies behind them is righted.

More in accord with current ways of thinking than his plan for the reconstruction of our financial system was the plea made by the member for Calgary that "groups" should be recognized in our parliamentary arrangements. He put it thus:—

> Each group represents a definite economic interest, and it is really futile to vociferate to the contrary. Each group has a right to be here and to make a contribution to the government of this country.....Strangely enough, the one hundred and seventeen members who sit at the right of Mr. Speaker have generously undertaken to assume all the responsibility for the government of all the people of Canada, permitting the one hundred and seventeen who sit to the left of Mr. Speaker to go scot free, without any responsibility, without any regard to what is best, and to become carping critics. Indeed, in some instances the one hundred and seventeen who sit to the left of Mr. Speaker will do their best to hinder the other one hundred and seventeen from doing their work.

In addition to his general plea for the recognition of "groups" in our parliamentary machinery, Mr. Irvine put forward one definite suggestion for a step on the way. This was that the practice under which a government resigns if defeated in the House should be scrapped, and that it should not resign unless after a specific vote of want of confidence. He said:—

> Now, I as a Labour representative have no interest in bringing about the defeat of the government. I do not want to see this government defeated; on the contrary, I want to see it hold on and do good work for the people of Canada. I have at least some confidence in it. I believe it is sincere, and that it is going to try to do some good work. But when an issue developes in respect of which we differ from the government in principle, we shall be forced to follow the principle involved in the issue, and then—as I understand the ordinary parliamentary practice—if the measure involving the government policy is defeated by a vote of this House, the government is bound to resign. To my mind that is not a sound practice as things are to-day, and it should not be continued. I would like to see not only the Labour and the Progressive representatives but also honourable members of the

government side quite free to vote upon any issue according to its merits and without any thought of saving the government.

This proposal would mean a somewhat drastic departure from the theory of our constitutional practice, but at times it has had to be recognized. Governments both in Ottawa and in London do not always resign when defeated in the House of Commons. There was an instance to the contrary in the British House this summer in connection with an Education Bill. The government of the day can, and sometimes does, "swallow its medicine", if the issue is not deemed too vital, and continues to "carry on". To turn the exception into the rule,—to have it understood that the government resigns only on an explicit vote of want of confidence—might be an improvement. In certain circumstances it would undoubtedly have advantages. All who watch Parliament closely know that occasionally "deals" are put through because of the fear of defeating the government, when they would not be accepted by a House which had not that threat hanging over its head.

The reception given to the two bills to amend the Immigration Act and the Criminal Code was always interesting and sometimes amusing. These bills were Mr. Woodsworth's chief contribution to the sessional programme. To certain elements in the House they appeared very dangerous, and raised in some minds the terrifying spectre of "the Reds". They were held over early in the session at the request of the Premier, and later—on his motion—were given special privileges. When they were sent to a special committee the Conservatives at first did not name any committee members, though subsequently the official Opposition was represented. Both bills were accepted in principle by the committee, but neither bore fruit before the end of the session.

The bill to amend the Immigration Act gave rise to some sharp interchanges of opinion, as there were some who wished to retain the legislation of 1919 in full force. But the large majority of the committee agreed that the law needed to be revised, and reported that the revision should extend beyond the limits set by the Woodsworth bill, though they did not accept every change which that bill proposed. Besides advocating a general revision of the immigration law they recommended three specific amendments. The first of these dealt with the deportation of British subjects. The Act of 1919 provided that this might be done without trial, except in the case of persons born or naturalized in Canada. The committee recommended that the exception should include all "Canadian citizens", but they left this term undefined, and it is doubtful whether their proposal would

at all. The second change suggested was the repeal of that part in which it was presumed that any person who belonged in 1910 to an illegal association was still a member of it. It was recommended, in the third place, to omit a phrase which rendered subject to arrest—and in certain cases to deportation without trial—persons who were merely "suspected of belonging to any secret society or organization" of the sort condemned as illegal under the Act. This report was not satisfactory to Mr. Woodsworth, and indeed in some material respects it fell short of what he had proposed. He moved an amendment to provide that no person accused of "a political offence" should be deported without trial by jury.

On this last amendment I heard a curious comment made by a trade-union leader who is in the heart of the labour battles of the Dominion. He feared that trial by jury for political offences might be used to prevent the deportation of "strike-breakers". This is just one of many examples of the deviousness of law, and the difficulty of doing just what one wants to do by legislation. It emphasizes the wisdom of the special committee in not trying to draft a new immigration law during the closing hours of a session. Undoubtedly a revision of that law is needed, but there are difficulties in the way which will test the most skilful draftsman. One of these is that of defining "Canadian citizen". This difficulty is intensified by the fact that it is not the habit of settlers from the United Kingdom, being already "British subjects", to become naturalized in Canada. Thus, if the existing definition of "Canadian citizen" is continued, a Russian or a German naturalized in Canada might in five years attain to privileges that would not be extended to an Englishman who had lived here for a quarter of a century.

