

The License Question at Ottawa

In these days it is seldom that the people of Canada are surprised at anything which the arch-trickster, Sir John Macdonald, may take into his head to accomplish, but considerable surprise was manifest, even by his own followers, last week when it was found that he was endeavoring to play, not one of his characteristic tricks of rashness and recklessness, but characteristic for its meanness and deep seated cunning, in order to extricate himself from the difficulty he had got into on the License Question. It is well known what Sir John has been promising and threatening to do in regard to the License question. Having committed himself by referring to the matter in the Speech from the Throne, it was naturally supposed he would deal with the matter as a government question, and boldly face the House with a measure of some description. Fancy the surprise of the House therefore when he moved that the matter be referred to a select committee of the House, nearly half of whom were taken from the Opposition. A more cowardly or unstatesmanlike trick was never played by any leader of a government. Neither Sir John nor his Colleagues have the courage to follow up his threats. Mr. Mackenzie and his Government shouldered the whole responsibility of the Scott Act, and carried it through Parliament, and Sir John was glad to saddle the matter on Mr. Mackenzie, knowing that in thus doing he was securing for himself the liquor influence. But now, after promising a Government measure, dealing with the whole license question, he basely shirks the responsibility and seeks to drag the Opposition into the mess he had got himself into, while he knows full well that all along they have been opposed to any invasion of, or interference with the rights of the Province to deal with this question. The whole thing was nothing more or less than an ingeniously laid plot to entrap the Opposition, and a desperate effort to get them by consent or compelling them to serve on a committee to make an admission that the Dominion Government had a right to meddle with this matter, which, under the provisions of the British North America Act, is clearly written the jurisdiction of the Provincial Legislatures. But the Opposition was not to be thus easily ensnared, but they boldly, fearlessly and in a statesmanlike manner not only refused to act on the committee, but they denounced the Government for its trickery and desire to shirk the responsibility of a measure they had said so much about. Of course, as might be expected, the *Mail* came out with a whole column and a half double-leaded curses and imprecations because the Opposition refused to be a party with the government in such infamous and unconstitutional proceedings, and denounced Mr. Blake and the whole Reform Party as the avowed and deadly enemy of the cause they profess to champion, whereas the blow is aimed by the Government, composed as it is of brewers, distillers, &c., such as the Carlings, Smiths and their friends, at the very foundation of the temperance cause. The Crooks Act, which it is Sir John's aim to overthrow, and which was denounced by him at Yorkville as a tyrannical and unjust measure, is constitutional and the best working license act that this or any other Province has ever had, which fact is attested by not only the religious bodies but the highest tribunals of the land, while any act emanating from Ottawa is directly in opposition to the constitution, and not only every temperance man but every honest man knows that it would be retrogressive from a temperance point of view, but progressive viewing it from the standpoint of the liquor party. But Sir John's trick to accomplish his nefarious purpose is unworthy of a politician, to say nothing of a statesman, and shows to what length he and his party will go in order to carry out their contemptible schemes and what subtle and disgraceful methods he has to resort to in getting himself out of his difficulties. The Opposition is to be commended on their straightforward course.

The Muskoka Election.

The Opposition has carried Muskoka. It is only a few months since Mr. Bettes was elected by a majority of 415. On Tuesday of last week he was defeated. It is not a matter of surprise to any who know anything of the tactics employed to secure his defeat. The whole riding was over-run by the emissaries of Sir John Macdonald and the Dominion Government. In one day there were no less than forty men entered the District under the guise of cattle buyers. They went to assist in the general corruption. Large amounts of money were contributed by contractors to which were added the sales of timber limits and supplemented by grants from the Dominion Treasury. Over eighty cases of bribery were brought to light before the election took place, which will doubtless be ventilated in court. The money spent in buying up votes by wholesale was the people's own, and the effort thus made with the funds of the Dominion are to hand the Province of Ontario over to the control of traitorous politicians who can

be manipulated at will by the whiskey men and Quebec Bleus. Talk about French Anarchists, German Socialists or Russian nihilists! Any of these would be grand specimens of humanity compared with the political corruptionists that have been at work in Ontario during the late elections, and that at the instigation of the Federal Government and its corrupt ally, the Ontario Opposition.

