

HOW POLITICAL GAME IS WORKED IN EL PASO, TEXAS, UNDER COMMISSION RULE

Standard's Representative Interviews Two Prominent Citizens--Startling Results with Five Men in Control--Fixtures in Office by Influencing Votes--Citizens Pay Dearly for Improvements.

Before leaving Montreal, Mr. H. V. Mackinnon, who is investigating the methods and results of the commission form of government for the Standard, secured an interview with two prominent residents of El Paso, Texas, where the system has been in force four years. The inside information these gentlemen imparted will be somewhat of a shock to those who are being asked to believe that commission rule eliminates politics and that the acts of the commissioners themselves are always open to the light of day. The commission in El Paso is nothing more than part of a political machine, and is worked by the party controlling it to its very material benefit.

It is not denied by these Texans that El Paso has benefited in its improvements under commission rule, but they point out that the citizens have paid dearly for their advantages. To raise money the commissioners reduced the tax rate and increased the assessment 95 per cent. They tick together and by controlling all civic contracts exert a powerful influence on the vote. Unless some fatal dispute arises they are fixtures. Much other interesting information is given as to the way the game can be worked. Viewed in the light of the proposal that a commission should be the system for St. John, the conditions in El Paso, Texas, are very instructive. Mr. Mackinnon's letter follows:

The Men From El Paso.

Montreal, P.Q., Feb. 11, 1911. By the merest chance I dropped into the Queen's Hotel this afternoon and found there a group of men from El Paso, Texas. El Paso, he remembered, is one of the southern commission form of government, also without all the modern improvements which Des Moines has included. His charter, nevertheless, embodied a considerable number of improvements over that of Galveston, and the people whom I saw today were able to give me not only an accurate idea of conditions previous to the adoption of the commission plan, but a very fair conception of its results in actual operation.

Mr. John O'Keefe is a Maritime mine owner. Previous to the introduction of the commission plan he was a member of the city council of El Paso. He was then a Republican and is still in federal politics, but at the present time he is a Democrat in State politics. Mr. M. Albert Dolan is the official interpreter of the Criminal Courts, is Deputy Sheriff of El Paso County, and is a prominent lawyer. They talked together. What one said the other agreed with and each confirmed the other's report on pre-commission conditions, and the most striking results. As a matter of fact they said:

Brains and Opportunity.

"The world is a magnificent bunco game. Politics is one gigantic scam which is played by everyone and by every people. The political game involves everything, and the men who have the brains and who have the knowledge of how to supply them best will control things in spite of the rightness or wrongness of the principles adopted by those who disagree with them.

"When one of these little white angels, such as a great many people suppose the commission form of government to be, flaps its wings over the millenium it has arrived. It is a mistake. That time will only come when all the people in the town are little white angels.

A Political Game.

"The commission form of government, in so far as El Paso is concerned, is merely a concentration of the political game whereby the privileges formerly exercised by a considerable number of people are now concentrated in the hands of a few.

"There can be no doubt that El Paso has improved under commission rule—it would be useless to deny this—but at the same time the fact remains that the Democratic machine bosses everything just as it used to in pre-commission days, and the most striking result of the adoption of our new charter is to make more permanent than ever the absolute control of the political machine. Boss Kelly is in sole control, just as he was five years ago, and there is every indication that he will remain in this position until he dies.

Adopted Four Years Ago.

"Four years ago El Paso adopted the commission plan. There was no particular reason why it should do so, conditions then were no worse than they were and are now in great American cities. We had a council consisting of a mayor at \$50.00 per month, and eight aldermen at \$25.00 per month each. The aldermen were elected under the ward system, two from each of the four wards in the city. The mayor was elected by the city as a whole.

"The whole organization of civic politics, of state politics and the federal politics was controlled by the

Democratic machine. The introduction of the commission, although it was placed before the people as a means for their benefit, was in reality nothing more or less than a trick of this organization to make more permanent its grasp on civic affairs.

The End Achieved.

"This end has been achieved. We now elect a mayor at \$3,600 per year and four commissioners at salaries of \$1,800 each. These men are supposed to give half their time to civic affairs. As a matter of fact, and as will always happen no matter what conditions may exist, these men give to the business of the city just as much time as they feel disposed to give without regard to the actual needs of the municipality or to the wishes of the people.

