

The West

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1908

Organization Needed

The result of the general election shows this province to be strongly Liberal and such is not what was expected by the Conservatives. It was not thought that the Liberals could carry more than six at the most of the ten seats.

Under ordinary circumstances and the election being held at the same time as the rest, Jas. McKay, K.C. would carry the Prince Albert constituency by a big majority. What effect the deferring of the elections is going to have we cannot say. The majority R. S. Lake has in Qu'Appelle was so small that the wonder is that even he was elected.

One reason for the defeat of the Conservatives in this province was their lack of organization to combat the influences which two governments with their immense patronage can bring to bear about election time. Three times since July has the country been enumerated. Three voters' lists have been made, the one on which the provincial election was held, then the regular provincial lists provided by the election law to be printed and used in future, and the Dominion list which was used in the recent election. In very many cases the enumerators were active Liberal workers, who did not feel they were doing anything amiss when they canvassed in the Liberal party's interests. This feature alone, especially in foreign settlements had its effect on the vote in Saskatchewan.

As we said it would take a splendid organization to counteract the work done by government officials and employees, and that organization the Conservative party did not have, and furthermore they did not have the necessary money to pay enough men to bring about good organization.

The question for the future should be to remedy this state of affairs. Organization work must be taken in hand at once. Representatives from all parts of the province should be called together to discuss ways and means and some method employed whereby the party can redeem itself in this province the next time. Organizing for a campaign is not the work of a month before polling day, but a work which requires a much longer time. In fact, in this province where there are so many new comers settling, organization to be effective must be active all the time.

We trust that the Conservative party, which has stood and stands for so many good principles will in this province at least undertake more vigorously and more systematically to see that those principles for which they stand may prevail.

Probe the Charges

Now that Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been returned we trust he will at once look after his black sheep and he has many of them in his party who were elected by the good will and work of the Liberal machine. His first attention should be turned to the Minister of Public Works, Mr. Pugsley. The Mayes charges should be cleared up. Dealing with this subject the Toronto News says:

According to the sworn statement of the contractor, \$35,993 were stolen from the public treasury by means of a collusive arrangement with the Public Works Department. Incidental to this statement is the charge that a loan of \$2,000 was forced out of the contractor by Mr. Pugsley himself. Mr. Pugsley alleges that the

\$2,000 was received as the price of legal services, and The News at least is prepared to accept that statement until further support appears for the contractor's story. On the other hand it must be remembered that Mr. Pugsley is a deft and quite remarkable statesman, and that his dealings with the New Brunswick treasury admit of no defence.

What it is necessary to declare, however, is that the result in the election at St. John does not dispose of the Mayes charges. They must be sifted to the bottom. Proceedings should be promptly initiated by the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Public Works. McAvity should be either fairly acquitted before the country or should be sent to the penitentiary and forced to disgorge every dollar which was corruptly taken out of the treasury. It is whispered that this particular job leads on to many other transactions, and there must be a searching and wide investigation into the whole system of dealing with public contracts and with Intercolonial supplies in the eastern provinces.

Reward System

We regret to see that some of the papers of Canada are preaching the doctrine of reward for political work done. Here is what the Halifax Chronicle says in speaking of the result in Halifax where Mr. R. L. Borden and Mayor Crosby were elected:

"They have declared by their votes that they do not want these things, and if the government is disposed to take them at their word and extend these favors to other constituencies and other parts, which have been loyal to their interests, the Tories of Halifax and their dupes will have themselves to blame."

Because a constituency elects a member of the opposition is that a reason why the people of that constituency should be deprived of its rights? Such a doctrine would indeed be a very bad one for the country. If government work and government institutions were not placed in constituencies represented by opposition members it would be a strange system. Why should any constituency be deprived of its public need, because the people have voted as they felt inclined they should vote?

We trust that in the doing of a public duty the government of the day will not be influenced by any such consideration but that if a necessary work is required in any constituency it will be done irrespective of party.

Editorial Notes

Both parties should insist on their being no "saw-offs" in case there are protests entered.

It is expected that Sir Wilfrid Laurier will commence his black sheep crusade after Thanksgiving Day.

If Messrs. Fowler, Leturge, Pope and Bennett were Conservative black sheep, the party did well to let them be defeated. It is regretted that the Liberals did not treat their black sheep in like manner.

