

Last Week in the Legislature

Hon. T. A. Crerar was criticized a year ago for failure at Ottawa to "move" the Progressive platform when a debate on the address afforded opportunity. In his favor it was pointed out that there wasn't any use in doing so. The Drury Government is in its fourth year, and the fourth session of the 15th Legislature finds the United Farmers' platform still awaiting fulfillment. Yet in this case the party is supposed to be in power. There has not been a great deal said about the U.F.O. platform since the election, but of late the Opposition has shown a tendency to dust it off and present it to the House and the public, somewhat in the manner of an interesting archaeological discovery. The past week brought some significant references to the specific pledges upon which the United Farmers achieved office.

Clause 10 of the platform names as an object of the party: "To apply the principle of proportionate representation to our electoral methods. The Opposition every day or two applies to the premier for information as to what is going to be done, but has not succeeded in getting a pronouncement. The rumor was, of course that "P.R." was to be tried out in Toronto and Hamilton. The Legislature turned down flatly a bill of Karl Homuth's to make the plan optional in municipalities and The Farmers' Sun drew the conclusion that the premier as a result would not likely proceed with his plans. Later, W. C. Good, M.P., was brought to address a meeting in Toronto on proportional representation, and a gathering of 150 in Foresters' Hall, College street, named a committee to see the premier and press for action. Still later, Premier Drury was once more interrogated in the House but declined to say what is to be done. Presumably he cannot say, because he does not know. The party is split, and its whip, Andrew Hicks, of South Huron, calls "P.R." a "hazy, mazy mess."

Clause 7 of the U.F.O. platform reads: "To encourage and cheapen hydro-electric development and maintain effective public control over it." It was J. C. Brown, U.F.O. member for North Middlesex, and not an Opposition critic, who got up this week and declared that western and eastern sections of the province are crying out for hydro extensions; that prices for power do not permit competition with manufacturers in Central Ontario, and that the Lethbridge report (which the Government did not adopt) had offered the best solution with respect to the hydro situation in rural Ontario. As to "effective public control," perhaps the Government may consider this achieved in some respect by means of the Gregory hydro probe and its staff, almost as big as the hydro commission. Its investigations have already cost the province well up to a half-million, and are still going on, and some of the evidence is so evidently biased that only a few days ago the premier was called upon to repudiate a "voluntary witness," Arthur Hawkes, who attacked Sir Adam Beck in quite uncalculated terms.

The very first clause in the U.F.O. platform is "to cut out all expenditures that are not absolutely essential." About the only comment it is necessary to make upon that is the mere quotation of provincial expenditure for last year, \$38,000,000—just double that of the Hearst Government in 1919. Preamble to the U.F.O. platform in 1919 noted that the provincial debt had "increased at an alarming rate (now exceeding \$100,000,000." Hon. Peter Smith had to inform the House in his budget speech that Ontario's debt is now \$240,000,000. If \$100,000,000 was "alarming," what is \$240,000,000? Due allowance must be made for hydro investment, but even that does not occupy the same relative proportion to debt as in 1919.

"Expansive provincial highways" were condemned in the U.F.O. platform in favor of a policy of organized continuous road maintenance. Premier Drury the other day intimated publicly that outlay on highways might well slacken down now. Most people will agree, after the outlay during the past few years, but unfortunately certain districts have been looked after much better than others.

One does not hear much about the "initiative and referendum" referred to in clause 9 of the U.F.O. platform. But there is one thing sure—the Cabinet isn't going to initiate much. It is a pity, however, that the ministers do not take a referendum among themselves on legislation before the House. There have been three cases this week of a ministry

divided on certain bills, arguing on opposite sides, and in two instances voting in opposing groups. In one instance, the premier and a couple of his ministers voted to send a bill to committee, while the remaining Cabinet members present and the whole of the U.F.O. following voted down their leader—a practice of which Hon. Thomas Crawford arose to point should never be witnessed under our system of government. Lieut.-Col. W. H. Price (Con., Parkdale) speaking in the budget debate put it this way:

"Whenever you have a government which has to depend on the support of individual members opposite, you are going to have a government bringing down a bill or a policy by private member, or, as the premier is to-day, unable to tell us what he is going to do about proportional representation. I cannot say that I desire autocratic government, but I favor a government with sufficient support behind it to bring down a bill and say 'that is our bill, or, that is our policy; we propose to put that to the House and on that we stand.' Group government is responsible for three and four months' sessions, when we might have six weeks' sessions; no doubt about that.