The real battle in the special committee took place over the bill to amend the Criminal Code. The Act passed in 1919, at the time of agitation and anxiety about the Winnipeg strike, tried to define unlawful associations. It specified as such any which taught the bringing about of governmental, economic or industrial change by the use of force, violence, or threats. It removed from the Code certain protection thrown around those who in the advocacy of constitutional change by lawful means might criticize the government or the King, and it increased the penalty for seditious utterances from two to twenty years' imprisonment. The Woodsworth bill proposed to repeal all the amendments, and to restore the criminal law on sedition as it stood before 1919. A fight took place over the first section which repealed the definition of unlawful associations. This clause came to a vote on two different days. The first vote showed a tie, and the chairman—Joseph Archambault, a

conscientious but conservative Quebec Liberal—gave his casting vote against it. Then it was discovered that a member of the committee had not voted, and he was told that he *must* vote. Voting under compulsion, he declared for the clause, and it was carried. Advice of parliamentary counsel was desired on the matter, and the whole bill was laid over until another day.

On the second day there was a heated debate, in which the "Reds" were assailed by Mr. H. C. Hocken, an excellent Toronto Tory, and liberty was glorified by Mr. E. J. McMurray who had been one of the counsel for the strikers in the Winnipeg trial. The bill was then adopted on a vote which divided on party lines. Liberals and Progressives stood together for a return to normal laws regarding sedition, while Conservatives voted solidly for the maintenance of the legislation passed under Union government during the unrest of three years ago. In the end Mr. Woodsworth did not get any practical result from the bill, as it did not come up again in the House during the session after it had been reported by the committee; but he did succeed in dropping into the parliamentary arena a new type of issue which is likely to be heard of more frequently in future. Whether the alignment of parties which he produced is prophetic, it would be hard to say. On some issues there is a natural harmony between Labour and Progressive and Liberal ideals. But on others, such as government ownership, Labour has more in common with the Conservatives than with the Liberals.

More immediate success, on paper at least, was scored by the Woodsworth motion in regard to unemployment. He secured an admission by the government and by the House that the federal authorities had certain responsibility for the solution of this problem. But he did not get any action by the government up to the prorogation of Parliament, though since that time a conference with the provinces has been called by the Prime Minister. Mr. Woodsworth proposed—and in this he was supported by his colleague from Calgary—that the government should establish a system of unemployment insurance. But this was met by the objection that the authority of the Dominion Parliament to do so was at least doubtful. Probably Mr. Woodsworth was not surprised. He replied that he did not consider unemployment insurance more than a palliative, and he challenged the existing organization of industry to show that it is equal to solving the problem. He said:—

> Some believe that our economic problems can be solved only by the most radical and far-reaching changes in our whole economic system. I am one of those. But I may be mistaken. If the present system of organization is capable of carrying on, give it a

chance. If it is capable of providing for the wants of the people, give it every opportunity. But, in the meantime, do not let us permit the men and women and especially the little children to suffer.

That is a moderate statement of a startling challenge. It is the challenge of a Socialist, as would be freely admitted by Mr. Woodsworth himself. But he speaks not as a Marxian or a Fabian Socialist, or as a Socialist of any particular school. He speaks as a practical Socialist who is interested in results. Mr. Woodsworth mentioned that he was "associated with what is known as Radical Labour throughout western Canada", but the gage which he threw down had been thrown down before in more conservative quarters. It is implied in Guild Socialism, which has appealed to many of moderate ways of thinking. It is implied in the programme of the British Labour Party, which is admittedly conservative in Labour circles. It is a challenge which must be met by the existing organization of industry, or a new order—not necessarily Socialistic, but necessarily different from the present one—will take its place.

A gallant action was won by the Labour Party on another question, closely related to the problem of unemployment. This was the successful demand of Mr. Irvine for a second investigation into the Nova Scotia coal troubles. The two most striking incidents in this action were the retirement of the government from an impossible position taken up by the Minister of Labour, and the support given to the Labour argument by the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen. The Minister of Labour had declared that the government would not grant a second investigation until the "strike on the job" was dropped, but the Prime Minister eventually announced that the second investigation would be granted unconditionally. Mr. Woodsworth and Mr. Irvine both spoke in the debate, not so much justifying the "strike on the job" as arguing that it was inevitable. The defence of this form of tactics came from Mr. Meighen, although he carefully discriminated between the case before the House and what was ordinarily described as "loafing on the job". The ex-Premier said:—

To pretend to be doing a day's work and not to be doing it,—that is what I would call dishonesty. It is pretending to be doing what you are not doing. Are these men even in that position? If they were, I do not think it would be a violation of the law; but are they in that position?.....They have been requested, we will put it, to accept a wage reduction of 32½ per cent. They have declined to do it. They say; "No. It is not a living wage. We cannot support our families, we cannot send our children to school. We do not want to go on strike or go out". Why? The reason

> given is that they have exhausted their funds in mutual help already, and that they would have great difficulty in supporting a strike. They say; "Here, you are giving us two-thirds of a day's pay, and we will give you two-thirds of a day's work and only that. We won't pretend to give you any more". That is what I understand to be their position. Now aside from the fact, aside from whether it can be criticized or not, is it any false pretence on their part? Really I cannot see that it is.

