

every means, however contemptible, to obtain possession of the secrets which the Government to which they were accredited were guarding with jealous care. If Captain Borup's views of what is manly and honourable, with which the despatch above quoted seems disposed to agree, were true in fact, we should fain hope that the number of military men in the service of any self-respecting nation who would accept appointment on such terms would be very small. We should also be slow to credit Captain Borup's denial that he had sold the information so dishonourably gained to other nations unfriendly to the one whose interests were thus betrayed, for the man who would consent to act as military *attaché* on such conditions, even at the request of his own Government, and who could bribe a servant of the nation whose hospitality he enjoyed to betray his country, would scarcely be the man who could be relied on to refuse to part with the secrets thus gained to anybody, for a sufficient consideration.

**H**ISTORY records many instances in which statesmen and politicians have fallen from positions of great power and influence, in which their presence had come to be supposed indispensable, only to find that the nation and the world could get on remarkably well without them. But there are perhaps few cases in which the deposed citizen has himself chafed so violently under the discovery as has Prince Bismarck. It can hardly be said that the man who for a time filled the eye of all Europe, and who was and is the acknowledged founder of the united German Empire, has played either a nobly dignified or an unselfishly patriotic part in retirement. But his recent utterances with reference to the alleged mental attitude of the German authorities, and especially of himself as Chancellor of the Empire, towards Austria, bear away the palm for passionate recklessness even from anything he himself has previously said or done. Those words are likely to rankle long in the minds of the Austrian Emperor and Government, if they do not even seriously affect the stability of the Dreibund. The statement that as Chancellor of Germany he (Bismarck) always held Austria in such a position that the alliance with her could be cast off at pleasure, was by no means complimentary to himself as a man of truth and honour. But then we do not remember that Bismarck at the height of his power ever made much pretension to lofty principles of conduct. To consolidate and extend the German Empire was avowedly his ruling principle. No one ever supposed that he was or would be very scrupulous in regard to the methods by which this end was to be reached. To other peoples—especially to those so far removed from the scene of action as we in Canada—the chief interest in the present struggle between Bismarck and the “Young Man” who sits on the throne of his grandfather, centres in the opportunity presented for studying the character of the once great Chancellor. The object-lesson is instructive as showing how much mere singleness of purpose, under the sway of a will never “puzzled” by dread of moral consequences, or disturbed by insurrections of any kind in “the little state” of the inner man, may do to supply the strength and assure the success which we sometimes delight to think attainable only as the outcome of great mental and moral qualities. True, the success in this case proves to be but temporary, while the character supposed to be so strong fails to exhibit either loftiness or dignity in the hour of personal disappointment and adversity. In its more practical relations it may pretty safely be said that the Austrian incident removes the last hope which the fiery young Emperor has hitherto been vainly cherishing, of a reconciliation with his former chief adviser, apart at least from his full restoration to his former position of political absolutism—a condition which is probably now impossible of fulfilment, even were William himself disposed to give way. The German Empire may not be growing very fast in the direction of democracy, but it has, there can be little doubt, outgrown Bismarckism.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION—II.

**W**HY did the bye-elections last winter go in favour of the Government? This is an interesting question. Sir John A. Macdonald was dead; the census returns had astounded even the most ardent friends of the National Policy; the Langevin-McGreevy investigation had disgusted every man with honourable instincts in the country; Haggart was discredited; Chapleau smirched; the civil service shown to be rotten, and signs of general exposure and lack of confidence everywhere manifest. And yet constituency after constituency was carried for the Government, which could never be captured when Sir

John Macdonald was at his palm, and the fortunes of the Tory party looked brightest.

None of us is quite wise enough to state in oracular terms the exact cause of this remarkable result. The most that can be done is to think over it, study it and form the best opinion possible. Different persons will reach different conclusions, and from the general consensus something near the truth can be obtained. This much is clear, nothing is to be gained by looking at the matter with partisan prejudice. The most fatuous of all forms of folly is self-deception. Let us get at the truth, if we can, and see what is the matter with the Canadian people. It is quite likely that several circumstances combined to bring about such a result, and these should be dealt with in detail, taking, as far as possible, the minor ones first. Let it be premised, however, that every one of the reasons given below is firmly believed by some persons to be individually and solely the reason for the result. It is most likely, however, that the truth will be found in the aggregate.

