

The Toronto World

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THE WORLD.

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MR. ROSS ON CORRUPTION.

At Mount Brydges Premier Ross treated the subject of corruption in a statistical manner. It was not true that corruption was down from long terms of office. Sandfield Macdonald was only four years in office, yet five of his supporters were unseated after the general election of 1871, and only one member of the opposition; whereas during the long Liberal administration, more Conservatives than Liberals were unseated for corruption. If statistics are to be of any use, it should be pointed out that in the recent series of election trials four Liberals were unseated, while all three petitions against Conservatives were dismissed, and in one, Centre Bruce, the member elected was compelled by the judges. It is true that in North Renfrew there was heavy expenditure on both sides, but judging by Mr. Ross's evidence, this case would hardly help Mr. Ross.

However, the fact is that the statistical method of judging corruption is not very satisfactory. The long tenure of office is only one of a number of causes leading to the recent extraordinary revelations of corruption. The Ontario government has been so weakened in recent years that it has been constantly at the mercy of two or three members, or constituencies; and the result is that an unnatural and mischievous importance is attached to the by-elections. No doubt, as Mr. Ross says, by-elections are keenly fought when the government majority is large. But the danger of corruption is tenfold greater when the life of the government is actually at stake. To-day the government has no majority except the casting vote of the Speaker, and by the admission of Liberals it is in a minority of several thousands in the country. The desperate measures to which its friends have been driven are illustrated in West Elgin and Sault Ste. Marie.

It is no use saying that the fault is inherent in human nature. In politics we must seek political remedies, and the remedy in the present case is to fix responsibility on the chief beneficiaries of corruption. When Mr. Ross says that no agent of the government was connected with the wrong-doing, he must surely forget that the attorney-general was in the Sault just before the election, and was warned of the disgraceful expedition of the Minnie M. Then the government candidate in North Renfrew has made a sworn statement directly connecting the government with the corruption in that constituency. Nor does it help the case to show that Conservatives have in former years made some charges that could not be proved. All oppositions do that. Our business is with the charges that are proved, the corruption that has been demonstrated beyond a doubt.

Mr. Ross denies the existence of a compact between himself and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and says there would be nothing nefarious in such a compact, if it existed. Perhaps not, but the question is what effect the alliance will have upon both. It can hardly be supposed that the Ross government can bring much strength to the Dominion Liberals at this juncture; and when the federal election is over the Ross government must be judged on its own merits. If both governments are to throw their resources into the by-elections, there is every reason to expect corruption on a larger scale than has hitherto been exposed. It may be that the Ross government is a few months of power, but at a cost which only the most reckless politician would care to pay.

CANADIAN TRADE WITH AUSTRALIA.

There is an opening for trade in Australia in writing papers, news print, school and educational requisites, woodware, furniture specialties, tinware, hardware specialties, hosiery and underwear. Information on the subject may be obtained from Mr. William Lewis, 232 Clarence-street, Sydney, and 362A Little Collins-street, Melbourne, who will make all necessary arrangements. Accounts may be opened direct with responsible Australian firms, or, if preferred, shipments will be paid for by a New York exporting house.

ROSEBURY ON PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

Lord Rosebury's preface to the little volume on "Canada and the Empire" contains a curious mixture of truth and error, or rather of right and wrong thinking. He is just now in a difficult position. As a pronounced imperialist he is naturally in sympathy with all that makes for a closer union within the empire—as a pronounced free trader he views with distrust and alarm Mr. Chamberlain's efforts after the furtherance of that union by means of a mutually preferential tariff. Lord Rosebury is therefore under the necessity of placing a glass on Mr. Chamberlain's scheme for the purpose of demonstrating that it is more likely to cause disunion than to promote agreement.

Now he accomplishes this by assuming that Mr. Chamberlain has in contemplation some fixed and unchangeable system under which a preferential tariff once enacted cannot thereafter be altered without the consent of all the self-governing states interested. Of course an arrangement of that kind would necessarily produce friction. It indeed it could by any possibility be accomplished. But as we understood Mr. Chamberlain's proposal it is not intended to result in bonds so rigid, and no one would more readily recognize than he does the great improbability of either the mother country or the daughter states, so limiting their legislative freedom. That a voluntary preference is quite feasible is already evident since Canada, New Zealand and South Africa have already conceded it, and Australia is on the eve of following suit. There is nothing to prevent the mother country completing the pile on precisely the same conditions.