"In our original charter we did not embody the referendum initiative and recall, but of late there has been a movement because of dissatisfaction with the administration, to include these provisions in the charter. In anticipation of this movement the commissioners themselves prepared a bill which is now before the State Legislature, and which they believe will give them all they desire.

Increased Their Salaries.

"This measure includes the recall, but it also includes a provision for increasing the salaries of the commissioner and of the mayor, as well as granting them other privileges which they do not now enjoy and which will make their positions more secure.

"They are elected for two years. At the expiration of their first term of office, these commissioners hold a private meeting, and to anticipate movement on the part of the citizens they declare themselves in the field for re-nomination. That settles it. Nobody else would bother nominating, for these commissioners have absolute control of the floating vote and of the corporation vote, and no one else could beat them. They are secure in office and will remain there as long as they stick together.

Sticking Together.

"The present commissioners show every indication of sticking together permanently, they are the successors of the old council elected by the Democratic machine, and unless some fatal dispute arises between them (which is not at all likely) they are fixtures.

"It is quite true that under the commission plan El Paso has prospered. Previous to commission days we had no permanent pavements. There were a great many civic improvements which El Paso did not enjoy. We have them now and apparently the city is going ahead because of its new form of government.

The Reverse Side.

But looking on the other side we will find the following facts: El Paso is a city of 48,000 people, four years ago its tax rate was \$1.38 per \$100, and its bonds were reasonably placed. On the introduction of the commission plan the commissioners found it necessary to raise more money, for they realized that improvements in civic affairs must be made if they were to justify their position.

Lignite Coal Areas at Edmonton, Alb.

Ottawa, Feb. 14.—The geological survey in a special bulletin today announced the presence of a valuable lignite coal area at Edmonton, Alberta. It is 14 miles in extent and is estimated to contain 80,000,000 tons. The prediction is that Edmonton will become the centre of a flourishing coal industry. "Used in the gas producer of the down draft type," says the report, "this coal is more economical power production than the best grade under a steam boiler."

DIED OF POISON ON WAY TO ASYLUM. St. Thomas, Ont., Feb. 14.—When the police went to take Daniel A. Pound, a carpenter for the purpose of removing him to the asylum as being of unsound mind, he dropped, got into the cab, and at the police station died of carbolic acid poisoning, self administered.

DREARNOUGHT SEIZED AT ISLE OF PINES. Kingston, Jan. Feb. 14.—Word has been received here of the seizure of the British schooner Drearbought, by the authorities of the Isle of Pines. The vessel which is of local register, left the Cayman Islands carrying passengers and on arrival at her destination, was seized for breach of the immigration laws. The captain was sent to jail.

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R. W. HEWSON, PRESIDENT OF BARRISTERS

Moncton Lawyer Chosen Head By Legal Men In Annual Session At Fredericton—Praise For Local Government.

Fredericton, N. B., Feb. 14.—The annual meeting of the New Brunswick Barriesters' Society was held this evening in the Supreme Court rooms. Among those present were the following: G. Teed, T. C. Allen, J. D. Phinney, A. A. Wilson, R. A. Lawlor, Recorder Baxter, A. B. Copp, J. W. McCready, H. Coy, E. A. McKay, R. W. Hewson, A. R. Slipp, R. B. Hanson, J. R. Dunn, P. R. Sharkey, W. H. Harrison, P. J. Hughes, H. G. Fenety, H. Peters, P. A. Guthrie, W. P. Jones.

President M. G. Teed, K. C., presided. The report of Secretary Treasurer Dr. T. C. Allen, was read and adopted. The revenue of the society during the past year including the balance on hand, amounted to \$2,756.54, and expenditure \$2,990.35, leaving a balance on hand at the present time of \$665.61.

President Teed read a petition from thirteen New Brunswick law students attending the law department of Dalhousie University, praying that they be placed in the same position as King's College Law School students as regards examination with the exception of procedure. On motion the petition was left with the incoming council with the request that the matter be considered by them.

The Attorney General and Dr. T. C. Allen were appointed a committee to obtain subscriptions to pay for the painting of a portrait of the late Chief Justice Ritchie to be hung in the Supreme Court room.

The election of officers for the ensuing year resulted as follows: President—R. W. Hewson. Vice-president—J. B. M. Baxter. Members of the Council—A. B. Connell, H. A. Powell, G. Teed, A. J. Gregory, A. R. Slipp, R. A. Lawlor and J. W. McCready.

