

Ontario Workman

THE EQUALIZATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL SCALE SHOULD BE THE TRUE AIM OF CIVILIZATION.

VOL. I.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 1873

NO 49

STRAY NOTES FROM THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT.

(From our own Correspondent.)

OTTAWA, March 18.

Most of the time of the Second Parliament, convened under the new constitution of the Dominion of Canada, has so far been occupied chiefly in considering election cases, in the discussion of the customary address from the Governor-General, and in the performance of work partaking more or less of a routine character. The warmest discussion concerning elections was that concerning the constituency of West Peterboro', where the Returning Officers, who alleged that Mr. Bertram failed to produce his declaration of qualification, had in consequence returned the other candidate Mr. Cluxton, although that gentleman polled but 700 votes, while his opponent polled 745.

Mr. Blake moved that the return in the case should be set aside, and that the seat for the constituency, which Mr. Cluxton had not taken, should at once by the House be given to Mr. Bertram. The discussion on this motion which involved the consideration of many points of importance, which a portion of the Canadian press have studiously ignored, was spirited, and drew in as it advanced, the ablest talents on both sides of the House. The leader of the Government argued that the real question for consideration was not whether the Returning Officer in this case acted legally, or illegally, or even which of the two candidates was *bona fide* the elect of the people of West Peterboro'; but it was whether cases of disputed election should go to a sworn committee of experts, partaking as nearly as possible of a judicial character, or whether they should be made the subject of party discussion, and party votes in the House, at the expense of the postponement of the legitimate business of the country. In England such cases have for many years been removed altogether from the arena of the House, and although this has not been invariably the case with us, there are many good men to whom the details of the contrary Canadian precedents are thoroughly familiar, who regard them as pitfalls to be shunned, than as paths to be followed.

As in the election of Speaker, so in the usual Address, the leaders of the Opposition deemed it politic not to oppose the course taken by the Government.

Mr. Tobin, the mover of the Address, is a young man of much promise. He has been three times Mayor of Halifax, and is of Irish parentage, Roman Catholic religion; and, although an eloquent speaker, does not belong to the professions, but follows the ordinary avocations of commercial life. His clear, ringing voice, and earnestness of manner, contributed no less than the quality of his discourse, in impressing the House of Commons very favorably on the occasion of his *debut*. The sixth paragraph of the Address brought out several of the young members of the House, most of whom were very kindly received, although very wide divergencies were made from the legitimate subject of discussion—the amendment of the Election Law. The criticisms of the Opposition—who, partly from a commendable wish to follow the custom now generally followed in England, and still more, perhaps, from weakness, failed to urge their threatened amendment—were in the main pointless and in some irrelevant. And no stronger proof could be given of the general fairness and soundness of the governmental programme than the failure of Mr. Mackenzie, with all his industry and mental acuteness, to show any capital sins of omission or commission in the ordinary formal foreshadowing of the measures to be introduced during the session.

A measure in favor of vote by ballot is the subject of much discussion, at least button-hole discussion, and the remarks of

one of the Hamilton members and, the inquiry of the other as to what course the Government will pursue in relation to a ballot bill, have helped to increase the interest already felt with regard to the subject. The recent rejection of this mode of voting in one of the maritime provinces is much talked about here, and although their system of voting was absolutely unprovided with checks against the introduction of abuses, to which the warmest friend of the ballot must admit this mode of voting to be liable, it is quite probable this rejection will be a source of much embarrassment to the attempt to carry such a measure here.

The Committee on Privileges and Elections are busily at work. Several of the Departmental Returns are before the House, and the usual *quantum* of petitions for all kinds of purposes—good, bad and indifferent—are pouring in with more than usual profusion. Amongst the latter, by far the more numerous for any one purpose, are these praying for restrictions to prohibit the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors. One of these presented yesterday, from Montreal, contained more than five thousand signatures.

Those of your readers who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, or who knew of his high reputation, will be as sorry as were his friends here, to learn of the sudden death of your late *confrere* of the Toronto press, Mr. Gregg, who died this morning, after a short illness, at the Russell House, in this city.

OBSERVER.

Communications.

TORONTO.

THE HAMILTON MASS MEETING.

(To the Editor of the Ontario Workman.)

SIR,—It was with great pleasure I saw a letter from Mr. John Mowatt respecting the late mass meeting and its objects.

The meeting was due an apology from myself for non-attendance, owing to a misconception of the departure of cars and a delay caused by the great traffic on the railway. However, I can assure Mr. Mowatt that far from the agitation belonging to "Party" politics, any measure calculated to benefit or oppress the working classes, will be favored or opposed, irrespective of any party feeling whatever, and we always look at "measures, not men," in any question affecting the people.

Such was my feeling when I advocated the "Reform" cause among my fellow-workmen, and such is my feeling now; and no matter what party give us measures that are reforms, they will receive a hearty support; and all measures falling short of this will receive opposition. So much for myself, and my knowledge of the leaders among the masses warrants me to believe the same feeling animates the majority of them. In respect to the present Ontario Government receiving strictures, I hold they merit all the "severity" of any attack made upon them by the mass meetings at which their actions have been discussed.

