

THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S BREAK-UP.

The Government of Ontario is going to pieces. Every new day brings new signs of Cabinet dissensions. These dissensions are the result not of strength but of weakness. Where strength is necessary the prevalence of weakness breeds more weakness. Already the bolts are drawn and the bands broken that hold a Cabinet together—the bolts of high public interest and the bands of personal integrity and mutual confidence. The Cabinet is going to pieces.

The situation is similar to the situation in the Dominion Government at the time of "the nest of traitors" before 1896. Following the regime of Sir John Macdonald, and immediately after the brief leadership of Sir John Thompson, the Ottawa Cabinet broke up because of disintegrating forces working from within. There was no dominating public purpose, no masterful mind, no supreme and unifying motive. The warring elements, each ambitious for its own ends, made the Government a public menace. Selfish regard for the perquisites of office honeycombed the Cabinet and destroyed the party. It was a case of political suicide.

That ugly history is repeating itself in the Government at Toronto. Never in Ontario's experience has there been such a spectacle of Governmental ineptitude, incapacity, and sudden paralysis as the Legislature has manifested during the present session. Sir James Whitney may not have had the magnetic and compelling personality of Sir John Macdonald, or any of that old chieftain's statecraft, but he was master of his Cabinet. From the beginning of his Premiership until within the past year he was the autocrat of his party in the Legislature. His word was law. He might not inspire his Ministers with even the semblance of statesmanship, but he did hold them back from confessions of helplessness, and he did surround them with at least the pretence of public integrity.

As soon as Sir James Whitney's hold on his Ministers slackened the rifts became plain. From the very beginning there had been division over the electric power policy. Mr. Beck early espoused the policy of Provincial control, and partly because of the shortsighted folly of the private power interests he ultimately secured the support in the Cabinet of the Premier. Hon. W. J. Hanna was then and still is the friend of private monopoly. With him stand Dr. Pyne, Dr. Reaume, Mr. Duff, and very effectively Col. Hendrie. Between Mr. Beck and these colleagues, especially Mr. Hanna and Col. Hendrie, there is unrelenting, almost undisguised, antagonism. Mr. Foy, as acting Premier, is a complacent but not keenly interested observer. Mr. Lucas and Mr. Hearst each has his eye on Number One, cherishing vague hopes concerning the Premiership when the new choice must be made and the rupture between Mr. Hanna and Mr. Beck brings about the rejection of both. In the meantime there is in Cabinet circles eagerness for a general election, with Sir James Whitney's name as a rallying cry for all cliques and candidates.

And all this time degeneracy is going on in the Government, and the consequent imperiling of Provincial interests. The unprecedented procedure of the Government in borrowing several millions for the sole purposes of current general expenditures under an authorization explicitly confined to Northern Ontario development is matched in brazenness by the Provincial Treasurer's defence of that gross misapplication of public funds. Never before in the Province's history was such an unwarranted borrowing and spending attempted, much less openly and shamelessly defended.

There has been no educational leadership since Hon. Dr. Pyne became Minister. He never can lead because he does not understand. The ignorance of the University and its needs manifested last Friday was hopeless and pitiful. When Sir James was in his place he handled Uni-