Secretary-treasurer—Dr. T. C. Allen. The Attorney General and Dr. T. C. Allen were appointed a committee to obtain subscriptions to pay for the painting of a portrait of the late Chief Justice Ritchie to be hung in the Supreme Court room.

The society passed a unanimous vote of thanks to the chief commissioner of the board of works and the attorney general for their kindness and promptness in providing the new excellent library facilities. The government came in for warm praise from several speakers irrespective of politics, both the mover and seconder of the resolution.

On motion of Mr. Hewson, a committee was appointed to watch legislation in respect to laws passed regarding the legal profession. Mr. Hewson claimed that much legislation which passed was afterwards criticized owing to the fact that the profession did not take enough interest in what was being done. The members of the committee are Messrs. Hewson, Phinney and the secretary.

Upwards of 100 attended a Valentine dance given at the Queen Hotel by Fredericton and the affair was one of the most brilliant and successful social events of the season.

MORE THAN TEN DEAD IN WRECK. Courville, France, Feb. 14.—Four additional bodies were taken from the wreck here up to midnight and one of the injured making the total number of fatalities ten.

It was apparent also to the searching parties that other bodies are still uncovered, as charred flesh was still blazing at that hour.

LOWER DUTIES. Kingston, Jan. Feb. 14.—At the opening of the legislature today the governor, Sir Sydney Oliver, forecast-

MAJORITY FOR RECIPROCITY CLIMBS TO 129

Only Five Democrats Oppose Measure In U. S. House, While Republicans Divide Almost Equally.

Washington, Feb. 14.—President Taft's reciprocity agreement with Canada was ratified in the House of Representatives tonight through the support of the almost solid Democratic vote. The McCall bill, carrying the agreement into effect, was passed 221 to 92. A majority of the Republicans present voted against the measure, the division being 78 yeas and 87 nays.

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The McCall bill now goes to the Senate. What its fate will be in that body is problematical at this time. President Taft believes that if a filibuster can be avoided and a vote taken, the bill will pass.

The passage of the bill in the House came at the end of a long debate, which at times was as bitter as has been heard on the floor of that chamber in years. The fight was confined almost wholly to the Republican side. Democratic members joined in from time to time, and favored the majority members for their lack of unity.

The Democratic leaders also put in the claim that the reciprocity agreement was good Democratic doctrine, and declared that they were glad to welcome President Taft and many of the House Republicans into the Democratic fold. The suggestion came from the Republican side that Mr. Taft and Champ Clark might be rivals for the next Democratic presidential nomination.

Mr. Clark claimed that in a contest of that sort he would win with "hands down."

Closure Rule Applied. A final vote was reached tonight only through the application of a closure rule which shut off all amendments and disposed with the reading of the bill. The procedure was decided upon only after Mr. McCall, in charge of the bill, had failed to get unanimous consent to do away with the calendar on Wednesday. If that had been secured, he said, he would have been glad to let the debate continue for another legislative day.

The Republicans opposed to the bill fought the rule to the very last, denouncing it in caustic language. They directed their fire especially against Democrats, and accused them, on the eve of going into power in the House, of enforcing a "sag" rule as drastic as anything against which they had eloquently inveighed in the past.

The Democrats laughed loudly at the charge and seemed thoroughly to enjoy the discomfiture of some of their old time enemies.

Champ Clark took Representative Dalzell of Pennsylvania sharply to task for complaining of the "undue haste" which the House was acting to get the reciprocity measure through. The speaker-to-be declared that the Democrats had sat for years, bound and gagged while the gentleman from Pennsylvania and his associates had the measure in their hands, and had rushed legislation through without giving an opportunity for amendment. Undoubtedly an overwhelming vote for the speaker-to-be was given.

The bill to the committee of the whole House with instructions to report certain amendments. When the bill came to this, half a dozen members were clamoring for recognition.

Continued on page 2.

H. A. POWELL SPEAKS ON CANADIAN RAILWAYS. St. John Man Favors Private Ownership Under Control Of Independent Commission—Views On Valley Railway.

Moncton, Feb. 14.—Despite other attractions there was a large attendance at the Canadian Club meeting this evening when H. A. Powell, K. C., of St. John, spoke on railway developments in Canada. He said this province was highly favored as the expenditure on railways was in excess of value of all real estate.

