

The Commercial

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THE DOMINION ELECTIONS.

The recent contest has decided one point clearly, and that is, that little dependence can be placed upon the result of provincial elections, in estimating forecasts of an election for the Dominion Parliament. Within a few months previous to the dissolution of Parliament, provincial elections had been held in all the provinces of Canada, with most favorable results to the Liberals. These provincial contests were very generally supposed to foreshadow the overthrow of the Conservative Government in the coming Dominion elections. The Liberals therefore went into the contest with a great degree of confidence and enthusiasm. They pointed ecstatically to the Liberal victories in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, etc., as certainly indicating their success in the Dominion elections. On the other hand, the Conservatives could not but admit that matters looked serious for them. The result, however, has been quite a surprise to those who placed such unbounded confidence in the forecasts as gauged from the provincial elections. True, the Government has been returned with a very narrow majority, in comparison with its strength in the last House; but in Nova Scotia, where the Liberals made a clean sweep a few months ago, the Dominion Conservatives have now carried that province by a majority of two to one.

The result in Nova Scotia cannot be other than pleasing to those who would place their country before party. That province was swept by the Liberals at the time of the provincial elections on no less a cry than the dismemberment of the Canadian confederation. Their success was looked upon in the Old Country as the first step in the disintegration of the Dominion, and was hailed in the United States as presaging the dissolution of Canada, to be followed by a move in favor of annexation. The decisive victory for the Government, however, has completely knocked the legs from under the movement against the stability of the Dominion, and leads to the conclusion that the people were formerly misled by a party cry, which mistake they have now acknowledged and repudiated at their earliest opportunity. As in the Local, so in the Dominion elections, the repeal

agitation was the leading cry of the Liberals in Nova Scotia. The *Halifax Chronicle*, the leading Liberal organ, daily assured its readers that Mr. Blake's success would give them repeal from the Canadian confederation, to be followed by Reciprocity with the United States. To secure Repeal and Reciprocity, therefore, it was necessary to vote the Liberal ticket. But two-thirds of the people of Nova Scotia voted with the Government, and against Repeal and Reciprocity, thereby leading to the belief that they are not in favor of the two R's. There may have been other causes at work operating in favor of the Government, but in the absence of any definite knowledge on the subject, the conclusion must be, that the people of Nova Scotia are solid for confederation and ashamed of their past record. All Liberals who desire the stability of the Canadian confederation, and who look forward with hope to the future of the country, will rejoice at the utter rout of the repeal movement in Nova Scotia. The success of that movement in the late elections might have accomplished the temporary triumph of the Liberal party in Canada, but at best it could only have been a brief victory, for it would have carried with it the very elements of disintegration. Such a success would have ended in early disaster and the Liberals who wish their party as well as their country solid prosperity, will rejoice that the first movement to break up confederation, has been thus early annihilated.

In Quebec also, the movement against the Government was of such a nature as to call forth disapprobation from a large section of the Liberals in other parts of Canada. That it was not more successful there is good reason to feel thankful. It was essentially a movement to be depreciated by all who believe in race and sectarian equality. Had the Liberals been returned to power with a narrow majority, they would simply have been at the mercy of the Rielite party in Quebec. Such an event would have been nothing less than a disaster to the party in the near future, such as would have left it a wreck for many years to come. Those Liberals who are Liberals from principle, would prefer to see their party remain in opposition until such time as they could take office upon a solid platform, containing the elements of progress, solidity and prosperity for the country as a whole, rather than secure office temporarily and be at the mercy of Repealists, Rielites, etc.

By the time another election comes around, these elements of weakness will probably have disappeared, and perhaps by that time the Liberal party will be able to lay down a platform of principles and reforms which shall commend themselves to the good sense of the people.

In Manitoba the contest had the peculiarity of being confined to issues of purely local importance, and this peculiarity was heightened by the fact that both parties had practically the same platform. The great question at issue was that of disallowance, and on this point all the candidates were pledged to oppose the Dominion Government's policy of disallowing railway charters in this province. Manitoba is essentially a Conservative province, in the sense that the firm and enterprising spirit displayed by the Conservative Government in pushing forward public undertakings, in comparison with the more cautious policy of the last Liberal administration, has commended the present Government to the progressive people of the west. In regard to disallowance, however, the people of this province to a man are most determinedly apposed to the policy of the Government, but they evidently concluded that supporters of the Government, pledged to oppose disallowance, would be enabled to accomplish more than members in opposition. Should the Government decide to discontinue its policy of disallowance, (as has been lately announced), and thus remove our greatest grievance, there would be no part of Canada more heartily in accord with the present administration than the province of Manitoba. Regarding the questions of immigration, and the Hudson's Bay railway, all the candidates in Manitoba were pledged to support the interests of the province in those matters, regardless of party proclivities. Any movement by the Government toward assisting the Hudson's Bay railway project, or in the direction of securing a desirable class of immigration toward the Northwest, will meet with the hearty approval of the people of this country. With the greatly reduced majority which the Government will have in the next House, this country will stand a much better chance to secure its rights in the matter of disallowance. The four members from the Territories, (and perhaps some of the British Columbia members), may be relied upon to combine with the Manitoba members in forcing this matter upon the attention of the Government, and such a