It was worth all Mr. Irvine's effort to have drawn that utterance from the Leader of the Opposition. For it is not hair-splitting. It is a real difference to which Mr. Meighen called attention. The wisdom of "strike on the job" as a method of Labour tactics is another question. But surely such an open avowal of intention to give part of a day's work for part of a day's pay cannot be described as dishonest.

As an offset to Mr. Meighen's action in defending the Nova Scotia miners' "strike on the job", it may be well to cite the vigorous criticism of that policy uttered by a western Progressive, Mr. T. H. McConica. Mr. Woodsworth had compared the miners' tactics with those of a farmer who should limit his acreage to "curtail production", and this aroused Mr. McConica's ire. He spoke as follows:—

> Now, I admire the sentiments expressed by the Minister of Labour when he said that a man should render an honest day's work for a day's wages; and I resent the idea that there is any parallel between the man who shirks his task and the farmer who finds that he cannot raise an abundant crop. The farmer did not put in his crop for some other man. It was his own crop, and it was his own failure if he did not reap the harvest he expected. He did not accept any man's wages for which he was expected to raise a full crop, and then only try to raise half a crop. The difference is a very material one in my estimation.

It is easy to see from a passage like this that the Labour members got a mixed reception from the House of Commons. All sorts and shades of opinion on the labour problem are represented in their party. But, when we consider everything together, we see that they did get a surprisingly favourable hearing, even for some of their radical doctrine. There was a striking example of this in the harmony between the Labour view and the government policy in regard to the Mounted Police and the navy and army. The Woodsworth resolution for restricting the Mounted Police activities to unorganized districts drew from so generally respected a member as the Hon. J. B. M. Baxter the declaration that "it is perhaps as well for the Chamber to take a vote, and stand up either for the Reds

or against them". But, though the government did not accept the motion, their policy has been directed to the curtailment of the operations of the force. On military and naval expenditure the Labour members found the government ready to go a long way, although Mr. Woodsworth did not get any applause when he bluntly announced himself in favour of "absolute disarmament".

It was but natural that such matters as Mounted Police action, coal troubles, unemployment, and the Douglas scheme should bulk largely in the first session of the Labour Party in Parliament. It is not to be forgotten, however, that the two members interested themselves also in questions of wider import that came before the House. Sometimes they were accused of talking too much, but that charge can hardly be sustained. Frequent talking on their part was inevitable in so small a party, if the party point of view was to be expressed on the important issues before the House. They always spoke from that standpoint, and their comments were often illuminating. Both advocated the extension of government ownership of railways to include the Canadian Pacific, demanding that Labour should have representatives on the board of management and on the Railway Commission. Both firmly supported Mr. Andrew R. McMaster in his demand that Ministers should cease to be directors in the big corporations. Mr. Woodsworth committed the party to civil service reform, but urged the payment of better wages to the lower paid employees and the institution of Whitley councils to regulate relations between the civil servants and the government. Both Labour members favoured in present circumstances a restricted immigration, and Mr. Woodsworth contributed notably to the debate on excluding Orientals. He protested against introducing race prejudice, threw the blame for importing Asiatics on the corporations, but said frankly that exclusion was only "a temporary expedient". The reason he gave was that "we are beginning to get cheap labour done over on the other side of the Pacific", and he added:—

> It would seem to me that we would be attacking the problem on a great deal safer ground if we decided that we would maintain in this country certain minimum standards..... We would be going, perhaps, along saner lines if we said that we would make it a crime for any individual or corporation to pay any man or woman less than a living wage.

So much for the record of the new Labour Party in its first session. What of the future? I fancy it will be generally recognized that Mr. Woodsworth was right when he told the Minister of Finance that Labour had not yet come to a sense of its political

power. What Labour needs in Canada is a "get-together" policy. There are not fewer than eight Labour parties in the Dominion. There is the Canadian Labour party,—a political offshoot of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada,—the parliament of international unionism in the Dominion. Besides this we have the Dominion Labour party, the Independent Labour party, the Labour party, the Socialist Representation League, the Federal Labour party, the Socialist party of Canada, and the Workers' party of Canada. Some of these are confined to one province, others are represented in several provinces. At present there does not appear to be any prospect of fusion. The tendencies seem to be centrifugal rather than centripetal. The issue of Protection has been a powerful divisive force in the Labour movement, as this has been widely supposed to be vital to the workers. There are signs, however, that that impression is wearing away. The workers are beginning to see that there are other issues which are more important to their interests. This obstacle to union has been largely overcome by the Farmers; it may speedily be surmounted by the Labourites. Even then there will be powerful separating forces at work, but they are not insuperable. Meanwhile the Labour group in Parliament forms a centre around which discussion can circle. Both its members belong to the advanced wing of the Labour movement, but they are not dogmatists. They are willing to co-operate for the purpose of forwarding the cause of Labour, and they have set up in Parliament the nucleus of a party which will view all public questions from the standpoint of Labour, without leanings to any other political group.