

# Prime Minister Lloyd George Came To Power 50 Years Ago

By JOSEPH MacSWEEN  
LONDON (CP) — He won power in a palace revolution, toppling his own party chief 50 years ago when Britain was in the midst of the First World War.

Although a superb politician, he wrecked his own Liberal party and condemned it to the political wilderness where it wanders to this day.

A thunderbolt radical, he shook English society until aristocratic teeth rattled and coronets tilted. "The peerage is like cheese—the older, the higher," he once said. But on the threshold of death he joined the noblemen by accepting an earldom.

He became known and greatly loved as "the man who won the war." But in a few years he was rudely flung from power in the full vigor of life and never held public office again—although remaining in Parliament a total of 54 years.

That is the bare-bones story of David Lloyd George, the Welsh wizard who dared all, conquered all and lost all within six years at a period when to rule Britain was to rule the greatest empire the world had seen.

Any political old-timer can fill out the portrait with yarns of the quicksilver brilliance, inspiring oratory, dynamic drive, devious manoeuvring and beguiling charm of the only Welshman ever to become British prime minister.

On the personal plane, the statesman's eldest son, the second Earl Lloyd George, described his amorous exploits: "His entire life, including the 33 years of marriage with my mother, was involved with a series of affairs with women, some innocent, some romantic, some deeply obsessive, some cynical and worldly, and most of them fruitful."

Oddly, two Canadians acted parts in the intrigue-filled drama that was the rise and fall of Lloyd George. Lord Beaverbrook, the flamboyant publisher with the impish humor, and Andrew Bonar Law, the sober-sided politician who became British premier, helped the Welshman up and down. Law shunted him from power in 1922, after deferring to him in wartime.

Lloyd George could command the submission of a young Winston Churchill, his one-time cabinet colleague, and was known to intimates as "the great beast"—a wartime tag, comparing him with a lion in the jungle, master of all situations.

Churchill, in his war memoirs, wrote sadly of Lloyd George's failure to join in sending a warning during the "locust years" before the Second World War. But elsewhere Churchill said of the first conflict:

"No man who did not witness the fortitude of Lloyd George when the Germans broke through in March 1918 has any right to say one word against him."

TIME FOR CHANGE  
—JIMMY WAS JUST 1/2 Y. AGO  
It was just 50 years ago Dec. 7 that Lloyd George was called by King George V to form a government after beating prime minister for more than eight years, in a cabinet led by H. H. Asquith, Liberal prime minister for more than eight years, in a cabinet struggle.

The immediate issue was the membership of the cabinet's war committee but it followed prolonged intrigue and there was considerable discontent in the country and at the front over Asquith's handling of the war.

The King first called Bonar Law, Conservative leader, on the advice of Asquith. But Law declined the monarch's commission and Lloyd George

formed a coalition government mostly comprising Tory members.

"People predicted the coalition would last six weeks—it lasted six years," wrote Beaverbrook, when he reviewed events many years later.

Historian A. J. P. Taylor summed up the December episode this way:

"It was the nearest thing we have had to a revolution in modern times, a revolution certainly carried out within the framework of Parliament."

"But instead of an organized movement of parties, or for that matter of any open declaration or division in the House of Commons itself, this was carried on behind the scenes by manoeuvres and private pressures."

ORIGINS HUMBLE  
—POLITICIANS NEVER TIRE OF comparing the two great war leaders—Churchill, born in Blenheim Palace, and Lloyd George, son of a schoolmaster, the first cottage-born Briton ever to make it to 10 Downing Street.

Lloyd George entered the House of Commons at 27 in 1889 and held the same Welsh seat for 54 years before resigning and accepting an earldom in 1945, the year of his death. He never suffered personal defeat at the polls, as Churchill did.

Each in his era became "father of the House" but Churchill served it a total of 62 years. In the early 1900s Lloyd George became known as a scorching radical when, as chancellor of the exchequer, he introduced old age pensions and laid several other planks of what eventually became the welfare state.

When the House of Lords balked, Lloyd George threatened to appoint 300 new lords. The hereditary peers had horrific visions of themselves being swamped by a tide of dockers, bricklayers, Irish terrorists and anarchists.

