

The Toronto World

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NO PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVE

Municipal rights have been invaded
or openly assaulted at almost every
session of the Ontario legislature dur-
ing the past five years. Franchise-
holding corporations have been rich
and powerful. With their wealth and
power has come a daring disregard for
the interests of the people who brought
them into being. They have their
friends in the government and in the
legislature, and there is no proposition
so bold that they fear to launch it.
They are not content to remain on the
defensive, to hold what they have and
be satisfied with it. They have under-
taken to crush out every tendency to-
wards municipal ownership and the
encouragement they have received in
the Ontario house gives them bound-
less faith in their political influence.
Strange to say, the aggressiveness of
franchise-holding corporations as a
legislative influence has not developed
strong counter-influences in the Onta-
rio legislature. Attorney-General
Gibson is an unwavering advocate of
corporate interests. Behind him stand
less prominent members of the legisla-
ture who can be depended upon to
play the corporations' game. These
are the corporations' men in the legisla-
ture. Where are the people's cham-
pions?

Municipal issues are being raised
every year. The present session of the
legislature has been particularly
fruitful of such issues. The trouble
between the City of Kingston and its
street railway, and only last week the
application of the Town of Perth pro-
ved two opportunities for advocates
of municipal rights. The people of
Kingston wanted the legislature to
pass a charter for the City of King-
ston by the legislature. How many
members of the legislature went to
Kingston's aid? The Town of Perth
asked for power to buy out an electric-
lighting franchise, and up rose At-
torney-General Gibson to lead an over-
whelming legislative force against it.
The application was refused, thanks
to the energy of Mr. Gibson on the
side of the company and the comparative
indifference of the members who
upheld the rights of the municipality.
If the fight had developed one mem-
ber as strong and enthusiastic for the
Town of Perth as was Attorney-General
Gibson in behalf of Perth's cor-
porate assailant, the latter would have
achieved a less brilliant victory. But
no Gibson appeared to fight for municipal
rights. What happened in the
case of Perth vs. the Canadian Elec-
tric and Water-Power Company has hap-
pens in every other issue between fran-
chise-holding corporations and the people.

Neither party in the legislature
has developed a man who might be termed
a municipal rights man. Those whose
intentions seem to be good have ap-
parently no desire to take up an ad-
vanced position on municipal issues.
Two or three courageous champions
of certain rights in the legislature
men as strong for municipalities as
Attorney-General Gibson is against
them, would soon make municipal
rights respected in Queen's Park.
Kingston's fight or Perth's fight may
be the fight of any other Ontario mun-
icipalities to-morrow. Every member
of the Ontario legislature has therefore
direct interest in these questions. The
franchise-holding corporations pool
their money and their influence to wage
common warfare against municipalities.
This force can only be met by the
municipalities making united resis-
tance and by forcing their representa-
tives in the legislature to make com-
mon quarrel with every municipality
whose rights are assailed.

The representatives of the people are
representatives of the corporations.

NO WEAKNESS TO HIS PARTY

As the British political campaign de-
velops it becomes increasingly evident
that Mr. Chamberlain's policy of im-
perial preferential trade will become
not only the leading plank but the
salvation of the Conservative party.
It is always well on a matter of this
kind to take an opponent's opinion
more especially when it is that of a
publicist of exceptional information
and ability. In a recent editorial re-
view of the political situation The
British Weekly, the leading noncon-
formist hebdomadical organ, remarks
that Conservative journals like The
Standard and even Liberal organs in
asserting that Mr. Chamberlain has
broken up the Unionist party and that
the Liberal successes at the polls are
due to his proposals, utterly misread
the facts. The Liberal reaction, it
goes on to say, was in full progress be-
fore Mr. Chamberlain's policy was
announced. "The figure given in The
Westminster Gazette shows that in the
twenty-seven by-elections beginning
with Bury the ministerial vote de-
creased 1.9 per cent, while the oppo-
sition vote increased 46 per cent, from
80,506 to 131,716. The fourteen by-
elections since Mr. Chamberlain de-
clared last May for protection show

an increase in the ministerial vote of
2 per cent, and an increase of 42 per
cent. in the opposition vote. Thus
the Liberal voters doing a little better
before Mr. Chamberlain began than
they have been doing since."

It is clear, therefore, as The World
has on previous occasions pointed out,
that Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal depur-
ture has, far from injuring the Conser-
vative prospects in the country, not
only stayed the rout, but actually in-
creased the Conservative poll. Outside
observers are apt to forget that in
none of these by-elections has there
been a straight fight between the pre-
sent free trade system and an imperi-
alist preference. Mr. Chamberlain has
been contending not only with the
baiting and equivocal policy of Premier
Balfour, but with all the head of gov-
ernment, which have been built up dur-
ing the Conservative tenure of office.
More particularly the Education Act
has been worked for all it was worth
and without a doubt has won with
tremendous effect in Mid-Herts and
other constituencies, where noncon-
formists prevail. So intense has the
fight become over the pressure of this
obnoxious measure that not only Con-
servative nonconformists but evangeli-
cal churchmen supported the Liberal
candidates. This has been felt all the
more on account of the vacillating atti-
tude of the government and their re-
luctance to interfere in behalf of the
vested interests and the Liberal im-
migrating magnates, lines of conduct
which have evoked the strongest pro-
tests from the leaders of the Church
of England. But Mr. Chamberlain's
fiscal prospects are not lost, they are
very much alive, and will to all ap-
pearance become the rallying point of
the Conservative party. That the pre-
sent government can successfully meet
the electorate at a general election
under present circumstances is most
unlikely, but not until all these extrac-
aneous influences are cleared away can
there be any real test of British pub-
lic opinion on the imperial question.
In view of the complications awaiting
any Liberal ministry that may be con-
stituted their accession to office would
be greatly to the advantage of Joseph
Chamberlain and his policy.

RIFLE PRACTICE AND DEFENCE

Few superstitions die harder than
the idea that military preparation con-
sists in standing men or boys in a
row and making them go through a num-
ber of motions in unison. The nearer
they approach the ideal of a box of
soldiers the better and possibly the
more complete the preparation. The
recollections of the nursery are res-
ponsible for the condition of the
average official mind. Some years ago
it was customary to drill the boys in
some of the schools with imitation
guns. With these guns a number of
pleasing movements could be perform-
ed, and they possessed this great ad-
vantage that they were in no danger
of going off. Shooting is the evil
against which the official mind must
carefully guard.

The boy left school and joined
the militia, he was charmed to find
himself surrounded by the dear old
traditions of the nursery and the school.
The soldier and the imitation gun.
True, he was provided with a real gun,
or something which appeared to be
constructed with a view of discharg-
ing bullets; but its capacity for this
was rarely put to the test. Once a
year there was a sham fight, in which
a body of troops would advance in the
face of a withering fire of blank car-
tridges, the formation of the attacking
party being usually such that it would
have been reduced to sausage meat by
a foe armed with real cartridges. A
shot at a target with a real cartridge
was an event to be graven on the ta-
blets of the memory.

Or, if late years there has been some
improvement. The South African war
gave a violent shock to the official
mind, but the official mind has re-
covered, and is now saying that you
must not overstate the experience of
the South African war, that