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JOHN P. PATTERSON, Manager.

The News.

ST. JOHN, N. B., FEB. 14, 1908.

LIBERALS LEAD

With less than fifty votes between them and victory the Liberals have taken the field in Sunbury County Saturday under highly encouraging auspices.

The candidates chosen by a convention unusual in size and marked by a hearty fighting spirit were in good men, who enjoy the acquaintance and esteem of practically every elector in the constituency which is their home and in the interests of which their personal interests are intimately concerned.

Dr. Peake is a young man of excellent ability, who, after his entrance into the political field five years ago by running only 53 votes behind the leader of the Opposition, who at that time had defeated a large part of the electorate into the belief that the contest was to end with his assumption of the office of Premier.

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There never has been, outside the imagination of Opposition leaders excited by recent changes in government personnel, any reason for expecting other than a repetition of the results of 1903. A government so strongly entrenched as this cannot be overturned in a time of peace without good and potent reasons, such as the Opposition have utterly failed to advance.

As will be noted elsewhere in a detailed nature of the opposition platform, Mr. Hazen has been unable to suggest any progressive change, one reasonable and business-like improvement in the Government's policy.

The people will judge, and rightly, that a government which has held power for a quarter of a century, and in that time has given cause for not one definite charge of misfeasance, though constantly under the searchlight of a prettily honest government; and that an opposition which has not in the same time been able to frame a policy containing one new progressive feature has little claim for promotion.

MORE SCHOOL BOOK DECEIT

The evening opposition organ publishes a tabular statement to show that the school reader in use in Nova Scotia cost fifty cents less, instead of more, than the aggregate price of the New Brunswick readers.

The method by which this result is reached is both simple and characteristic. The list of books left incomplete. One of the readers which Nova Scotia children are compelled to use, if they reach as high as the seventh grade is omitted in the calculation. In Nova Scotia they have, all told, nine readers, including primers. The Times, used in the most expensive reader, used in the seventh and eighth grades, gives only eight, which contain about the same amount of matter, and even fewer pages, than the two primers and five readers which make up the full list in New Brunswick.

The petty deception of "The Times" is characteristic of the major part of the opposition campaign. The criticism of the government's financial methods, crown land policy and railway policy is based upon similar misrepresentations; but in nothing have these unfair and misleading tactics been so frequent and obvious as in the opposition treatment of the school book question.

When Mr. Hazen or any of his supporting speakers or papers assert that New Brunswick school book prices are twice or three times as high as they should be, and promise to reduce them by 50 per cent. pointing in proof of their statements to the prevalent prices in Ontario, they are deliberately falsifying the facts of the case. It is unfair for the present Ontario prices are for this year only and were caused by a change in the whole system which will make the books now in use obsolete next year, compelling the publishers with large stocks on hand to unload them far below the cost of manufacture.

while every intelligent man knows what methods the government has endeavored to bring about the ends they have sought, yet no man can possibly know in what respect Mr. Hazen or his administration would differ from that of the present government. Any man can say, "I would do it better," but the people will demand some more convincing evidence than this of the opposition's superior ability to manage the affairs of this province.

As the case stands before the people now there is excellent reason for retaining Mr. Hazen as leader of the New Brunswick opposition, but no good ground has yet been presented for his promotion to a position of executive authority.

ONE PARTY AND PURITY.

"And further resolved that the Government party in Kings county is pledged hereby to adhere strictly to the principles of purity in this election without reference to any agreement or understanding with the Opposition party."

Ignoring this strong and creditable resolution passed by the committee representing the Kings County Liberals, pledging that they will conduct an absolutely clean election regardless of the methods of their opponents, the local government organs yesterday published the report of yesterday's conference at Hampton under headlines declaring "Government against clean election in Kings," and "Government opposes plan for clean election in Kings."

The government committee had been told that the party must avoid any pledge against the use of money and liquor in the coming election. The Times, while making no mention of the foregoing resolution in its news columns, says editorially that "they (the government committee) were playing wicket and that they regarded as clever political trick, and to give it the appearance of good faith they issued a declaration of the effect that, regardless of the action of the opposition, they would run a pure election. This is pure humbug."

The malicious misrepresentation of this must be apparent even to the most partisan readers of the journals and respectful to all who believe there is room for fair play and truthfulness even in politics.

