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AN APPEAL TO LIBERALS

Duty of the Independent Electors of Ontario.

THE NEW FAMILY COMPACT

A Letter From Rev. D. C. Hodson on the Position of the Globe Upon Coalition and Corruption, and Stating the Causes of the "Present Distress"—An Examination of the Attacks Made Upon Him for His Previous Letter.

Gentlemen,—An open letter to the Hon. G. W. Ross, in which I endeavored to present fairly the political condition of the Province, has not had any adequate reply.

If a Government is under the fire of criticism one of the tests of its fitness to be returned to office is its defence. If it has any defence the Government organs ought to be able to present it in a reasonable way. Of course, if there is no defence there will be a temptation to meet criticism with abuse.

While I am aware that the private affairs of an elector, who has had no active part in politics, are of little interest to the public, I think that the reply of the Government organs to my letter is of some importance. The more so, when the same method of reply is adopted with everyone who differs with the Government.

Reasons for not publishing the letter were given by The Globe after days of profound silence in a column editorial of great wrath. One reason assigned was "it had already been published in the evening newspapers." This was not true, as the letter was given to The Globe at 9 a.m., Dec. 19, in time for the evening edition, which the Editor boasts is as large as that of any other evening paper in Toronto.

Personal Attack.
 The Globe editorial is a tirade of abuse. One would have thought that the Editor, if he had any defence for the Government, might have used his editorial space to better advantage. The Globe said: "What matter though, with E. King Dodds, he did campaign against temperance legislation in the interest of the liquor traffic?" In 1884, when I was a student, I delivered in my native county four addresses against the Scott Act. I believed the Act would delay better legislation, that it could not be enforced, and, if carried, would soon be repealed. I thought that it was a device to keep from the temperance people the legislation which they desired. The loaded referendum of a later day was a similar device. I stated my position clearly and everyone understood it. I was not retained by the liquor party, and did not campaign in their interests. A charge similar to The Globe's was made, some years ago, by a Conservative paper. The charge was withdrawn and an apology published. The Globe editor, annoyed that he had no defence, searched the past of twenty years ago to find something to injure my reputation.

The Globe also said that I was guilty of coquetting with both political parties before the last Provincial election, and that about the same time I expected a favor from Mr. Whitney. This statement is false. I asked nothing from Mr. Whitney, expected nothing, and would have accepted nothing. I was and have always been as free to criticize Mr. Whitney as Mr. Ross. I have been offered nominations by both parties, and I have always declined. Before the last Provincial election I did not seek a nomination, I did not desire one, and I would not have accepted one. I have never desired a nomination since.

The Globe insinuated that I was a disgruntled office seeker. This is untrue. I never had a personal grievance against the Ontario or Ottawa Governments, or any member of either Government. I never received a personal favor from either Government and was never refused one. The last communication I received from the Ottawa Government was a cordial letter requesting me to be a candidate in their interests.

The Globe also said, "His past is chequered." I graduated at Knox College sixteen years ago, when I was a young man, and I have been a minister in good standing of the Presbyterian Church ever since. No one has ever laid a charge against my character. The editor was aware of this when he wrote his editorial.

New Family Compact.
 The failure of the Government to reply to charges made against it, and the campaign of abuse, in which many Government organs are engaged, because the Government has no defence, indicate the necessity for a change. But there is another matter for consideration. Not only by the Government has the Liberal party been disgraced, but by that combination of which the Government is the centre. There exists an organized tyranny, which has been developed by long office-holding. If any one opposes the new Family Compact, he is hurried to jail, if he can be charged with an offence, and, if not, his private life is assailed. Many men, fearing personal abuse, hesitate to oppose this evil. But the combination must be destroyed that there may be liberty of speech and a better public morality. The electors can do more than change the Government for, by doing that, they can destroy the tyrannical machine.

When Mr. S. H. Blake, one of the foremost citizens this country ever had, criticized the Government, what a whirlwind of abuse was about him! The name of Blake recalls the old days. Let Liberals compare the giants of the days of Baldwin and Lafontaine with the fellows who are masquerading as Liberals in our day.

by, was the lion of the Reform party. He served the country in the days of the first Family Compact; we live in the days of the second. His son, Edward Blake, was Premier of Ontario. He would have become Premier of the Dominion had he not felt it his duty to enter upon another political struggle, in the land of his fathers. The Reform party has had no greater family than the Blakes. No family has given more ability, time and money to the service of the Liberal party and the country. The evils against which William Hume Blake fought long ago, like the lion that he was, were no greater than the abuses which his son, Mr. S. H. Blake, opposes now. Mr. S. H. Blake, eminent citizen and philanthropist of note, because he opposed corruption, is denounced by the friends of the Government, masquerading as Liberals, while the once great Liberal party, fallen upon evil days, is duped and disgraced.