Incidentally Lord Rosebury professes great concern that the views cable from London to the Dominion are as favorable as the metropolitan press to Mr. Chamberlain's agitation, and he adds that to tax the British Liberal party with indifference or hostility to the idea of empire is an imperial peril. "For," he says, "the Liberal party is predominant throughout the empire." Lord Rosebury in this has been misled by names. It may be true that the colonies as democratic communities sympathize generally with the Liberal party in Britain, but it is by no means the case that the party calling itself Liberal in the colonies is the more democratic of their parties. For instance, in Great Britain municipal and government ownership is supported much more warmly by the Liberals than by the Conservatives, while in Canada it is very much the reverse. And in many other points an argument based merely on names would lead to very incorrect results. The inapplicability of British party names to Canadian political parties has been repeatedly pointed out by Prof. Goldwin Smith, and is undoubtedly true.

But Lord Rosebury's ideal of the British empire is one which will commend itself thoroughly to colonial opinion. "The true ideal," he says, "is and should be a vast co-operative league of contented and enterprising Anglo-Saxon states, together with an empire in the east of different races and different conditions." That is true. Much of the pessimistic criticism passed on the stability and future of the British empire is faulty because, as Lord Rosebury remarks, "Men are led by the analogy of other empires, ancient and modern. They will not or cannot realize that the British empire is and must necessarily be always unlike these." This is the rock over which pedants and doctrinaires continually stumble. They cannot realize that the past is being continually outgrown, that new problems demand new solutions, and that the final fruit of Anglo-Saxon civilization has not yet been reached. Co-operation is a nobler form of empire than autocracy or federation and is capable of infinitely vaster extensions.

A CREAK APPEAL.

Mayor Urquhart showed a singular disregard for the proprieties of the occasion in flashing before the North Toronto Liberal convention a message from Sir Wilfrid Laurier in regard to the Yonge-street bridge. The Yonge-street bridge is not less important as a municipal question by reason of the fact that it is totally foreign to the federal issues upon which Mayor Urquhart is appealing to the electors of North Toronto.

What Mayor Urquhart accomplished in the way of confirming the judgment of the railway committee of the privy council was nothing more than the city had a right to expect from the man it pays to discharge the duties of the office of chief magistrate of Toronto. When his worship endeavored to use this simple act of duty to a position which he already holds as a means of strengthening himself in a federal election he did a gross injustice to the people who elected him on his merits as a servant of the city.

It has yet to be shown that the confirmation of the decision of the railway committee of the privy council was anything more than a formality. The railway committee of the privy council is for all practical purposes the Dominion government itself, and Sir Wilfrid Laurier's belated assurance that the creation of the railway commission would not interfere with a decision favorable to the City of Toronto will not strike the city as a particularly notable concession. But even if the Dominion government had done Toronto a special service what would that have to do with Mayor Urquhart's claims to rank as a government supporter in the Dominion parliament. The practice of buying constituencies with government patron is an old one. In some places it has succeeded. To the credit of Toronto it is to be said that this city has declared itself on political questions, regardless of the force of its support of a government might win, or of the cold justice which its hostility might provoke.

And now Mayor Urquhart makes the cool insinuation that Toronto should be influenced by a favorable decision from Ottawa on the question of the Yonge-street bridge. This is the first time that the Yonge-street bridge has been included in the list of issues that divide the two great historic parties of Canada. The departure from the lines of party cleavage is a very clear one, and Toronto is not likely to appreciate the veiled hint that the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and kindred subjects are to be side-tracked in favor of the Yonge-street bridge. Mayor Urquhart must think that the City of Toronto holds itself at a low price when he attempts to influence it by such petty appeals. The fact is that his worship is trying to trade on the influence which he, as a Liberal, professes to have to exert on a Liberal government.

To accomplish this purpose he introduces municipal politics into federal politics and asks the electors of North Toronto to determine a great party issue on purely local lines. These tactics are not at all creditable to Mayor Urquhart, who since he has the willingness to endorse the Dominion government in the present campaign, should have the courage to stand or fall on the questions which divide the government and the opposition. Incidentally Mayor Urquhart might explain why he, a professed champion of public ownership, should now be the candidate of a government which is pledged to the hilt against any extension of the principle of public ownership.

A. B. Aylesworth, K.C., is minister without portfolio, and several other things that establish a claim to political pre-eminence.

Since Lorne Hale made his statement at Pembroke the organs of the Ross government are strangely silent about the \$7000 that E. A. Dunlop spent in his election.

The first thing Lorne Hale knows he will be lugged before a royal commission which will find that his election expenses amounted to exactly a dollar and fifteen cents.

A little more talk about the \$150,000,000 that Canada is to pay for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and the Laurier government will get on its ear and pay the amount out of its campaign fund.

"What is worst in a party comes out in by-elections," says Hon. G. W. Ross. From this the obvious conclusion is that the real culprits are the election courts which make by-elections necessary.

Hon. William Templeman of Victoria, B.C., has only to be shot in a ditch to complete the neat compliment. The Ottawa Free Press has him in its repertoire as the "Hon. William Templeman."