1. The Quebec exposures. Many good people would put this down as the main reason for the revolution at the bye-elections; I put it down as least important. It is quite true that the country was greatly shocked at the Baie des Chaleurs transaction, and that it came to light at exactly the wrong moment. It is equally true that it afforded a comfortable excuse for every Tory in Canada to continue his support of a corrupt Government at Ottawa. But, after all, it was only a convenience, not a necessity. No intelligent or high-minded man in Canada wanted to see his country purged of corruption at Ottawa any the less because it was manifest there had been crookedness in Quebec. It is very opportune to the average Tory, when worried by references to the Langevin-McGreevy-Chapleau-Haggart exposures, to get over the whole business by saying: “Oh, but look at Quebec!” But that class of man would have voted Tory anyway, and, if the Quebec business had not occurred, he would have satisfied his conscience and answered his monitors by some other excuse equally meritorious, if not equally effective.

Besides, justice compels me to say that nothing was disclosed in connection with the Baie Chaleurs matter which directly affected Mr. Mercier or any of his colleagues. Mr. Pacaud made a haul, it is true, but he was not entrusted with any responsibility by the people, and it was his affair solely if he made clever bargains with contractors. Mr. Mercier is now a fallen Minister, and no one exists who is willing to risk a word in his behalf, though ready enough to bask in his favour a very short time ago; but this much may be said, and this is the record which history will make of his fall: “He fell because he was dismissed from office, and thereby lost the semblance of power. To accomplish this, a partisan Lieut.-Governor had to violate the Constitution. If the election had taken place with Mr. Mercier at the head of the Government, he would have triumphantly won, which puts a quietus on the apotheosis of Quebec morals, which has recently been proclaimed. If Lord Stanley should take the same course in reference to his Ministers they would be annihilated equally effectively. Corruption was condemned in Quebec because there was a Lieut.-Governor to dismiss a Ministry; corruption is condoned at Ottawa because there is not.”

2. Another cause of the Liberal defeat was lack of organization and general preparation. The Franchise Act imposes enormous labour and responsibility, but, if a party expect to win, this labour and expense must be performed and incurred. It is idle, when defeated, to say that it was done by stuffing the electoral lists. With eternal vigilance stuffing becomes practically impossible. In many constituencies in Ontario there has been for several years a very conspicuous lack of careful and systematic political work. It is not pretended that organization can completely overcome the results of policy, but it is a fact that in the game of practical politics scores of close constituencies can be changed from one side to the other simply and solely as the result of machine work in the way of ward committees and general care in matters of detail. It will be admitted that the series of defeats sustained last February and March opened the eyes of many leading Liberals to the fact that much that is essential to party success had been left undone, and too much left to chance. To defeat a Government under the conditions which now prevail, it is essentially necessary that the work begin early. Information in detail should be disseminated down to the very ranks and to the remotest districts. Interest in public affairs should be evoked by frequent discussion of the issues of the hour, and all the forces of each constituency should be called into play by all the arts and ingenuity of which practised politicians are capable. It is just in this that the Liberals of Canada have been lacking for some time past. Too much is left to the last moment. The announcement of dissolution finds half the constituencies utterly unprepared, and some instant shift has to be made and a blind chance taken, rather than a careful combination which has the elements of success.

3. The third cause of the Liberal losses in the bye-elections in Ontario was a sort of reaction against the policy of Unrestricted Reciprocity. This will be keenly disputed by the Liberal leaders, but it has nevertheless a measure of truth in it. Not, indeed, that the people, as a whole, had any less desire to secure a large measure of free commercial intercourse with the United States, nor any diminished confidence in its advantages. But the publication of Mr. Blake's letter and a more general apprehension of the question led many persons who were at first

simply concerned in getting the enlarged trade, to realize that it involved many things of grave importance, and there was a manifest sense of alarm and a disposition to pause for further light. When the subject is fully considered it will be discovered that all these great problems have, sooner or later, to be faced and decided, and probably the judgment of the country will be with the Liberal policy; but in February, 1892, the sentiment was in favour of a halt, and this told adversely in the elections.