Liberalism and Liberty.
 If Liberalism stands for anything surely it is freedom of speech. "Liberty of speech," said James Otis, "is inalienable." Can it be that this is true of the United States, and that in Canada a Liberal dare not express his opinions? The Dominion Alliance complained because the Government broke its pledges. They were at once attacked. When a Liberal enters a protest against corruption, the servants of the machine, unable to make any adequate reply to charges established by the courts, heaps abuse upon him. They do not hesitate to attack men like Mr. Blake, Walter Mills and others who are prepared to suffer, if thereby they may serve their country.

The Globe on Corruption.
 The strongest evidence against a man is his own admission. Is not the Government condemned out of its own mouth or by the chief organ which represents it? It is a whim of human nature that a man will severely criticize a friend and be very angry if another employ like criticism. When I reviewed the course of the Government, the Billingsgate vocabulary of The Globe was let loose upon me. All this time there was in the file of The Globe a condemnation of the "present distress" as severe as any published by me. How do we account for this phenomenon? There have been two occasions, and to the best of my knowledge only two, when, by some happy combination of circumstances, not only has the editor been free from the controlling hands of his directors, but there have recurred to him the conscientious scruples of former days. Even to The Globe there are vouchsafed a few rare moments of impartiality. I need not say that on these occasions The Globe is at its best. It is during these moments of independence and "vision" that it is reliable. On one of these rare occasions The Globe contained the editorial which follows. When I remember that it was during the present Administration that such a condition, as the editor describes, developed, and read The Globe's pitiless condemnation, I wonder why the organ is so angry with me:

"The canker of corruption has eaten too deeply into the heart of Canadian politics to have the malady cured by any judicial pronouncement, be it never so just, or by any enactments of Parliament, be they never so wisely framed. A boulder here or there might be discovered and punished, a grafter here and there might be cut off, one Government might be destroyed and another set up; but all that would touch only the surface corruptions of the disease, it would heal but slightly the hurt of the body politic. The poison is in the blood, the heart beats falsely, and no remedy will avail that does not strike down to the springs of our political thought and activity with a power that recreates and makes clean."

"The curse of politics in every Legislature from Halifax to Victoria, and in the Senate and House of Commons at Ottawa, is the notion that political conduct has no relation to the Ten Commandments, that party expediency is the first law of politics, that being found out is the only political crime. That notion is the political creed of those who aver that they are not in politics for their health, of those who affect to sneer at Sunday school politics, and of those who defend vilest political crimes with the devil's argument. That doctrine is the 'facilis descensus Avernus' of Canadian politics. It has damaged beyond repair more than one Government, and is the almost incurable malady of both political parties. The present distress in the Ontario Legislature, the uncertainty of the Government's life and the delectable helplessness of the Opposition, is not the result of accident or of blind, reasonless fate; it is the Nemesis of political crime, the inevitable outcome of moral law for the sake of party gain. From the days of Simcoe's first Parliament until now there have been among us, in both political parties, forces making steadily for political unrighteousness and something of their issue in humiliation and loss has come upon this generation. And to the heritage of the past we have added our own quota of easy political virtue and lust for political power. We may not be in a worse plight than our fathers, but the burden is well nigh intolerable, and unless lifted will crush as a millstone the life of our nation."

Telling Censures.
 This is the language of The Globe when at its best. "The poison is in the blood, the heart beats falsely, and no remedy will avail that does not strike down to the springs of our political thought and activity with a power that recreates and makes clean." A deplorable condition! If I had used such language, "a chequered past" would have been the complimentary to the language The Globe would have used. If the description of the "present distress" is correct, what is the remedy? The only remedy is the defeat of the Government under which the "present distress" was developed. The Globe is emphatic. It declares that the Liberal party has an almost

incurable malady. It states that the "present distress" is not the result of accident or of blind, reasonless fate. Quite true! Corrupt methods had something to do with it; the failure to punish culprits named by the judges, Captain Sullivan's timber limits and many other incidents which do no honor to the Government are closely related to the "present distress." What does The Globe mean by its reference to "lust for political power?" Is not the lust for political power of the Ross Government, which desperately clings to office, largely the cause of the "present distress?"

