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TOPICS OF AN OLD-TIMER

Canadian Politics in the Early Forties Beginning of the Irish Period—The Administrations of Sir Charles Baggot and Sir Charles Metcalfe—Great Obstinacy of the Latter—Baldwin, Hincks Sullivan, Killaly and Drummond Fighting for Responsible Government—Irish Liberals Rallied to their Support—Advent of Mr. George Brown in the Reform Arena—Death of Lord Metcalfe—Earl of Elgin and Kincardine Appointed His Successor.

I notice there is a new life of the Earl of Elgin, written by Professor G. M. Wrong, of this city, just issued by a London publishing house. A review of it was published in the Globe magazine section last Saturday that interested me, but it was far from satisfying my desire for discourse about that distinguished statesman. It is my good fortune to have been here before Lord Elgin's arrival and to remember the mingled feelings of satisfaction and distrust with which he was received by the people of the province at that time. It was a period in our history when their imaginations were heated by the bitter party strifes that preceded his advent and there was much speculation as to the line of conduct he would pursue in dealing with the different parties and factions that had been clamorous for favors or denunciatory of his predecessors.

* * *

My own recollection goes back to the time when Sir Charles Bagot was governor and the parliament house was in Kingston. This was in 1842. Baldwin and Lafontaine and Hincks and Sullivan and Aylwin had just come into power; John Sandfield McDonald was to make his first speech in parliament and Responsible Government was the question of cleavabe. Sir Charles was in very poor health and tendered his resignation with the design of returning to England, but ere he could carry out that design his death took place. There was much sympathy expressed for him by the reformers, and he was credited with being a reform or liberal governor, although sent out by a Conservative administration. The Conservative press, however, criticized his conduct the same as if he had betrayed the party.

* * *

The Conservatives were in power in England with Lord Stanley at their head, and they sent out Sir Charles Metcalfe to guide the ship of state in North America. The new Governor had seen service in India and Jamaica, where he was absolute, and contemplated a constitutional government in Canada with a shudder; and besides he found that in the Baldwin-Lafontaine Cabinet he had able men to deal with. There were five Irish Liberals in that Cabinet and the Irish period had set in. Those men were Robert Baldwin, attorney-general west; Francis Hincks, inspector-general; R. B. Sullivan, president of the Council; Dominick Daly, secretary of state; H. H. Killaly, president of the Board of Works. Mr. Daly, however, was not in accord with his colleagues. The new governor soon showed his hand by making appointments without consulting his advisers and a conflict was at once the result. On the 26th November, 1843, all the members of the Government excepting Mr. Daly, rendered their resignations and the country was left without an administration. On the 9th of December parliament was prorogued with a new ministry taking the place of that which had resigned. Mr. Daly was the nucleus of the new administration, but no combination could be effected that would have any chance of being sustained. M. Vige, one of the French members, tried it; W. H. Draper, the ablest of the Conservatives of that period, tried it; but all in vain.

* * *

A Reform Association, of which Mr. Baldwin was president, was founded in December, 1843, and commenced to hold meetings. The first of those meetings was held at the association's rooms, corner of Front and Scott streets, with Mr. Baldwin in the chair. Hundreds were unable to obtain admittance. The speakers were Henry John Boulton, who proposed the first resolution; William Hume Blake, father of Edward Blake, who proposed the second resolution; William H. Perrin, James Henry Price, a lawyer prominent in those days; Jesse Ketchum, an American, but a prominent citizen of Toronto; William A. Baldwin, a relative of the chairman; a Mr. Cathcart; Mr. Skeffington Connor, a prominent Irish lawyer, and afterwards a member of Sandfield Macdonald's government; and Mr. George Brown. This was the latter's maiden effort. A gentleman who was present has told me that it was hard to understand the gentleman, he spoke with such a strong Scotch brogue. The great speech of the occasion, however, was made by the Hon. Robert Baldwin Sullivan, the Provincial Secretary, who was then undoubtedly the ablest speaker in Canada. But there were others. On that occasion also spoke Dr. Workman, later superintendent of the asylum; Mr. Malachy O'Donohoe, brother of the late Senator John O'Donohoe; Mr. Joseph S. Morrison, afterwards Judge Morrison; Mr. John Macara, a prominent Irish lawyer; and Mr. Boyd, afterwards Judge Boyd. That certainly was an Irish night, for of the whole list of speakers ten were Irish and Irish Reformers at that. The Celts, evidently, were not in unison with Lord Metcalfe or Mr. Dominic Daly, "the everlasting secretary," who had deserted his Irish fellow countrymen in their hour of need.