4. Now we come to some of the really potent factors in the result. The Tory party and the large industrial interests got fully alarmed a year ago. The Government majority was small; Sir John Macdonald was dead; the scandals looked bad; the impression was general that the Government was doomed; the special interests that were created by, and exist upon the favour of, the Government, trembled when the hour of judgment was at hand; the united band of office-holders, who have been flourishing at the expense of the public, felt the heavens falling. It was a moment for a last desperate rally. The bye-elections must be carried if money and intrigue could do it. As a consequence we saw a combination of forces upon constituency after constituency that was unexampled even in this age when corruption is chronic. An organized brigade, with funds *galore*, went from county to county and stayed there until the election was safely over. There was no even contest in such circumstances. Such influences cannot be offset by a few large public meetings at which abstract questions of public policy are discussed. Just at this stage in our history it unfortunately happens that the worst means are the most effective. The Liberal party went into the bye-elections with nothing but the issues in their favour, and hence were bound to be beaten.

5. Another enormous factor was the overshadowing power of patronage. The Government was in and had a working majority; hence the general impression was that the true policy was to keep solid with the Government if anything was to be got. This has become so completely a recognized feature in our political institutions that no one now seems to regard it as an outrageous and abominable blot upon popular government. At this moment there is not a constituency in Great Britain where a candidate would dare to mount the hustings and say to the people: “Support me because I am in sympathy with the Government, and can therefore get favours; my opponent cannot, because he is in opposition.” Such a statement would drive a candidate in disgrace and contempt from the hustings. I am told on good authority that at a bye-election in England, on one occasion, a Government candidate ventured to suggest that it would be better to have a representative of the party in power elected. The result was electric. He was hooted from the platform and withdrawn as a candidate within twenty-four hours. There would indeed be hope of Canada if such a condition of things existed here. But unfortunately it is just the reverse. It is only the candidate that can and does promise Government spoils who has any reasonable chance of winning. At the last bye-election in the County of Queen's, N.S., the most vital question was the securing of a railway for the county. Mr. Morine, the Government candidate, upon every platform declared that he was the candidate of Sir John Thompson, and that he was authorized to say that a railway subsidy would be granted in the event of his being returned. And he as often declared that the only hope the people had of obtaining a dollar of Government assistance for a railway was by returning a member to support the Government. Was there any outbreak of popular indignation at this? Not a bit of it. It was regarded as most clever electioneering. Mr. Forbes' majority was considerably reduced, and he would have been defeated if tremendous efforts had not been made on his behalf in sections where the railway was not the burning question.

The test of the power of this patronage is very easy to find. If a general election were to take place to-morrow in Canada, with the present Government in power, it is not too much to say that impartial onlookers would regard the chances of success in their favour. But if, for any reason, Lord Stanley should get into difficulty with his advisers and as a result call in Mr. Laurier, who doubts that the new Government would sweep the country from end to end? The issues would be the same, but the difference can only be accounted for in the power of patronage. Need it be argued that this is an utterly vicious condition of things? That it is subversive of every principle of popular government, and inconsistent with any lofty national instincts. It is simply abominable, low and infamous, and the sooner men of honour and principle begin to seriously reflect upon it, and become satisfied of the necessity of a reform, the better it will be for the well-being of the country.

If this is pessimism then the Founder of the Christian religion was a pessimist when He drove the money-changers out of the temple and when He thundered his denunciations against the Scribes, Pharisees and Hypocrites. If we are to look on sweetly when the basest ideas of public life are canonized, the lowest methods applauded, and every sound principle of ethics ignored in the government of the country, and close our lips from fear of being anathematized as pessimists, then, indeed, the pathway to reform is a steep and rugged one.

There is yet another cause which contributed to the success of the Government in the bye-elections, but the consideration of that must be reserved for another occasion.