

the stolen seats held them till the close of their term.

THE MACHINE IN WEST ELGIN

In June, 1890, it was established by the sworn confession of the government candidate in West Elgin that in the election of January 12, Conservative ballots "were in some nefarious and corrupt manner manipulated," by persons sent from outside on behalf of the Liberal party. Some of these committed perjury and forgery by acting under assumed names in the place of local men as deputy returning officers. Hon. A. B. Aylesworth, now Minister of Justice, signed his name as a witness to this confession. W. T. R. Preston, organizer of this government campaign, was so proud of the performance that on election night, after the fraudulent vote was counted, he sent the following telegram to the candidate who had been counted in:

"Heartiest congratulations. Sorry from the bottom of my heart I cannot be with you to-night. To be supported by such a noble army of workers should make you the proudest man in Ontario. Shake hands with the boys for me and hug the members of the much abused threshing machine for Auld Lang Syne."

The very next day after this election had been stolen, and this telegram sent the Laurier Government made Mr. Preston Chief Commissioner of Immigration, with headquarters in London, at \$3,000 salary, to which was added afterwards a free house and generous living expenses.

A MONTREAL CONSPIRACY

An organized conspiracy stole the by-election of St. James, Montreal, by wholesale personation, from Mr. J. G. Bergeron, the Conservative candidate. Though the poll books and ballot boxes furnished abundant evidence of fraud both the Federal and Provincial governments refused to prosecute. Mr. Bergeron and his friends were obliged to institute proceedings. They secured the conviction and imprisonment of one of the chief offenders and obtained a decree unseating and disqualifying the usurping member. By appealing against the disqualification alone this member continued to hold his seat. He voted with the Government in the house and was treated as a member of high standing with his party during the following session, after which the judgment was confirmed. Meanwhile the Government, with a considerate feeling of comradeship, had ordered the release of the convicted conspirator, almost at the beginning of his term of imprisonment.

THIS ONE FAILED

Encouraged by this sympathy in high places, Government supporters in 1904 organized a like conspiracy to steal the St. Antoine seat in Montreal from the Conservative candidate, Mr. H. B. Ames. Warned by Mr. Bergeron's experience Mr. Ames was able to discover and defeat the conspiracy, and caused the arrest of the offenders in the midst of the machinery and equipment for their project. Here again the Federal and Provincial Departments of Justice stood aloof and left the candidate to bear the expense and trouble of the prosecution.

TRICK BALLOT BOXES

In the same year the trick ballot box scheme was devised. It is not known how many seats were won by this device, but the design was frustrated and exposed in Hastings and Frontenac. The Government candidates in these ridings were parties to the conspiracy, and one of them engaged a misguided youth who had false ballot boxes

made at Watertown, N.Y., and who visited the Government organizer for the district on his travels to and from that town. The feature of this invention was a secret compartment into which the returning officer could, by turning the handle, throw Conservative ballots. Bogus Government ballots were substituted for those switched. This trick was discovered just in time to prevent its execution. Again the Departments of Justice under the Ross Government of Ontario and the Laurier administration were slow to act, so that the leaders of the conspiracy were allowed to escape from the country. When they were safe the criminal law was brought to bear upon the youth who has been made the instrument of the plotters, and who rejected the advice of his associates to get out of the country.

REWARDS FOR ALL

In this year also the "thin red line" conspiracy in Manitoba disfranchised some 9,000 Conservative voters, capturing for the Government the seats for Provencher, Portage, Isidore, and Selkirk. Within two months Mr. R. E. A. Leach, the chief perpetrator had been appointed by the Federal Government to a \$2,000 office.

The Prince Albert election frauds in the election of 1905 were perpetrated by actual, former, and future Government employees. When these men were arrested their counsel was the agent of the Federal Department of Justice in their town. Their fine was paid by his clerk, and, at least one of the criminals has since been in the employ of the Dominion Government.

The Minnie M. conspiracy, a wholesale scheme of personation by a boat load of foreigners, was brought to the knowledge beforehand of the Ontario department of Justice. The head of that department refused to take steps to prevent it and did nothing to punish the criminals. Some of the persons connected with that nefarious plot have been rewarded by the Dominion Government with attractive offices.

THE LONDON PLOT

Last and most striking of all is the London election conspiracy by which Hon. Mr. Hyman, then a Minister of the Crown, was elected in 1905. This impudent plot has been exposed and the offenders punished, because the Ross Government has disappeared from Ontario and is no longer able to protect this class of criminals. The persons convicted of wholesale bribery, combined with ballot manipulation, include election officers, some of the leading lights of the Liberal party in that district, and at least one favored contractor with the Federal Government. Among those who contributed effort and money to the cause of the machine in that campaign, are at least two other Government contractors, and certain high office holders in Liberal organizations in other cities.

It was proved in this trial that the London plot was but one incident in a general seat stealing conspiracy extending throughout the country; that for this purpose the Government machine had long maintained in regular employment certain instructors in the fine art of ballot switching; that it had a corps of trained ballot stuffers prepared to hold polls in suitable places; that it had paymasters to arrange financial terms, printers of bogus ballots and manufacturers of trick ballot boxes; that it had a regular scale of fees for different kinds of ballot manipulations, monthly allowances for criminals in exile, and a system of reward by public appointment and public rake-off.