The seniority of the House runs about as follows: Hon. William Patterson, 1872; Hon. John Haggart, 1872; Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 1874; Sir Frederick Borden, 1874; Dr. Sproule, 1878; Hon. Geo. E. Foster, 1878; G. Taylor, 1882; David Henderson, 1888; Dr. Reid, 1891; Col. Hughes, 1892; W. F. Maclean, 1892.

We trust that in the election of councillors for local improvement districts that the Hudson's Bay Railroad will not be an issue. It has been an issue, so Mr. Scott and his organs say, in the last two elections and the people now surely have reason to expect that something he done by the Liberals to redeem their pledges.

If Sir Wilfrid Laurier does not "finish his work" it will not be for lack of a majority in parliament. If ever a public man was entitled to claim the result of a contest as a great personal victory, Sir Wilfrid can make that claim today. After making every allowance for the causes, legitimate and otherwise,

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which led to the return of the government with a majority of more than fifty, one fact stands out pre-eminent, namely that it was the premier's commanding personality that won the day.—Victoria Colonist.

"Lake's majority is in keeping with the man" says the Regina Leader.

This remark is in keeping with the picaresque politics of that paper. Mr. Lake's reputation will not be injured by such contemptible remarks. Not a slur can honestly be cast upon him and the Leader knows it. In making such a remark it lowers itself below the meanest Liberal in this riding for every voter and worker on the Liberal side recognized him as a gentleman. This is one point Qu'Appelle is proud of that it had two gentlemen in the field.—Qu'Appelle Progress.

Press Comment

(Ottawa Citizen)

The Laurier government is entitled to regard the verdict as one of approval of its administration. At the same time Sir Wilfrid Laurier must appreciate that there are good grounds for the criticisms that have been aimed at the grating element which of late years has fastened itself upon the government. It will be an act of wisdom to purge the government of this reproach, and to reward the confidence of the electorate by the establishment of an administration that will be free from suspicion of complicity in jobbery and questionable transactions. This he will have to do if he is to finish his work with honor to himself and advantage to Canada.

(Toronto News)

As it is, the opposition will go to parliament formidable in numbers and with some addition to its fighting strength. There is a sound and important public work to be done in opposition as in office. While it is natural that politicians should desire to capture the treasury benches, and while it is certain that the government deserved to be beaten, there is every reason to think that during the next four or five years the Conservative party on the opposition benches can do far better service for Canada than will be performed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, burdened by all the difficulties which he faces and by the character of a considerable section of the support with which he will have to deal in the House of Commons.

(Grenfell Sun)

One great lesson of the election just over, in the electoral district of Qu'Appelle and others throughout the west is, that the political future of western Canada, is in the hands of our foreign born, and lately enfranchised population. They are our future rulers. Wholly unacquainted as many of them are of British institutions and even of our language, they can be depended upon in the vast majority of cases to almost solidly go with the party in power. Influence which would not for a moment weigh with an intelligent British born and English speaking electorate, can be used with perfect success amongst them. We say this with no intention of disrespect but with a fair knowledge of its truth. It could not well be otherwise. Coming from countries where constitutional government as we understand it are unknown and where the government is always supreme, they are subject to pressure that others are not. It is not a very cheering prospect for the future of this country and points to need of a campaign of intelligent education to bring about a better condition of things.

(Winnipeg Telegram)

The significance of the result of the elections in Manitoba is that the political methods introduced by Clifford

Sifton into Canadian public life will not be tolerated.

The overwhelming popular vote in the last election can be given no other meaning. Siftonism has not been as close to the electors of other sections of Canada as it has been to Manitoba. But the people here, when once they knew the man and his methods have emphatically declared that such a man and such methods will not, if they can prevent it, be permitted to govern the development of western Canada.

The question the people of Manitoba are asking themselves today is whether they have been able by their action to eliminate the influence of Clifford Sifton and his crowd of hangers-on from the government of Canada.

Their opinion has been decisively expressed, but they are not the whole of Canada, and if the people of Canada are going to accept those whom the people of Manitoba decisively reject, that is their right and privilege. Still it is worth the while of our fellow citizens to remember that these men were rejected because of matters concerning which we had more intimate knowledge and a closer and keener personal interest.

It will be very hard on western Canada if Sifton can recover through the general verdict what he lost through the verdict of his own province. That is a fair issue to take as between the people of Manitoba and the west and their fellow citizens.

It can be said reasonably and fairly that the campaign in the west was entirely made to rid the government of Canada of influences which have been robbing the resources of the west, Canada's great empire, and, by the corroding influence of unblinking corruption weakening the foundations of our national life.