"I believe we have the greatest exhibition of interference and lack of responsibility in this Government that we have ever had in the province. With other governments, whatever their divisions behind the scenes, we have been accustomed to expect Cabinet solidarity. If a man wanted a certain policy in his department he would have it either accepted or rejected in Cabinet and when carried, affairs would be handled in that way."

"The two old parties" is a stock term and pet phrase of all U. F. O. speakers. It appears in the U. F. O. platform. J. C. Brown, North Middlesex, got it off in the budget debate this week, and Reece Hall, Liberal member for Parry Sound, who followed, confessed that the phrase had "got on his nerves." He raised the House to heights of hilarity by narrating the story of a dispute between two fishermen as to whether a catch they had made was a trout or a salmon. A native informed them that it was a sucker. Mr. Hall declared that while he belonged to an "old party" he did not confess to being a "sucker," and left the House to draw its own conclusions as to where the term should be applied. Col. Price, in his budget speech, showed that he had been somewhat similarly impressed by a speech of Mr. Drury's at a dinner not long after the 1919 election. He had thrown sturs upon the men who had conducted the affairs of the province as having been lacking in sincerity.

"That is the kind of thing I object to," said Col. Price, "reflection on the sincerity of men who have been in public life and led their parties. I think that is one reason why the Government finds itself to-day on the down grade and slipping very fast, because at that time they hailed themselves as paragons of excellence and the panacea for all ills the flesh is heir to. I would have liked to hear the premier tell Sir James Whitney he was not sincere. Sir William Hearst was sincere. Some of my friends opposite voted for his policies. There is a tendency on the part of newly-elected leaders to think that nothing ever was accomplished in the world before."

THE ONTARIO BUDGET

(Flesherton Advance.) Provincial Treasurer Peter Smith delivered his budget speech in the Ontario Legislature last week. The document as published makes very interesting reading. From it we learn that there will be no reduction of taxation this year. It is proposed to borrow thirty-five million dollars this year, sixteen millions of which are for building highways. Nearly nine million dollars more was expended last year than in the previous year, yet there was a surplus of \$1,064,326 on hand. The present Government has doubled the amount of revenue.

The above figures do not show any evidence of retrenchment, although the Treasurer promised retrenchment this year; and there is a glimmer of hope in the following statement from his lips: "I think it is time that people realized that the war is over and that they get back to normal in the matter of spending."

To this sentiment we would say "hear, hear!" and we would advise the Hon. Peter to have the sentiment printed on a placard and tacked up on the door of every spending department. It might be well, too, to have forty or fifty copies scattered around the Legislative chamber just prior to voting on the next sessional bonus to members.

THE SPEECH FROM THE BUNGHOLE

(T. H. Race in Mitchell Advocate.) "The Calgary Albertan does not like the expression, 'my Government' in the Provincial Speech from the Throne. What is really meant is the people's Government, but we cling to this and other old forms long after their meaning is lost."—Globe.

There are a few relics of Monarchical pomp and flummery in this democracy of ours that we could very well dispense with, very well do without. Twice within that many weeks we have had two brilliant occasions, two spectacular pageantries, two Speeches from the Throne and what not. What sense is there holding to that term, "The Speech from the Throne" in a democratic land like ours? We have no throne here and don't want one. Why cannot we call that speech what it really is, the Governor's speech, as they do in the United States, and use that term instead of the one now in common use. Quite a few years ago when that brilliant Irishman, Jim Fahey, was editor of The Stratford Herald, there was a joint political meeting in a remote section of North Perth. The Liberal contingent from Stratford, including the two speakers, also included a small keg of beer. On arriving at the school house they could not find a drinking cup or any other vessel to meet the requirements of the occasion. Time was essential as the opposition might arrive at any moment. Better waste a little beer than to waste time. So they drove the bung of the keg in and each fellow in turn put his mouth to the bung-hole and the keg was emptied in short order.

Beer was better than two and a half per cent. at that time and a quantity of it taken in such forced draughts had its effects. The evidences of some working influence were so apparent in the first speaker that whisperings of the cause began to pass through the audience and Fahey got hold of the facts. The first speaker finished and Fahey took the floor. "Well, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen," he said, "I have been privileged to listen to many remarkable speeches, speeches from the platform and speeches from the throne, but this is the first time I have ever listened to a speech from the bung-hole."