Commencing with the Lien Law:—Though Mr. Mowatt was highly satisfied with its original form, the large mass meeting at Toronto did not manifest any approval of it, the vote being unanimously against it. It has been my impression that all legislation should be based upon justice, and I am prepared to defend this view; yet I can find no justice in fixing the amount recoverable, under the law, at fifty dollars. If fifty dollars can be justly collected, why not forty-nine, or any sum? leaving the cost of collection to fix the limit. And this brings us to another important feature in the same bill—Section 3, and line forty-one, reads: "The registrar shall register such claim, so that the same may appear as an incumbrance against the land therein described, upon payment of a fee of one dollar;" and why one dollar? Is justice to be bought? My opinion is that it should be free to all. Passing over the question that it was a one-sided measure, not calculated to benefit workingmen, who seldom have fifty dollars to collect, I wish

to point out the allusion of Mr. Mowatt that "the 'Tories' never have done anything for us;" for when I see the great prosperity of the country under the rule of the so-called "Tories," I am not so sure that they have never done anything for us. I have a vivid recollection of an obsolete law being put in force by THE Reformer, and the Tory of all Tories bringing in a bill stopping such tyrannical reform measures in future. Surely Mr. Mowatt will concede that then the Tories did something.

I don't care if the "Arbitration Bill is a *fac simile* of the one in England." It is a bill not much calculated to improve our position, and I would rather depend upon the justice of our cause to win than settle our difference in a manner that gives the employers all the chance of winning, and the workmen none. I opine the step in the right direction spoken of by Mr. Allen was that the question had been legislated upon, and some people think that a great deal.

As to the question of Convict Labor, (the question which fell to my lot, and no one is more grieved than myself at my non-attendance), I can speak with more confidence about. I can assure Mr. Mowatt that he would have been gratified to find that it was the *Contract system* and the *Contract system* alone that would have been attacked. I hold that the first duty of the Government in respect to criminals is their reformation. Above all other things this should have the preference.

I can find no other just cause why a prison should be built if not for this purpose. And I think most people will coincide that this view is the correct one. Upon the first rumour that the prison labor was about to be hired out to contractors by the Ontario Government, the Toronto Trades' Assembly had a long and earnest debate upon the question in its various bearings, and they in their wisdom appointed a deputation to wait upon the Government, and urge upon them an opinion that the contract system was detrimental to the prisoners, as well as to the State and the people. I communicated with the Hon. Adam Crooks, asking permission for the deputation to wait upon him. I received a note from the Hon. gentleman appointing an early hour for the interview, in fact the hour was so early that I could not get the deputation together. Under the circumstances I went alone and was received in such a manner that stamped the Hon. gentleman as a *gentleman*. He listened with the greatest attention to my statement, and then entered into a conversation respecting the effect the contract system would have upon the parties interested. At the close of our interview, I asked that the deputation should be received at some future time, when he assured me he would be always happy to receive such a deputation. Afterwards the deputation waited upon the Hon. O. Mowatt, and the Hon. Adam Crooks, when the question was as well ventilated as was possible in so short a time, the arguments of the deputation being the injury to the prisoners by the contract system and the injury to outside workmen by the botch workmen who would be continually discharged from the prison. *It was distinctly stated by the deputation that they had no objection to offer against the prisoners having a trade if the trade was learned thoroughly, and that the only way to learn the prisoners a trade and reform them at the same time was by the Government taking sole charge of them, and whatever profit made from them would then help to pay for the administration of justice.* The deputation was assured that the matter was settled, and the contract signed; though months after this the question was forced up in the House, and the Government then moved that the House grant permission to the Government to sign the contract. Comment is needless.

I am glad that the Kingston prison has been brought up, and I can say so far as the contract system applies to either that or any other prison, our objection is quite as pointed, and we do not object to the Reform party or any other party in this mat-

ter, but we earnestly object to the contract system as being most demoralizing to the prisoners hindering their reformation and often injuring their health, a loss to the Treasury and an injury to outside workmen, the whole of which in the future No. 5. I will with your permission prove.

I am, dear sir,
yours, etc.,
J. W. LEVESLEY.

Toronto, March 17, 1873.

CHARADES.

No. 1.

Sometimes I'm hard at others soft,
In various shapes you have seen me oft,
I'm round and square and oval too,
Or any pattern named by you;
Both large and small each size between,
In colors numerous I'm seen;
You tread on me when out you walk,
I'm sometimes near akin to chalk,
Men give to me a kind of grace,
In every town I have a place,
Wherever houses may be found,
But I'm not always on the ground;
I tower high above your head,
And yet I'm on the ocean's bed;
Oft am I thrown by girl or boy,
Much prized and valued as a toy,
A weight I am well known in trade,
In fruit I'm often found 'tis said,
Yet to be mineral I claim,
And ask you now to give my name.