This was the time when the Governor found a defender in the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, who published a pamphlet written by him, signed "Legion," and which was ably replied to by Hon. R. B. Sullivan, over the non de plume of "Leonides." After nine months of constant effort and discouraging disappointments, Lord Metcalfe was only able to write to the Colonial Office that he would soon be able to announce the formation of an Executive Council for the province. When announced the names were Mr. Dominic Daly, Provincial Secretary; Mr. D. B. Viger, President of the Council, a French-Canadian; Mr. W. H. Draper, Attorney-General for Canada West; Mr. D. B. Papineau (brother of the rebel leader), Commissioner of Crown Lands; Mr. William Morris, Receiver-General; and a Mr. Smith, Attorney-General for Canada East. This office had been declined by four French-Canadians. It was resolved by the Governor and his new advisers to dissolve parliament and call a new election, because the new and incomplete cabinet would not stand for twenty-four hours in the popular chamber as then constituted. But the election which followed favored the Governor and the Conservatives by a very small majority. The new parliament met in Montreal. The first trial of strength took place on the speakership. The opposing candidates were Sir Allan Napier McNab, who was put forward by the Conservatives, and N. Morin, a French-Canadian, who was put forward by the Reformers. Thirty-nine members voted for McNab and thirty-six for Morin. This choice made the Reformers furious, for McNab was an ultra-Tory and leader of the family compact. Mr. Baldwin's speech in moving an amendment to the address, was said to be the most able ever heard in parliament and had a telling effect. Mr. Draper was the ablest spokesman of the Administration, smooth, plausible and effective, and he defended the Governor with great ability.

* * *

The last election brought into the House another Irishman of known talent—Louis T. Drummond of Montreal—against whom a petition had been presented, but it was not received. Also, one of a somewhat sinister character found a seat in this House, Mr. Ogle R. Gowan, Grand Master of the Orangemen, for Brockville. Mr. Small moved for leave to bring in a petition against Messrs. Sherwood and Boulton, the two Conservatives elected for Toronto, but it was not allowed. There were vacancies in the Government to be filled, but the Government majority was so uncertain that not one of the Conservative members could be spared from the House for re-election, so the Government determined on an adjournment of the Assembly, and a long adjournment at that—from the 20th December, 1844, to the 1st Feb. 1845. It was claimed that such an adjournment would cost the country $60,000; and then Mr. Gowan, as a compromise, proposed from the 24th of December, 1844, till the 3rd of January, 1845. This was carried contrary to the expectations of its movers, as they really wanted the long intermission.

* * *

A bill was brought in affecting the Irish laborers working on the canals, to disarm them. This was at the instance of some of the Orange members, who did not want to see the Catholic laborers in possession of arms to defend themselves against attacks of their enemies. The Baldwinites defended the canalers and Mr. Drummond reminded the House that commissioners had been appointed to enquire into the canal riots. "Men," he said, "who had been branded as "savages" were not so by nature, but had been goaded to error by the violence of their task-master."

* * *

Dr. Barker, editor of The British Whig of Kingston, wrote to his paper about the venality of the majority of that House and the Government of the day: "I am heartily sick and disgusted with Montreal and the House of Assembly and wish myself at home a thousand times. I go every day after dinner to pass the time in the reporter's box, and when I get there can't stay an hour. Some piece of chicanery or double-faced intrigue is sure to provoke me and send me out with a flea in my lug. Let the matter be ever so bare-faced or scandalous, you are sure to see lots of honorable members advocate it and defend it unblushingly. The Lower Canada members appear to much greater advantage than their Upper Country brethren. All the quarreling and fighting—all the fending and proving—all the special pleading and false coloring—are left to the Conservatives."

At this time so far as responsible government was concerned, the condition of things was no better than when Metcalfe was without an Executive Council. Ministers took no notice whatever of a defeat. The whole party or mob professing to support them, presented a sickening picture of corruption, deceit and self-seeking in all its multifarious forms.

The Home Government had raised "Sir Charles" to the peerage and an address of congratulation to him was voted by the assembly. Mr. Baldwin did not participate in this address, and Mr. Aylwin, who was the best speaker in the House, said "he could congratulate neither Sir Charles Metcalfe nor the British House of Peers. So far from deserving a peerage, Metcalfe should have been taken home and tried for high crimes and misdemeanors. Others spoke in a similar strain.

