



The
**CANADIAN
 COURIER**
The National Weekly



Vol. XX.

June 3rd, 1916

No. 1

WHO IS SECOND MAN UP

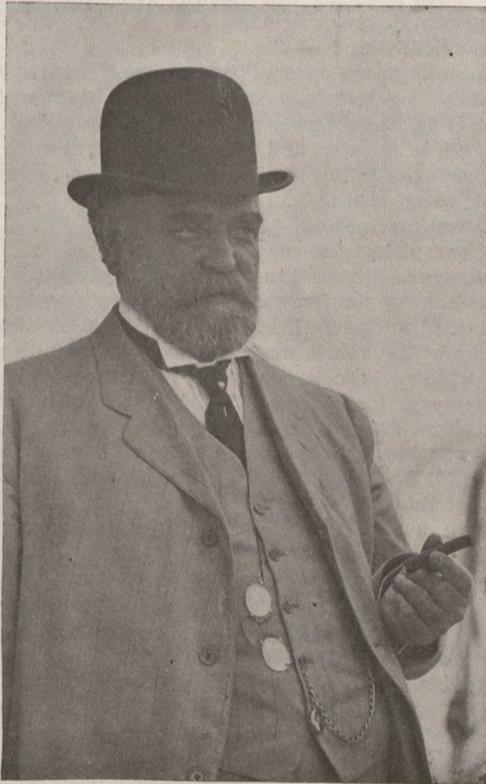
To Sir Wilfrid?

HAZARD NUMBER ONE

A Conservative Opinion

By PAUL BILKEY

Press Gallery Correspondent in Ottawa for the Mail and Empire, and therefore capable of seeing a Liberal second man up in political perspective



Hon. William Pugsley was born in Sussex, N.B., where his father, William, of U. E. Loyalist descent, farmed a few acres. He was educated at the Sussex public school, at the University of New Brunswick. Beginning at the age of 21 he became attorney-at-law, barrister, reporter for the Supreme Court of New Brunswick, member of the Legislature, Speaker of the House, resigned and was re-elected, became Solicitor-General; resigned again, and some years later re-entered politics as M. L. A. for Sussex Co., and Attorney-General, afterwards Premier of the Province. In 1907 he was elected to the House of Commons for St. John City and County, became a Minister of Public Works in the Laurier Cabinet, retaining that position until 1911 when he became a member of the Opposition.

To determine the qualifications which the new leader ought to possess, it is necessary to look en passant (bilingual!) at the political situation in which he will play his part, using the term "political" in the wide sense. The Parliament of Canada is in for a period of real work, the successful performance of which will mean much to the future of the country. The whole national economy is to be overhauled.

The war and the transportation situation are making that necessary. There are, moreover, influences at work which seem to threaten or to promise—take which ever way you like—changes in the scheme of Canadian confederation.

But don't let's get too serious about it, because, after all, we are discussing the choice of a party leader. The point we were making is that the problems that are in prospect will require the attention of men with brains, and whatever else the Hon. William Pugsley, K.C., D.C.L., member for St. John City, hasn't got, nobody can deny that he possesses ability. That, then, being the principal requirement, Dr. Pugsley seems to be the man.

It would, of course, be a change, but that is the order of creation. Change is not undesirable if it is progressive. Anyhow, a change is a rest. Nobody knows that better than Dr. Pugsley himself. His public career has been long and varied. He knows to which party he belongs, having tried both. In that respect he possesses a decided advantage over Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was always a Liberal of the Old School and a disciple of Cobden and Bright. His school days have, of course, been over for some time.

DR. PUGSLEY has not the Laurier eloquence, but he is a fluent and clever speaker. Intelligent fluency is more in demand than the old style of picturesque oratory, which is falling into disuse and disrepute, as indicated by the expression "hot air." Eloquence is a rich diet which fails to satisfy the appetite, while often disordering the stomach of a public which is becoming more and more politically dyspeptic. Pugsley's pepsin is better.