It is unnecessary to recall the shameful canvasses they have used in that province in former elections, canvasses calculated to stir up the passions and the worst feelings between people who ought to be friends. Fortunately the credit of the people of Queens County is not so easily won and lost as have been wholly unsuccessful. The opposition, instead of gaining strength in Queens, have been steadily losing.

QUEENS COUNTY

There is no county in the province which the opposition have made such desperate efforts to capture as Queens. It is unnecessary to recall the shameful canvasses they have used in that province in former elections, canvasses calculated to stir up the passions and the worst feelings between people who ought to be friends.

Mr. Hazen considered as a candidate for the premiership a horse of another color entirely. To lead a government energetically and successfully demands constructive rather than critical capacity, optimism rather than pessimism—qualities of which Mr. Hazen has lamentably failed to give evidence during his service in the legislature. Under his leadership there has developed nothing better than a school of politicians whose wearisome boast is that in matters pertaining to the development of the province, they would do so as the government has done, only more efficiently and perfectly.

Indeed Mr. Hazen might have saved himself the effort of making a campaign platform he had tabulated government performance and added in qualified acquiescence "so mote it be—and more so." The present campaign might then take on the character of an antiphonal chorus in which the government candidates would recite the aims of the government as manifested by the actual accomplishment and the opposition candidates would at each pause interrupt the people's applause by a querulous "so mote it be—only more so."

That such a method, however artfully disguised, has its disadvantages need not even Mr. Hazen deny. It is an excellent method for a man who desires to occupy permanently the official position Mr. Hazen now adorns. Extreme and persistent reticence in the utterance of constructive ideas invariably creates the popular impression that bashfulness and expediency are not the sole reasons for silence. It is true, however, that the government will require some evidence of superior ability more convincing than the oft-repeated boast of an aspirant to office.

That the administration of the affairs of the province has not reached absolute perfection few men will deny; but that the present government has met and will meet the occasion and the opportunity with skill, intelligence, and integrity, has been the belief of the great majority of the electors and we do not discover any sufficient reason for a belief that Mr. Hazen and his party would possess greater ability in meeting the difficult situation with limited resources.

Moreover, Mr. Hazen's method tends to destroy the habit of positive and constructive thinking on political problems. As an evidence of that fact,

CHEAP SCHOOL BOOKS

"If the price of school books is satisfactory, as contended by the government, why do you not publish a school book commission?" asks an opposition organ.

It has been no contention that the price of school books in New Brunswick is satisfactory. True, the price is lower here than in any other province, with the exception of the temporary barter gain sale prices in Ontario, but it by no means follows that the price is satisfactory. As an matter of fact the only reason for the low price is the great possible price compatible with the best quality, and the government proposes to find out if this condition exists, and if not, how the variations from fact which are characteristic of the Opposition campaign in this election are too extreme and too frequently repeated in the face of correction to be accounted for thus charitably.

It is impossible to believe that in some instances at least the misrepresentation must be intentional. One can understand the work of an intelligent man who has been to work to hoodwink and deceive, by insinuating untruths, but it is impossible to believe that in some instances at least the misrepresentation must be intentional.

For instance, Mr. John Morrisey of Northumberland in his speech at an Opposition meeting in Sackville, Wednesday evening, as reported in the Standard Oil Company's paper, charged that the Solicitor General and other members of the Government had been absolutely dishonest in their management of the crown lands.

Several weeks ago Mr. Morrisey made a similar charge in a speech at Bathurst, the falsity of which was shown in this paper, so that even if Mr. Morrisey be sincere in his first repetition, Mr. Morrisey would know in fact does know, that figures showing the exports of lumber from this province bear no relation whatever to the returns shown by the government. He must know that what is necessary for the well being of the province, in a pamphlet issued by Mr. Hazen, it is asserted that in the first year in which Mr. Blair had control of the finances of New Brunswick there was a deficit of \$1,000,000.

It is not natural that there should be a difference between the present statistics and the stamper returns. Can a man who has publicly made such a comparison as Mr. Morrisey here presents and has based upon that comparison charges of dishonesty against honorable men—can he hope to be rated as honest and sincere; can he hope to have his statements in political matters held, accepted as fair and true?