A member of the Government named Robinson, Solicitor-General for Lower Canada, at last was so disgusted that he tendered the resignation of his office. Mr. Draper, the Premier, assured the Governor that the Administration could not go on without an infusion of new blood. The Ministers were wanting in weight and influence. Mr. Robinson was censured by his Conservative friends for abandoning the ship of state. His reply was: "Mr. Speaker, though I am poor, I can afford to lose my office, but I cannot afford to lose my character." The Draper Administration had declared they would stand or fall by a University Bill that they had introduced, but when they were compelled to drop that bill not one of them showed any sign of quitting his seat. M. Papineau introduced an education bill. M. Morin, speaking on the measure, said the Government had attempted by corruption to procure assistance from the Liberal side of the House. Proof of the statement was challenged. Lafontaine replied that he was prepared at any moment to prove attempts to corrupt the House on the part of the Ministry. Many of the French members on applying to the Government regarding the business of their counties, were met by the answer that they did not support the Government. To which a member named Bertrand replied: "What! must we sell our consciences to procure justice in this House?"

* * *

Parliament was prorogued on the 29th of March, 1845, the session having been ended. And poor Lord Metcalfe, who was at heart an honest man and whose nature shrank from intrigue, found himself in a very sad plight.

* * *

Lord Metcalfe came to Canada an unwell man. I saw him in Hamilton at a public levee he held in Press's Hotel. He was a rather stout man with a broad, rubicund face, which was affected by a cancer. A life of chloride of zinc was far from comfortable. He could not shut his right eye. Sometimes he feared he could not open his mouth. He had an idea that the Reformers were disloyal to the crown and that it was incumbent on him to stick to his position and control them. He tried to make light of his sufferings. He was, no doubt, an honorable man; but it was strange he could not see that both Baldwin and Lafontaine, the leaders of his opposition, were two men sans peur et sans reproche and labored alone for the good of their country, while he was only whimsical himself. But that was an obstinacy characteristic of his countrymen.

* * *

Dissatisfaction at last began to break out in his party. The appointment of Hon. William Cayley as Inspector-General gave proof of this. Ogle R. Gowan ridiculed the appointment, and he was a prominent member of the House. The Cobourg Star newspaper, under the editorial management of Mr. Crofton, an Irishman who wrote humorous sketches for that paper under the nom de plume of "Uncle Ben," fired into the Administration with grape and canister. I knew this gentleman well in Toronto afterwards and know that he was a strong Conservative.

* * *

The end of Lord Metcalfe's troubles was rapidly approaching. In October he wrote to Lord Stanley that the disease had affected his articulation. There was a hole through his cheek. His doctors warned him that it would soon be out of his power to perform his duties. The physicians thought it would not be safe for him to leave Canada in the winter and he tried to cling to his position to the last. On the 2nd of November Lord Stanley wrote him enclosing an official letter accepting his resignation, but authorizing him to make use of it or not, as he saw fit. The Queen sent him the kindest messages.

He consulted his Canadian friends and left it in their hands whether he should resign or hang on in his misery. They advised him to seek rest and restoration in his native land, and on the 25th of November he embarked for England without a demonstration of any kind. He arrived in England on the 16th December, 1845. Death was now merely a question of time. He had hoped to take his seat in the House of Lords, but it was not to be. Never for a second was he free from pain excepting when drugged. He secured a place of residence on Mansfield street and was attended by Sir Benjamin Brodie. In the month of April, 1846, he retired to a quiet country seat in the neighborhood of Basingstoke. The disease caused the bursting of a vein in his neck and the hemorrhage was alarming. With the close of the month of August a fever set in. The presentiment of near death was upon him and he soon thereafter gave up the ghost.

* * *

On Lord Metcalfe's retirement Lord Cathcart, the Commander of the forces in Canada, was commissioned to administer the Government. On the 20th of March, 1846, Parliament was opened in Montreal. Soon the Draper Administration was defeated. In a House of fifty-one members the Government not only twenty-seven votes. But they did not even then resign. In July there was a reconstruction of the ministry, Mr. Henry Sherwood, member for Toronto, going out, and Mr. John Hillyard Cameron getting his place of Solicitor-General for Canada West, and bringing in Mr. W. B. Robinson with him. But the Ministry was "a thing of shreds and patches." Sick of unsuccessful public life, Mr. Draper determined to go on the bench. But who was to succeed him? Sir Allan McNab or John A. McDonald? While this question was being discussed it was announced that James the eighth Earl of Elgin and twelfth Earl of Kincardine, had been appointed to the exalted position of Governor-General of Canada and British North America.

In my next I propose to give a description of Lord Elgin's career in Canada.

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PERSONAL.

Mr. S. Charles Graham, formerly of The Register, now of the Free Press, Winnipeg, is a visitor in the city on his way to New York.

EXTRA MURAL STUDENTS

May take their Degrees—Important Announcement Made by the Rector of Ottawa University.

Though privately held, the annual commencement exercises of Ottawa University last week proved most edifying and were marked by a few incidents of real importance.

Very Rev. J. E. Emery, O.M.I., D.D., rector of the university, presided, and the entire faculty attended.