Now, ridiculous as this story may seem, there was some point and connection in it. Everybody present could see the fitness of the thing. But where is the fitness, where is the connection between the throne and the speeches we get at the opening of our legislatures? We are a democracy and should cease to wear the frills of a monarchy. We did hope and look for better things when the farmers got into power. But the only changes we have had so far is that in repeating the abuses of the old parties they have been a little more extravagant in it. Like the Speech from the Throne, they have lost their meaning and should both go together.

MEAFORD WANTS MORE

Meaford got an appropriation in the main estimates for its harbor. But, like Oliver Twist, it wants more and is going to Ottawa to say so. At the same time it would like to go into an elevator, or at least have one built on its waterfront. Nothing pushed for, nothing secured is evidently the policy and it is not too bad a policy at that.



H. H. MELANSON APPOINTED TO IMPORTANT POST ON C.N.R.

Mr. Melanson, who assumes the important office of General Passenger Traffic Manager, Canadian National Railways, is descended from Acadians who settled at Port Royale in 1660. He entered the service of the Intercolonial Railway at Moncton, N. B., in 1889, being then described as "assistant to the junior clerk" in the mechanical department. Three years later he entered the passenger department of the Intercolonial Railway, and in 1899 was promoted to be chief clerk of that department. After experience as general baggage agent Mr. Melanson was made Assistant General Passenger Agent of the railway in 1909 and general passenger agent in 1913. He was appointed passenger traffic manager of the Canadian Government Railways in 1917 and passenger traffic manager of the Canadian National Railways in 1918, a position he has held until his recent promotion. He received the degree of B. Sc. from the University of St. Joseph at St. Joseph, Que., in 1915.

CHILD SWALLOWED TOP

A very interesting example of the use of the X-ray machine was seen at the Royal Victorian Hospital, Barrie, a week or so ago when the four-year-old son of Mr and Mrs. George Ellis, Utopia, was brought in for examination. It was thought that he had swallowed a brass top. When the child was placed upon the Roentgen table the missing top was plainly to be seen reposing in the stomach. As the top was over half an inch in diameter and more than an inch long, there was much anxiety as to whether it could be passed out in the natural way. X-ray pictures were taken daily and so the downward course of the article was followed until it was removed by nature, certain treatment being given to assist the movement.

A GOOD ANSWER

A farmer who was carrying an express package from a city mail order house, was accosted by a local merchant: "Why didn't you buy that bill of goods from me?" he asked. "I could have saved you the express, and besides you would have been patronizing a home store, which helps pay the taxes and build up this locality." With characteristic frankness, the farmer replied: "Why don't you patronize your home newspaper and advertise? I read it, and didn't know you have the goods I have here, nor do I ever see our name in the paper inviting me to come to your store."

BLOOD-CURDLING HOWL SCARED MR. PARLIAMENT

The Hon. Nelson Parliament, Speaker of the Ontario Legislature, was once thoroughly frightened. Long, long ago, it was when he was a youth on his father's Prince Edward County farm, and parliamentary honors were far in the misty future. You can feel the chills run up and down your spine when he tells the yarn.

It appears that on the Parliament farm a horse must always be fed for the night before it can be driven in the evening, but on this particular occasion young Nelson forgot all about this till he returned home some time in the wee ma' hours. Where he had been he will never divulge.

"I climbed up the ladder to the dark loft," he says, "grabbed a fork and shoved it down into the mow with fairly good force. Instantly the most blood-curdling howl went up into the night. I must have jumped from the mow, for I am quite sure I never touched the ladder, and that howl had scarcely subsided before I was safe in the house, with my hair standing on end."

"There was no trace of the tramp, if such he was, in the morning. Come to think of it, he must have been more startled than I, and he likely had a nasty jab from the fork. But my part of the episode provided about the weirdest sensation I have ever felt."

Mr. Parliament chuckles. "And that night for once," he finishes, "a horse on our farm went without being fed."

THE WORLD'S BLIND SPOTS

The world has its "blind" spots for thunder and lightning, says a bulletin of the National Geographical Society. The brilliant flash of lightning and the crackle and rumble of thunder would be as impossible of conception by many Eskimos as would "solid water" by equatorial savages.

In general the frequency of thunder-storms decreases as one goes north, until within the Arctic and Antarctic Circles they seldom occur.