C. T. C., Hamilton.

No. 2.

A river in England,
A state in America,
A colony of England,
A country in Europe,
A mountain in Scotland,
A river in America,
A city of Italy,
A river in Africa,
One of the quarters of the Globe.

My initials, read downwards, will give the name of a popular man in England.

J. T., St. Catharines.

Labor Notes.

The free-stone cutters of Ottawa have adopted and are now working 9 hours as a day's work.

The Labor Reform Party of Portland, Me, mean to have an independent candidate for Mayor.

William E. Henry, Labor Reform Candidate for Mayor of Joliet, was elected over Porter, Democratic nominee, by 580 majority.

The members of the Trade Coopers' Organization (Ireland) have notified their employers that an increase of pay will be expected.

A movement is on foot to secure an amalgamation of all branches of framework knitters of the Midland counties of England.

In the House of Commons, Mr. Jacob Bright has presented a petition from 10,000 women of Manchester in favor of female suffrage.

The joiners and carpenters of South Shields are agitating for an advance of wages. They want 4s. extra per week from the 17th of March, and suggest a committee of masters and men to be formed for making a new code of rules. The answer of the masters is not yet given.

The biennial conference of the Birkenhead Operative Painters' Union was recently held at the Crown Hotel, Conway street, Birkenhead. During the past year sixteen new societies had been formed in connection with the general union, several of them being in the neighborhood of Birmingham and the Potteries.

Jenny Collins, the Boston working-woman, having made a great success of Boffin's Bower, now proposes to establish a school near the city, for instruction in domestic arts, especially cooking. She proposes to open a house and take girls to teach, giving them fair wages, and disposing of the cooked victuals at cost price in workshops and manufactories, where the operatives "carry their dinners."

A mass meeting of Edinburgh joiners was held on Saturday, the 8th instant, in St. Mary's Hall, Lothian street, for the purpose of considering an overture received from a meeting of employers, requesting a conference with the men in regard to the demand for a rise of wages on the 1st of March. The meeting unanimously agreed to send several delegates to confer with the masters, and to report the result of the conference to a future meeting.

James Donahue, Superintendent of the Free Labor Bureau, Nos. 8 and 10 Clinton Place, N. Y., makes the following report of business for the week ending Feb. 10: Applicants for employment, 711; of these there were 139 males and 582 females. Male help required, 112; female, 595. Situations procured for 96 males and 486 females. Whole number of situations procured for the week, 582.

The Locomotive Engineers of St. Louis are out on strike, and according to telegrams received, the strike assumed a serious character on Tuesday. It is stated that several locomotives have been thrown from the track, and that much property has been destroyed. If these reports be true, the strong arm of the law should be brought to bear, and the men guilty of such acts be punished to the utmost extent of the law.

THE SHIP-CARPENTERS AND CAULKERS.—The mechanics in this branch of business have recently had an evidence of the efficacy of union. A reduction of wages was attempted by the ship-builders, and the men refused to accept the proffered reduction. By this means the men preserved their wages and gained a triumph for the Union. But little time is made in this branch at present, owing to the amount of snow; but there is a good prospect of work and fair wages in the ensuing spring.—*Chicago Advocate*.

It is not often we have the pleasure of chronicling the fact of an employer recognizing the services of a worthy employee. But last week the old established firm of Heidelbach, Freidland & Co., clothing, presented Mr. J. H. Shufor who, for over twenty-four years, has been in the employ of the firm, with a magnificent silver water pitcher and goblets, and his fellow employees made him a present of a handsome china set. Mr. Shufor celebrated his silver wedding and entertained his guests in a right royal manner.—*Chicago Advocate*.

The demand for mechanics is increasing in spite of the cold weather, all trades except bricklayers. Plasterers and carpenters, joiners are usually engaged. The different car works are very busy, many of the hands working overtime to fill contracts. Moulders and machinists have plenty of work. Ship-wrights and caulkers are in demand, and many more hands can employment at Gibraltar, and other points on the line of the river and lakes. \$3.50 per day seems to be the ruling price for good hands in the different ship yards. The prospects are promising for a busy season for all who are disposed to avail themselves of the privileges offered of steady work and fair wages.—*Chicago Advocate*.

THE SCOTCH COLLIERIES.—A conference of Scotch miners' delegates was held in Glasgow recently. It was stated that the men employed at Messrs. Merry and Cunningham's pits in Motherwell and Wishaw had received an increase of 1s. per day. From the Glasgow district it was reported that some of the employers had promised the advance of 1s. on the 1st of March, and others had postponed it until the 17th, while the majority had refused to give a direct answer, but promised to consider the matter. A resolution was adopted to resist the employers' policy with regard to the special rules, and to send a memorial to the Home Secretary asking that a certificated manager should be resident at each colliery. It was also resolved that the men who had not received an increase of 1s. should again solicit their employers for it, and report the result at the next conference.