So seldom is The Globe in this rare mood it will be well to examine again the closing sentence. "We may not be in a worse plight than our fathers, but the burden is well nigh intolerable and unless lifted will crush as a millstone the life of our nation." The diagnosis of The Globe is good, but no remedy is offered. It is unnecessary to suggest one. There is, for such a disease only one remedy known to the student of politics and that is change of Government.

More Condemnation.
 On Monday, November 19th, 1903, The Globe published an editorial. Another rare moment of "vision" had arrived. Whether the Sabbath exercises had exerted a beneficent influence upon the editor and his directors has never been disclosed. However that may be, I ask the electors to read some of the statements made in The Globe editorial. I cannot quote all the paragraphs because the pressure of matter requires that "preference be given to those that make their points without any unnecessary waste of space."

"The condition of the Conservative party is not the first concern of Ontario Liberals, nor is their first duty the reform of the Opposition in the Legislature. There is a mote in our own eye which must be taken out if they would judge justly the quality of their opponents, or see clearly the way in which they themselves should walk, and the public service they are in duty bound to render."
 "The present distress has not come by accident or chance, or as the result of a change of Government policy, and not at all because of any growth of power or prestige in the Opposition. It has come through the cooling enthusiasm and the slackening effort of not a few Liberals. And the secret of it all is in the discredited election methods sometimes resorted to, and the activity of political parasites who make party service a means of private gain. Because of electoral corruption here and the prominence of party heeled there, Ontario Liberalism has lost something of its old-time self-respect, and its note of confident and public spirited enthusiasm has lost something of strength and resonance."

The Independents.
 There have been few occasions which appealed so strongly to the independent elector as the present. The Government has been a transgressor. There is a great moral issue before the people. Now, if ever, must individual responsibility be recognized. Everyone must be true to himself. For one to say that, as he has always voted Liberal, he must not change now, is that folly upon which corrupt Governments rely. The present Government is Liberal in name alone; it has trampled upon the most cherished principles of Liberalism. Every Liberal may truthfully say that he was never so consistent as when he opposed the Ross Administration.

What hope can exist that the Ross Government will remove the "present distress?" It was by that Government that it came. There is no hope that Mr. Ross will have sufficient support to give us stable Government. He is appealing to the people on account of necessity; he could not control the Legislature. That is the real reason for dissolution. The electors declined in 1898, 1902 and in the bye-elections to give him a working majority. On account of recent revelations he is less likely than ever before to gain a working majority. If he should again by any chance have a narrow majority, can we hope for anything better than the desperate struggle for political power which has well nigh paralyzed political virtue? Would such a state of affairs be good for either the Liberal party or the Province? Ontario has suffered, in the eyes of the world, enough humiliation in the effort to retain in power the Ross Government. The attempt at coalition has done no more than furnish, at the hands of The Globe and the Government, a guarantee of ability to Mr. Whitney and his friends. The Liberals have been in power for thirty-three years; surely that is long enough.

Would not a term in Opposition be good for the Liberal party as well as the Province? Let us appeal to history. Baldwin and Lafontaine lacked of the "lust for power" of the present Government. When they might have remained in power they resigned rather than sacrifice the principle of reasonable Government. Neither they nor their party lost by their action, for after a short interval they went back to power to form the Great Ministry.

In 1896, thousands of Conservatives rose above partyism and helped to defeat the Government which had been in power so long. Are Liberals less independent and patriotic? Can they do better than follow this example, vote for a change of Government, hold the new Government to a strict account and defeat it, at the end of four years, should it be unworthy the confidence of the people.

England does not love coalitions, if the people, by their votes, render any other kind of Government impossible. When the Legislature meets, this question ought to be frankly discussed.

Yours sincerely,
 DONALD C. HOSSACK.
 Toronto, Jan. 13, 1905.

Whatever the members of the Government may say about coalition, there can be no doubt as to the attitude of the Government organ. The Globe discussed coalition on September 11, 1902; also on September 17, 1902. The Globe said: "If the country gives a decisive majority to Liberals or to Conservatives, there will be party Government. If it refuses to do that, some other plan must be devised. There is no use in saying

that the Liberal party has an almost incurable malady. It states that the "present distress" is not the result of accident or of blind, reasonless fate. Quite true! Corrupt methods had something to do with it; the failure to punish culprits named by the judges, Captain Sullivan's timber limits and many other incidents which do no honor to the Government are closely related to the "present distress." What does The Globe mean by its reference to "lust for political power?" Is not the lust for political power of the Ross Government, which desperately clings to office, largely the cause of the "present distress?"

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