When Katma volcano on the Alaskan peninsula erupted in 1912, some of the adult natives of the vicinity were more terrified at the lightning and thunder that accompanied the dust clouds than at the possibility of

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Tells How Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Relieved Her of Inflammation and Great Weakness

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being buried by ashes, because they had nothing in their lifelong experience by which to judge the blinding and deafening noise of the skies.

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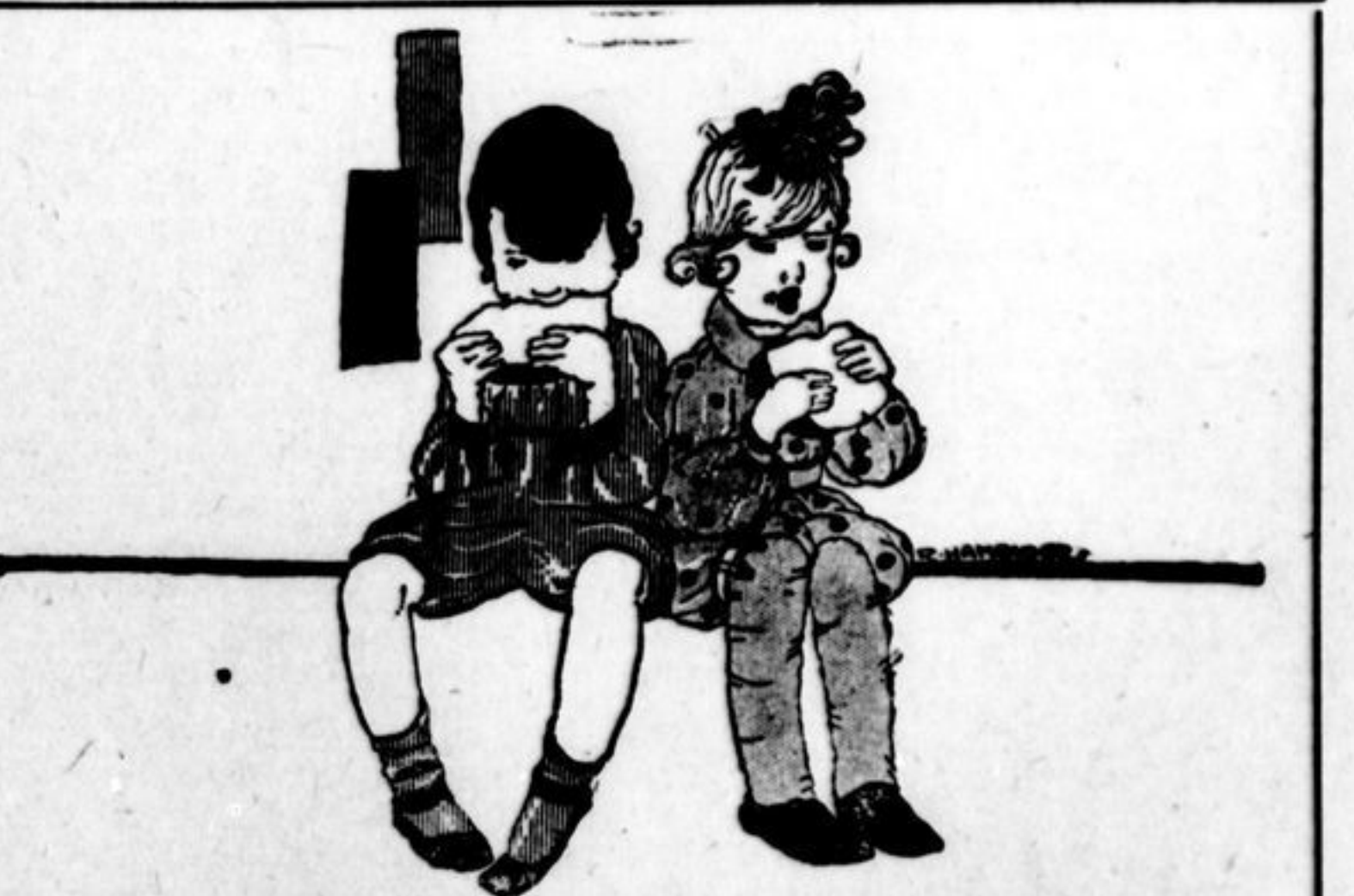
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