

Mrs Snowden “Spills Beans” for British Labour Party by Criticizing MacDonald

by Walter G. Fuller (*Special Correspondent of The Eagle*)

London, 20 January – A remarkable thing has just happened to the British Labour party – a thing not altogether to its liking, I imagine. A few days ago a pretty and attractive woman speaking at a meeting 3000 miles away from London uttered a few words which were quickly flashed across the Atlantic with dire results upon the unity of the party. This woman is no other than Mrs Philip Snowden, clever wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Labour Cabinet. Mrs Snowden is just now travelling about Canada on a lecture tour and her barbed words were these: “The British Labour party is the victim of the worst political leadership of modern times, and Ramsay MacDonald took too much upon himself.”

Thus the beans have been spilled and no mistake! Everybody sees that from now on all co-operation between MacDonald and Snowden, after such a calculated indiscretion, is at an end, for it is an open secret that Mrs Snowden in thus expressing her opinions about the former Labour Premier is revealing her husband’s opinion as well. The two men have been hardly on speaking terms for months. They cold-shouldered each other in the House of Commons for months before the general election, and they have not scrupled to criticize each other frankly to mutual friends, as well as to political opponents.

Well, what of that? some persons may say. Why shouldn’t the two men disagree behind the scenes if they want to, so long as they preserve the amenities of party loyalty on the public platform and in the press? Yes, why not? In most cases a couple of public men who cordially disliked one another might very well agree, as no doubt Asquith and Lloyd George have done, to keep their smiles and friendly handshakes for the all-seeing eye of the newspaper camera, but to quarrel with one another to their hearts’ content behind the scenes.

But such a course is not possible to these two Labour leaders – the romantic and sentimental Scotsman MacDonald and the hard-bitten, realistic Yorkshireman Snowden. They represent two rapidly diverging views within

the Labour party, and when they openly and publicly reveal the breach between them each will inevitably take away with him a powerful group of supporters.

Snowden’s group would rather join the Liberals than work with the Communists. On the other hand, MacDonald and his followers will reject both Liberalism and Communism and stand alone. Thus we get a forecast of developments within the Labour party which many people have come to regard as inevitable within the next few years – within the lifetime of the present Conservative government.

The Labour party, like Caesar’s Gaul is as a matter of fact divided into three parts, viz.: (1) the Labour party proper under MacDonald, an entirely independent group definitely Socialist and hostile to Liberal, Tory and Communist alike. (2) A right wing under Snowden anxious to get certain reforms carried out, such as the taxation of land values and control of the drink trade, and willing to co-operate with any party, especially the Liberals, that will help this band of reformers get its ideas carried into effect. Third and lastly, the Communist group – a bold, militant left wing group which will very soon be a painful and embarrassing thorn in the flesh of the Labour party as at present organized.

MacDonald has had a difficult – an appallingly difficult – row to hoe, and it is no wonder that he has been obliged to go away on a long sea voyage to the West Indies to rest from his labours. As Britain’s first Labour premier, secretary of Britain’s complicated foreign affairs through a difficult time, and leader of the House of Commons and of his party, this poor man, when he took office little more than a year ago, attempted more than any man has done since Hercules undertook his labours.

Mrs Snowden has now upset the apple-cart, no doubt deliberately and with her husband’s full approval. There are, of course, some critics who are saying that it would have been better if the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer had himself come out into the open and said what he thought of his late leader rather than leave his

wife to speak her mind in far-off Canada. But however this may be, Philip Snowden cannot be accused of lack of courage. He certainly has

not let his wife speak out in this way because he himself feared to do so.

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