The new leader, it may be said further, is a man of dignified, not to say majestic presence. He is affable to a degree. As a political asset his handshake is unsurpassed, his smile unequalled. He seldom, if ever, refuses a request. The Department of Public Works, during his regime as Minister, was a veritable land of promise, many of which were kept.

In the national work that is to be done, Dr. Pugsley's undoubted capacity would be of decided value to the state, if exercised by him as leader of his party. Nobody has the right to assume that he would not exercise it for anything but the furtherance of the national welfare. Sir George Foster has outlined a scheme for so organizing the resources of the country as to increase the wealth of the Dominion by utilizing even what are now waste materials. Dr. Pugsley put that principle into effect years ago. Take the case, for instance, of sawdust.

Without tying up to that wharf for any length of time, let us enumerate some more of the real qualifications of Dr. Pugsley for the promotion which seems to be coming. He is a man of infinite resource. He knows all about politics and policies. In his public life he has had fat years as well as lean years, though you mightn't think it to see him. He was Premier of his native province, New Brunswick. His college career was adorned with gold medals and papered with scholarships. He is a lawyer of eminence. As a parliamentarian he occupies a position of peculiar prominence. He is a master of procedure. He knows the political history of Canada as few men know it. He brings to the discussion of public questions an understanding which commands the attention of all, and particularly of his opponents. He is still young at sixty-five, is as full of fight and energy as he ever was, and will bring to the Liberal leadership the benefit of a brilliant mind as well as of a ripe experience.

FOLLOWING is the first of what we expect to be a series of six articles on the above title. We believe that the people of Canada in both parties are interested in the question of who is to lead either party in the next shuffle for that position. The series begins with the opinions of the Mail and Empire correspondent, formerly of the Toronto Telegram—in the Ottawa Press Gallery. The other five articles will also be by men who on both sides of politics send to some of the chief Canadian newspapers the news of Parliament. The choice of press gallery writers for the authorship of these articles is based upon experience. The men whose daily business several months in the year is not only to gather news of Parliament, but to size up the men and the leaders in the House, are parliamentary experts on the outside—or ought to be. In the practical working of party government it becomes necessary for political leaders to keep in close touch, not merely with their own cabinet members and lieutenants, but quite as much with those who are the middle-men between Parliament and people.

It may be asked, then, why not choose Liberal writers to prognosticate on Liberal second men up and vice versa? The answer is—that if a man were to write his opinions about a leader on his own side of the House, he might require to write a book instead of an article.—Editor's Note.

In All Seriousness, Why Not Pugsley?

ASSUME that Sir Wilfrid Laurier will relinquish the Liberal leadership, which seems to be inevitable, in view of his statement to the Quebec electorate in 1911, that he would never again lead an Opposition.

There must be a successor, because all packs have leaders. Who is it to be? It is fair, perhaps, to confine the search to the group of Liberal ex-ministers, in and out of Parliament, who still consider themselves to be in politics. There are, of course, some good men in the further back ranks of the Opposition, but they have probably reached their hydraulic level. Personally they are good fellows, and several of them are men of ability, but, speaking in the language of fuse inquiries, they don't seem to function properly. Maybe it is the fault of the propellant, or maybe the gauges were at fault, and we all know by now that the modern projectile cannot be one hundred per cent. efficient unless all these matters have been made the subject of expert study. At any rate, we can say that, as political leaders, these gentlemen are likely to be among the very late deliveries. Put them, therefore, aside.

What about the ex-ministers? For the purpose of this argument, Liberal ex-ministers who were not in office immediately prior to the incident of Sept. 21, 1911, are not included. That excludes Sir Clifford Sifton, which is important. Had he remained, with his hearing unimpaired, many things might have been different, and the occasion for this article would, possibly, not have arisen—at this late date.

It is also reasonable, or seems so, to remove from the reckoning, those Liberal ex-ministers who do not occupy seats in Parliament at this time. You can't stick your head in at the window and lead a political party to anything, except, perhaps, the window.

That narrows the circle. We arrive at the ex-ministers who bobbed up after the wreck and now occupy half a dozen seats in the front row to the left of Mr. Speaker. Which brings us to Dr. Pugsley. There are reasons for not considering the others. The others are the reasons.