When the extraordinary power of an entrenched government over constituencies is considered can it not be said that the people of western Canada have made a noble response which is not merely a response to a campaign for decent government, but an appeal to the whole people not to neglect their interests because they are less numerous now, but to remember that the interest of one is the concern of all.

That is the message of western Canada to all Canada. The defeat of the Conservative party was a national mistake but it does not jeopardize the nation unless the west's message goes unheeded. Whatever party is in power let us keep corrupting influences out of our public affairs.

(Moose Jaw News.)

Eight Liberals and one Conservative, which is the standing of the parties in Saskatchewan should set the Conservatives thinking. How does it come that the party which carries British Columbia and Manitoba by large majorities, and practically breaks even in Alberta, can carry but one seat in this province? The matter should cause serious reflection. There is something very wrong with the Conservative party in this province. To blink at the fact is useless. Not only have the Liberals carried eight seats, but they have carried them by majorities which, in more than one instance, are overwhelming. How is it that in Alberta the Conservatives could make the contest very close in all but one constituency, while in Saskatchewan they have been beaten out of their boots? Conditions in the two provinces are approximately similar. It will be admitted that owing to the presence of a large foreign population and the larger number of homestead holdings the government exercises a stronger direct influence in this province than in Alberta; but these two influences do not account for the great difference in the strength of Conservatism in the two provinces.

Candid Conservatives in this province must confess that the fault is not in their stars but in themselves that they are so far in the minority. They are disorganized. As a matter of fact there is no central organization. True, certain organization work has been entrusted to certain persons who have done the best they could, but unbacked by substantial support they have been unable to do effective and permanent work. The result is chaos. Could one take comfort in the thought that in the recent campaign the Liberals had the better argument, then one might trust to time to improve conditions through its natural operations. But in no province had the Conservatives a better case than in Saskatchewan. Not only had they in common with the whole Dominion, suffered through the maladministration of the Laurier government, but they had a special grievance in that their constitutional rights had been curtailed, and upon them had been foisted an incapable and corrupt provincial government, performing no other function than registering the decrees of its Ottawa trustees.

Sound principles are a splendid possession; but unsupported that cannot in Saskatchewan place an opposition party in power. The day may come when, delivered from the bonds of necessity, public opinion may, at the call of duty, express itself fearlessly; but that day is not yet in this province. The homestead inspector is a power in the land. The lonely settler lacking conveniences in the power of the government to grant, votes for its promising candidate, not because he believes that all the promises will be fulfilled, but through hope that something good will fall. If an opposition would make headway against such influences it must have an effective organization. It must have a strong press. Its headquarters must be within the province not at Winnipeg. This implies radical changes in the present methods. To speak thus plainly may seem bold; but the justification is that affairs could not be more unsatisfactory than they are now. To build rightly the ground must be cleared; and those who do the clearing render the party a service.

In the light of election returns the Provincial Rights party appear a numerous and strong body. True, it is much the weaker body numerically but good judges admit that it is the ablest. Numerically its strength must be estimated by comparison with the Saskatchewan Conservative representation at Ottawa. Moreover, had the recent provincial campaign been of six instead of three weeks duration, it is doubtful if Mr. Haultain would not now be premier. Again the provincial Conservative organization, while with its hands tied it had to fight two governments. But in spite of these disadvantages it is numerous and influential. That it has done so well as it has in comparison to the straight Conservative party is a tribute to its leader and the cause it represents. At the same time it is a standing proof that there is something wrong with the provincial Conservative party.

The Liberal government is a well disciplined body, and can be only fought successfully by an organization equally effective. That it can be fought successfully has been demonstrated by the returns from Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia. What has been done in these provinces can be done in this province; but cannot be done with the present system. Most Conservatives will agree that reorganization must come; but some may think that it can be postponed without loss. They are mistaken. The work must begin at once. To wait till the issue of the writs, as has been done in the past, would be suicidal. It must also be remembered that the government organization is vigilant, while its strong press is daily inculcating Liberalism into the minds of thousands of new settlers who are ignorant of our political conditions. If this province is neglected by the Conservatives it will become so strongly Liberal that to change it will be next to impossible. The formative period is, relatively, the most important in the history of a country. In such a period are we in Saskatchewan now living.

BORDEN REACHES OTTAWA

Ottawa, Ont. Nov. 1.—R. L. Borden arrived in the city from Halifax this evening. But for the fact that it was Sunday, the local Conservatives would have organized a demonstration in his honor. On Saturday night Hon. Clifford Sifton and J. G. Turritt arrived from the west.

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