Where is It.

The claim was made by the *Mail* immediately after the elections, and echoed and re-echoed by its satellites that dance to its music, that although the Government was returned the Opposition had a majority of the vote cast in the Province. They still stick to this claim, and on Monday the *Toronto Telegram* came out with a long, double-leaded article accepting the statements as true, and predicting a re-enactment of the DeBoncherville-Jolly case in Quebec, when the House assembled. Now what are the facts of the case. Had the *Telegram* or any other paper taken the trouble to glance at the majorities they would not display such a vast amount of ignorance concerning the political complexion of Ontario. How far their statements are from the truth may be seen from the following figures taken from the official returns as far as received:

LIBERALS.	
Total Majorities	8,500
Elected by Acclamation (4)	1,767
Total	10,267
CONSERVATIVES.	
Total Majorities	5,414
Elected by Acclamation (1)	447
Total	5,861

Nearly two to one for the Government. Let the Tory journals cease their croaking about a majority of the vote in Ontario.

Mr. Mowat's Majority.

There is considerable newspaper talk about the status of the independent members of the new Legislature. Mr. Neelon, of St. Catharines, is set down by the *Mail* as an oppositionist; but Mr. Mowat has not a stauncher supporter of his provincial policy than Sylvester Neelon, a life-long Reformer, and only agreeing with the Dominion Government on the question of the N. P. Mr. Lees, of South Lanark, received the support of the Liberals of that riding on the well defined understanding that he would support Mr. Mowat on the Boundary Award and Rivers and Streams Bill. Mr. Hari, of Prince Edward, was elected on the plain understanding that he would not go into Opposition of Mr. Mowat in the House. For all practical purposes the independent members elect may be set down as supporters of Mr. Mowat, and the Opposition can suck small comfort from the hope of these gentlemen proving false to their pledges.

Official Changes.

It is stated that the Government of Ontario has decided to appoint an Inspector of Shirievalties. It is more than probable that Mr. John Winchester, Registrar of the Queen's Bench Division in the High Court of Justice, will be chosen for the position. This will be an excellent choice. His successor at Osgood Hall will likely be James S. Cartwright, now deputy registrar of the Surrogate Court office. Mr. Cartwright is a man-in-law of Hon. Wm. Cayley, Registrar of the Surrogate Court office. After a long term of years in public service, during which time he occupied many important positions, Hon. Mr. Cayley will retire from public life, and will be succeeded in his present position by Mr. J. Gordon Brown, late managing editor and director of the *Globe Printing Company*.

Protect the Ice-holes.

The Dominion Government has enacted a law just recently which it would be well for some of our villagers to make a note of. It is that any person cutting and leaving open a hole in the ice so as to endanger human life shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by fine or imprisonment before any Justice of the Peace; and in case any person loses his or her life thereby the person in default shall be deemed guilty of manslaughter. It is reported that some dangerous holes have been left by ice harvesters in Boyle's mill pond, near the Queen's highway. Those holes should be looked after by those who make them.

Mr. Mulock, member for North York, has introduced a bill into the Dominion Parliament to remedy the evils arising from the monopolies that are being formed by the amalgamation of railways, which are becoming oppressive and burdensome to the people of Canada, and which will, as shown by the experience of the Americans, before long become intolerable if some check is not put on them. This is what is designed by Mr. Mulock's bill, which prohibits any amalgamation being effected without the consent of Parliament. The bill has passed its second reading and will doubtless soon become law.

The United States have adopted a two cent postal rate instead of three cent. The new regulation will come in force October 1st, '83. It is to be hoped that the Dominion Parliament will follow suit, and adopt a lower rate of postage, which would be a boon to the public which would be fully appreciated.