The fiery Welshman made many powerful enemies and this was regarded as one reason why, when the shills finally got under him, his descent was swift and final.

Lloyd George and Churchill were the last of the great orators," says the Earl of Swinton, who held high positions under both men.

TAUGHT WAR'S MEANING  
—Old-timers say Lloyd George had almost child-like pride in his own powers. On a Canadian tour in 1923 he threw a virtual tantrum when informed that his speech at the Montreal Arena would be carried over an amplifying system—then a new-fangled device which he deeply mistrusted.

"What I want to know is, can everybody hear me?" the little Celt shouted into the microphone.

Critics accused Lloyd George of stabbing Asquith in the back but other authorities maintain that Britain at the end of 1916 was uneasy about its war leadership and wanted a change.

ment and bitter industrial unrest that followed the war. Beaverbrook wrote:

"The brilliant schemes and stratagems which he resorted to in war, outwitting generals and politicians, peers, prelates and the king, and all to save Britain he now applied with daring and skill to save himself. . . He took up each position in turn during those tragic years of 1921 and 1922."

TORIES PULLED OUT  
—A story of intrigue, chicanery, flattery and vanity culminated in a famous Tory party meeting held at the Carlton Club Oct. 19, 1922. That meeting smashed the Liberal-Tory coalition built by Lloyd George to put — and keep—himself in power. Election defeat followed. He was only 53 with many vigorous years ahead, but his great days were all behind.

PEDDLED PEERAGES  
—Why did he fall? Some political students say the people twigged that Lloyd George, once the crusader for social justice and then crusader for national survival, had become a crusader for self.

Beaverbrook, in his The Decline and Fall of Lloyd George, notes that Lloyd George was a prime minister without a party as the 1920s opened. He had lost many friends—he had shed them "like the ermine sheds its winter coat." He caused a scandal by contemptuously peddling titles for money—sometimes on the instalment plan—to feed a personal political fund.

He tried to be all things to all men at a time when great moral and political issues, such as the future of Ireland, were at stake. He suffered from the general disenchant-

Lloyd George and his first wife lived separate for years before her death in 1941. They had two sons, one of whom became a Tory minister, and three daughters, one a Liberal and then Labor member. At 80 Lloyd George married his long-time secretary.

Friends sometimes say he never recovered from the death at 77 of his eldest daughter, the beautiful and sweet-natured Mair Eileen.

He once wrote his brother William, describing the kindly welcome he received from King Edward VII after being appointed chancellor of the exchequer in 1908.

"But I walked home through the rain crying," Lloyd George confessed to his brother. "I knew that my little Mair would not be there to receive me."

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## 50th anniversary of corner grocery

E. N. Kays is this month celebrating 50 years in the grocery retail business. His grocery store, located on the corner of Upper Queen and Chestnut streets, has been in business since 1916.

Mr. Kays, now 75 years old, is reminiscing about the days of his early business days.

Mr. Kays likes his business, the personal contact with his customers and his independence and would not consider joining a chain of stores.

EN and his wife Ida have been married 41 years, they have eight children and 16 grand-children all residing in Charlottetown.

PM Sidesteps Query On MPs

OTTAWA (CP)—Prime Minister Pearson has sidestepped a question in the Commons on whether the government received an opinion from its legal officers to the effect that MPs who accepted fees for CBC appearances placed their Commons seats in jeopardy.

The question was put twice by Opposition Leader Diefenbaker who asked that Mr. Pearson make a full statement on the matter Thursday.

Mr. Pearson said it would be "quite appropriate" to make a statement early next week. But he would prefer not to say anything else until "a final opinion" had been received.

The Conservative leader suggested that such a legal opinion was received by the government either in 1964 or 1965.

LITTLE AFFECT

The shopping centres and chain stores have not affected his daily business at the corner

The great variety of the same type of produce, the rapid transportation to enable daily re-supply and the power of TV and publication advertising are cited by Mr. Kays as the marked changes in the business from 50 years ago.

WE ARE PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN SUPPLIERS OF THIS FIRM FOR MANY OF THEIR 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS.

R. E. MUTCH Wholesalers Queen St. Charlottetown

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WE ARE PLEASED TO SUPPLY THIS FIRM WITH ALL THE BEST AND BEST.

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