

The Brain Browsers' Guide

Winnipeg, Wednesday, May 19th, 1915

GUILTY AND DISGRACED

It would be a very mild statement to say that the people of Manitoba were astounded last Wednesday when Sir Rodmond Roblin and the six members of his cabinet practically confessed themselves guilty of graft and corruption in connection with the new Parliament buildings contract, and forthwith tendered their resignations to the Lieutenant-Governor. Not only have each of the members resigned their portfolios, but it is also stated that they will resign their seats in the House and retire to private life, and that they will carry along with them into obscurity several private members of the Government party. Among the public men of Canada there are none who have been more ready than Sir Rodmond Roblin to impugn the integrity and blacken the character of any person who dared disagree with him politically, and in this he was aided and even surpassed by his newspaper organ—the Winnipeg Telegram. Neither has there been any public man more scathing in his denunciation of those who advocated reforms which he characterized as ridiculous and dangerous. Yet now this man, who has occupied for the last fifteen years the highest position in the gift of the people of Manitoba, publicly confesses himself unfit for public office. Just how deep is the guilt of Roblin and his colleagues it will not be possible to say until the Royal Commission finishes its investigation; but it is safe to assume that the record is a black one, or else such men would not have willingly and publicly accepted the brand of shame and ignominy as they have done. Public opinion demands that the investigation be carried to the extreme limit, and that anyone personally guilty, no matter how high his position, be punished to the full extent of the law. In the light of recent exposures the new Government should provide for judicial investigations into the past record of the self-convicted Government, and ascertain the amount of graft in the construction of the Agricultural College, the Court House, the Brandon Asylum, the purchase of the elevators, and other large expenditures of public money. There is no doubt but that the Roblin Government was deep in political corruption, and that it maintained its position by the use of a political machine which had no superior. But year by year, growing more autocratic, more corrupt and more callous, the Government finally collapsed of its own rottenness. Only six weeks ago the Government was fully prepared to whitewash the Parliament buildings graft by the aid of those human rubber stamps in the Legislature, who simply did as they were told by their political bosses. And right here is the secret of the corruption of the Roblin regime. It was due largely to the curse of partyism. The members of the Government party were simply licked into line like a bunch of cattle and did as they were told with intelligence equal to that of a well-trained dog or horse. Had they been possessed of courage or backbone, or had they exercised their God-given intellects, the present situation would never have arisen. Had Roblin placed a good Direct Legislation act upon the statute book he would not now be in disgrace, because the people would have

protected him from his own sins. For the people the lesson to be learned is the folly of supporting blindly any political party or any aggregation of politicians. If that lesson is learned thru the downfall of the Roblin Government the financial loss to the province will not be in vain.

To every well-wisher of his country there must come a feeling of sadness when men holding the highest positions of public trust and having the power to bring great benefits to their fellow men, deliberately betray their trust and give their fellows over to be plundered. It shows the great need of bringing our governments nearer to the people and forcing them to transact public business in the public view.

MANITOBA'S BRIGHT PROSPECT

Hon. T. C. Norris, the new Premier of Manitoba, comes to office with a clean record, and with a very progressive policy as endorsed at the Liberal convention in Winnipeg, March 27, 1914. Some of the features of the policy of special interest to farmers are:

1. Compulsory Education.
2. Referendum on banish the bar.
3. Reduction of liquor licenses.
4. Woman suffrage.
5. Direct Legislation.
6. An honest election act.
7. Assistance to farmers in the establishment of co-operative organizations for buying and selling.
8. Immediate establishment of a public abattoir.
9. Good roads, and money therefor to be spent thru municipal councils.
10. Hydro - electric development thruout the province.
11. Local option in municipal taxation.

It was upon this policy that the Liberal party received a majority vote at the elections last July. Practically all of this platform can be put into effect without the expenditure of public money, and the people of Manitoba may congratulate themselves upon having now in power a government pledged to progressive legislation and supported by men sincerely devoted to these reforms. No government in Canada has so progressive a policy as that on which Premier Norris and his colleagues have come into office. On the day after he was sworn in as premier Mr. Norris gave the following statement to the press:—

"The general policy of the Liberal party is well known to the people, because it was fully defined and dealt with during the general election last July and in the Legislature during the recent session. This policy will be strictly adhered to and carried out as rapidly as possible.

"In regard to the Parliament buildings, all matters will be thoroughly investigated, and action will be commenced forthwith against the contractors for the recovery of moneys improperly paid to them. This action will be pressed to a conclusion as rapidly as possible, and should it appear that any crime has been committed, the guilty parties will be prosecuted."

Within the next twelve months it may be assumed that Manitoba will take the foremost place among the provinces of the Dominion in legislation affecting the welfare of the common people.

The western farmers will raise a good crop this fall and get a good price for it—then the shearing will begin.

THANKS TO SIR DOUGLAS

The people of Manitoba, and, in fact, of all Canada, owe to Sir Douglas Cameron, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, a debt of the deepest gratitude. But for his courage the Parliament buildings graft would have been whitewashed by a subservient majority in the Legislature and the Roblin Government would have gone ahead to corrupt and debauch the province in the future. Sir Douglas, however, forced the appointment of the Royal Commission which Roblin knew meant political death. Our lieutenant-governors and our governors-general have been and are practically figure-heads, tho they possess absolute power to discharge governments at any time. If other governors would use this power as judiciously as has Sir Douglas they could serve their country in no better way.

THE NATIONAL POLICY

It is now nearly 40 years since the National Policy of high protection was inaugurated in Canada by the government of Sir John A. Macdonald, and it has been consistently supported by governments of both political parties ever since. That policy, it was confidently predicted, would build up the industries of Canada, bring prosperity to the people, develop our natural resources, and make us a strong, self-reliant and wealthy nation equal to all emergencies if trouble should ever come in the future. It is now, perhaps, opportune to ask where all this prosperity, self-reliance and wealth are to be found. It is true that a few people, manufacturers and other beneficiaries of Special Privilege, have become rich under the protection of the tariff, but the great majority of the people have found the tariff a burden, not a benefit. It has, in fact, been a means by which a few favored individuals have been permitted to put their hands into the pockets of other people and take from them, with the consent of the law, a portion of their earnings. The wealth which has thus been acquired, however, is not available for the use of the country in the present emergency, and it is not even being taxed. On the contrary, the taxes imposed upon the people who have been robbed under the tariff, the consumers, have been increased, and the manufacturers have been given added protection to enable them to levy still more tribute upon the people. As a National Policy protection has failed; as a Special Privilege policy it has been eminently successful.

PROSPECTS FOR LIVESTOCK

There can be no doubt that the Western farm is awakening to a realization of the value of livestock. There are several reasons for this increased interest. Cattle prices are very good at present, and owing to the wholesale disposal of all kinds of livestock when feed was scarce and grain high in price last fall, there is every indication that cattle will be in demand and will sell at a good price for some years to come. Winter is over and summer pasture is in sight. Naturally enough, farmers who have wintered over a number of stock on high-priced feed, are not anxious to dispose of this stock now that cheap feed