Mr. Morrisey's untrustworthiness is more fully apparent than it is remembered that in the Legislature in 1904 he made similar insinuations upon similar grounds against the predecessors of the present Solicitor General, but when challenged to formulate charges and produce his evidence, retired into the background and has never since referred to the subject in the House. It is possible that the government may not get all the stamper returns from cut on crown lands because of dishonest officials, but that it vigorously endeavors to do so is proven by the dismissal of officials found guilty of making incorrect returns and by the stringent instructions issued to every scaler by Honorable Mr. Sweeney when he first took office.

And in this unfairly attacking the crown land policy of the government—a policy which has more than doubled the territorial revenue and has insured the province the possession of its rich forest areas in perpetuity—Mr. Morrisey is but following the example laid down by his leaders in other matters. Of Mr. Hazen, for instance, in his false comparison of New Brunswick school book prices with the temporary bargain sale prices in Ontario, never mentioning the fact that New Brunswick books have been and are, with this temporary exception, the cheapest in Canada.

As a further proof of what has been done to conserve the interests of the province it may be pointed out that of the two millions added to the debt of the province since the change of government a million and a half is for permanent bridges and other important public works, which includes aid for the wharves, warehouses and grain elevators erected by the city of St. John on the western side of the harbor. Had the railway policy of the present government, by which the advantages of the province are secured by the construction of railways, been adopted at the beginning of the present New Brunswick would have saved at least four millions of its debt, because, with the exception of one or two unimportant lines, every railroad subsidized by New Brunswick is now a good paying property.

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ing the meetings would require about \$100 more. Allowing each candidate \$3 a day for expenses incidental upon travelling over the county for a month would add less than \$800. And this total of \$900 comprises all the really necessary legitimate expenses of conducting a country campaign. Knowing, even from their own admissions, that the Conservatives have at least \$2,800 in addition to this, and having unquestionable evidence that this money is already being used to bribe voters—one definite instance in Springdale specified in the government committee's reply to the opposition's proposal yesterday—the Liberals believed they had strong ground for doubting the sincerity of the purity professions put forward by the opposition committee, particularly as one member of that committee was one of the men who held the secret Dominion ballot Mr. Emmerson polled 1,245 and Powell 857, or 683 Liberal majority.

The opposition must find better ground for boasting than the secret ballot if they would convince the people that the present government majority of thirty-five seats in the legislature is not to be transformed into a Conservative majority.

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UNDERHAND WORK IN KINGS

While not one Opposition paper has dared to challenge or even to comment upon Dr. George M. Pearson's vigorous protest against the dishonorable treatment accorded him by the Kings county machine, Opposition workers throughout the constituency are endeavoring to counteract the effect of his exposure by underhand attacks in private canvases. All over the county the voters are being assiduously circulated with Dr. Pearson's statements as false and without foundation outside the disappointment of a "sore head" endeavoring to get even with better men whom he is envious; that the story of the promised nomination and the demanded contribution to the corruption fund are equally untrue. It is evidently designed not to irritate Dr. Pearson by any attempt at public contradiction or explanation of his statement, and at the same time to destroy his influence and the effect of his revolt by covert knifing. Such treatment of a man who has proved that he has self-respect and courage to back his convictions would seem to be rather risky.

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NORTHUMBERLAND IN LINE

In 1903 Northumberland elected three opposition candidates, Messrs. Morrisey, Loggie and Morrison, the only survivor of the government ticket being A. Tweedie, the premier, whose success was probably more a tribute to himself personally and to his high office, than to the government. The conditions which made this opposition success possible have been completely changed since then. These very influences which elected Mr. Morrisey, Mr. Loggie and Mr. Morrison are today the strongest guarantee of a sweeping victory for the four prominent and representative gentlemen who yesterday were chosen to carry the government standard.

In 1902 the most influential liberals in Northumberland were actively against the government. Today Mr. Loggie's of the present government to party loyalty and are giving it their hearty allegiance and support. This change has not taken place in a day; it has been going on gradually through the past year. In 1904 Mr. Loggie, who ran second on the opposition ticket in the provincial contest the year before, was elected as the Liberal Loggie of the present government. It is evident that the opposition is being broken up by the government's success in Northumberland. Today Mr. Loggie's of the present government to party loyalty and are giving it their hearty allegiance and support.

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LIBERAL MEETING IN KENT