Speaking of the control of railway corporations he did not believe that government ownership would solve the problem, but favored company owned roads, controlled by an independent commission.

Referring to the St. John Valley Railway, Mr. Powell said it should be a part of a transcontinental system. He was opposed to any other schemes. The guarantee of \$25,000,000 per mile was a serious matter for the province and would involve a heavy tax.

At the close a vote of thanks was tendered Mr. Powell.

LONDON PAPER CALLS PARTIES TO SAVE EMPIRE

Editorial in Morning Post Today Based On American Prediction Of Canada's Annexation.

London, Feb. 14.—The Morning Post bases an editorial on a Washington despatch declaring that American public men openly predict that reciprocity will lead to the eventual annexation of Canada by the United States.

The editorial appeals to Unionists and the Liberals not yet blinded by partisan prejudice, to close the ranks and fight to save the Empire, which is threatened with danger.

The Chamberlain section of the Unionist party is making a strong effort to rally its followers. A series of meetings has been arranged to be held in London and the provinces to stir up a vigorous campaign in favor of Imperial preference.

Disastrous Blaze Nears Wipes Out North Side Of Principal Street—Explosions Damage Remaining Buildings.

Hensall, Ont., Feb. 14.—This place was visited this morning about five o'clock by a most disastrous fire, which almost swept out the whole north side of King street. The fire is supposed to have started in J. B. McArthur's hardware store, but this is not certain. Fanned by the strong winds, the blaze spread rapidly towards the Commercial Hotel and completely destroyed the following places of business: J. and C. McDonnell, hardware and furniture.

R. J. Drysdale, shoe merchant, T. W. Palmer, restaurant, F. Mannes, barber, J. B. McArthur, hardware and the Commercial Hotel.

The main street of the town presents a scene of desolation this morning and business is practically at a standstill. The stores on the south side of the street were all more or less damaged by explosions of cartridges and powder in the hardware stores, and nearly all their plate glass windows were shattered.

The hotel was the only place in which there were any persons, and these had plenty of time to make their escape before the fire reached them, so that no one was injured. Part of the contents of the hotel were saved, but the contents of the stores were completely lost.

It is understood everything is fairly well covered by insurance. The fire is still burning but is now under control.

JOB STILES TAKEN BACK TO ALBERT JAIL. One Of Creditors Secures Judgment For \$80 And Costs While Defendant Is Committed.

Albert, Feb. 14.—The suit of Robert S. Woodworth against Job Stiles, who lately made an assignment was up today for hearing before Magistrate E. E. Peck, and the plaintiff obtained a verdict and judgment for eighty dollars and costs of the suit.

After the judgment was signed an order of render was granted by the Magistrate, and as a result Mr. Stiles was again placed in jail in discharge of his bail.

R. W. Hewson, of Moncton, Mr. Stiles' counsel in the assignment proceedings, is in Fredericton, and whether disclosure proceedings will be taken or what the next move will be is not known here.

The inspectors, Messrs. Mitten and Bann, have been active today and are preparing a full report of the assets belonging to the estate, and all matters relating thereto.

ENGLAND AND FRANCE ARBITRALE CASE. The Hague, Feb. 14.—The permanent court of arbitration assembled today to determine the case of the Indian la wadvent Savarkar in dispute between Great Britain and France.

An interesting international question of the right of asylum is involved. After preliminaries of opening, the session will be adjourned until Thursday, when arguments will be made.

HON. GEO. E. FOSTER SHOWS DANGER OF RECIPROCITY IN GREATEST SPEECH OF CAREER

Canada's First Tariff Expert Holds Rapt Attention of House in Eloquent Three Hours' Speech, Exposing Economic Fallacy and National Menace Contained in Proposed Agreement.

Ottawa, Feb. 14.—The speech which Hon. Geo. E. Foster delivered in the Commons today will rank as one of the greatest delivered made to a Canadian parliament. Dealing with the reciprocity arrangement in masterly fashion as befitting the greatest tariff expert Canada has, he added such eloquence that the House for the greater part of a three hours' oration, gave him rapt attention, and at times broke into spontaneous applause. At the close of his peroration carried the Opposition away and the utmost enthusiasm prevailed.

Mr. Foster condemned the premier for his treatment of the 1,500 fruit growers who were here on Friday. He had told them they were too late and fight to save the Empire, which is threatened with danger.

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