The *Port Hope News* says: "Mr. Fairbairn, of the Richmond Hill LIBERAL, was in town on Friday." We would say for the information of the *News* that there is no such person as a Mr. Fairbairn in connection with the LIBERAL, and if any such person represented himself as being either directly or indirectly connected with it, he must be a base fraud. We believe there is such an individual connected with the *York Herald*, but any person who knows its record would not be surprised at him disclaiming any connection with it, and pawing himself off as a member of the LIBERAL staff.

Our Election Law possesses many excellent features, but there is yet an important amendment required to make it effective in the accomplishment of its object—the prevention of corruption. There should be a heavy penalty—fine, imprisonment and disfranchisement—for every person convicted of offering or promising a bribe to any elector and also for every elector receiving a bribe, which should not be left optional with the court. When something of this kind is done then, and then only, such wholesale corruption as has been practised by the Conservatives may be prevented.

In 1872 enough spirits was consumed in the Dominion of Canada to make the tippie of each man, woman and child amount to 1 and 7-10th gallons; of beer, 2 and 7-10th gallons. In 1882 the consumption of whiskey per head was 1 and 3-10th gallons, and of beer 3 and 5-10th gallons per head. In 1872 there was used tobacco enough to give every man, woman and child 2 and 4-10th lbs.; and in 1882, 2 lbs. Of the provinces, Ontario used most beer per head, Quebec the most whiskey per head, and British Columbia the most tobacco per head.

Tobacco is now taxed at twenty cents per pound, but a movement is on foot to reduce it to eight cents. The matter is receiving the serious consideration of the minister of Inland revenue. It looks as if the reduction would be made. Instead of a reduction a majority of the respectable classes of the Dominion would gladly see the tax on such an unnecessary and, to many, a disagreeable luxury raised instead of lowered. It is to be hoped the minister will act wisely in this matter.

While the *Mail* is howling itself hoarse with the statement that Mowat is defeated, the *Welland Telegraph* (Conservative) thus sums up the situation: "The elections are over, and we are beaten. There is no use whining about the matter; it stands out in all its naked unpleasantness, and, however bitter the pill, it must be swallowed, and we take it in, not even putting a coating of sugar on it to cover its disagreeableness."

Mr. Casgrain has introduced a bill into the House, one clause of which renders public contractors who contribute to election funds liable to punishment. This is very distasteful to the Tory members of the select committee, Messrs. Rykert, Tupper, Amyot and Girouard, who voted solidly to expunge it from the measure. Mr. Casgrain will move its re-insertion when the bill comes before the House.

The North York and West Huron Election Appeals were up for argument in the Supreme Court at Ottawa last week. Mr. Lash, on behalf of respondents, moved to have the Appeals quashed, and the court, after hearing counsel, declined to pass judgment on the question of jurisdiction until the appeals had been argued on their merits. They were placed at the bottom of the Ontario list.

Some one who has had nothing better to do, probably a newspaper reporter, has been measuring the height of the various members of the Canadian House of Commons, and finds that the tallest member of the House is Mr. James Armstrong, of South Middlesex, who stands six feet five inches, after whom comes Messrs. Dodd, Kirk and Ray, Nova Scotia members, each six feet three inches.

The *West Durham News* (Conservative) gave itself and the whole Conservative party away, when, in a recent issue, it was arguing the Boundary Question it stated that Sir John could not possibly ratify the Award, for Quebec would not let him. "The truth will out."

The Post Office returns show that more than one half of the entire postal business of the Dominion is done within the Province of Ontario. The post office indicates not only the growth of the business of the Country, but its progress in intelligence.

Dr. Widdifield's majority in North York was the largest obtained by any candidate in the entire elections, and was the largest ever given in North York. This is not surprising, considering the two men that were in the field.

An exchange has come to the conclusion that the conservatives are only the workman's friend when on the political stump and then only when it suits their purpose." The *West Toronto* case was proof of this.

Algoma election of representative to the Local Legislature will not take place until June.

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