Mr. J. F. White, principal of the Normal School, on receiving the degree of LL.D., delivered a most instructive and comprehensive address. He spoke most entertainingly of the university in the past in academics and athletics. On the need of culture and aesthetic refinement in education he laid special stress. He emphasized also the need, here in Canada, for the members of the two predominating races to get together, as they can in Ottawa University, and understand each other.

Dr. White made several references to the need of religion in education, insisting strongly on the benefit accruing therefrom.

Very Rev. Dr. Emery in his address made the important announcement of the university's extra mural course of studies. By taking up the programme of study prepared by the faculty, persons engaged in other occupations can take the examinations and qualify for degrees. He pointed to Messrs. J. J. Leddy, principal of St. Patrick's separate school, Ottawa, and Mr. J. J. Lonergan, Buckingham, as successful in the intermediate examinations this term.

By establishing this course Ottawa University has now branched out the same as Queen's and Toronto universities have done.

Speaking of the severe trials the university experienced in the destruction by fire of the old building, Rev. Dr. Emery expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the students, past and present, for their staunch fidelity to their alma mater. They had made a magnificent stand, thanks to which the New Alumni Hall, in which the exercises were held, is well advanced in construction. They had been tried by sore difficulties, but had remained true throughout. He exhorted all the students and the graduates, to become apostles of the university, and sound its praises wherever they went.

With the presentation of Mr. J. F. White's honorary degree of LL.D., Very Rev. Dr. Emery said: "In honoring Mr. White, we honor the whole teaching fraternity and ourselves, for in him we have a man who is a credit to the profession, and one who has done much for the cause of education in Ottawa and in Ontario. The University is to be congratulated. The University is to be congratulated on having added to its alumni so distinguished an educationist."

Mr. F. W. Grey received the degree of M.A., and the following B.A's were awarded: John J. Freeland, Roderick J. Byrnes, John E. Burke, all of Ottawa, and John C. Walsh, Read, Ont.

Mr. J. E. Burke, the valedictorian, acquitted himself with distinction in the impressive and feeling address of farewell to the scene of his studies so fraught with pleasant memories. His words were addressed and appealed in turn to the faculty, the alumni present, especially the classes of 1900 and 1901, who held their reunion the previous night, and to the present students.

The conferring of degrees and awarding of medals, certificates, diplomas and prizes followed, taking up about an hour and a half altogether.

Mr. Martin Brennan, Ottawa, received his commercial diploma, but his name was accidentally omitted from the list published yesterday.

BARRIE CORRESPONDENCE

MARRIED.

In St. Mary's church, on Tuesday, June 20th, at 6.30 a.m., two of Barrie's most popular young people, Miss Mary Isabel, second daughter of the late James Graham, and Mr. Charles T. Devlin of the firm of Devlin & Murchison, and only son of Bernard Devlin, Esq., were united in marriage by Very Rev. Dean Egan, assisted by Rev. Father Finnegan. The bride, who was attired in a grey silk shirt waist suit, with blue hat, and grey feather stole, and carrying a shower bouquet of white roses, entered on the arm of her uncle, Mr. P. J. Lynch, assistant superintendent G.T.R., as the organ pealed forth Mendelssohn's Wedding March, played by Miss Lena Dalton. The bridesmaid, Miss Anne Graham, sister of the bride, was attired in a green shirt waist suit, with white hat, and carried American beauty roses. The groom was assisted by Mr. Frank B. Guilfoyle, Collingwood, cousin of the bride. Although at such an early hour, the church was filled with friends of the young couple and the full choir rendered Leonard's mass. After the ceremony the bridal party drove to the home of the bride's mother, Mulcaster street, where, after the usual congratulations the wedding breakfast was served. The bride, who is the possessor of a highly trained contralto voice, was made the recipient of an address and silver tea service by the choir, of which she is a valued member. Numerous other wedding gifts testified to the popularity of the bride and groom. Mr. and Mrs. Devlin left amidst showers of rice and old shoes, by the 8 a.m. train for Detroit and other American cities. On their return they will reside at 75 Mulcaster street, where Mrs. Devlin will be "at home" on the second and third Thursdays.

Mr. Will. J. Lynch of St. Michael's College, accompanied by Mr. D. Sullivan of Brushton, N.Y., is home for the summer vacation.

Mr. Day, of Guelph, has joined the staff of the Union Bank here.

Miss Maud Sheppherd left last week for her home in Kingston, where she will spend a month.

Very Rev. Dean Egan and Rev. Father Finnegan, were pretty busy lately administering the Holy Sacrament of Matrimony to the many candidates who presented themselves.

Mrs. W. L. Patterson, "Glen Logie," has returned to town, accompanied by her son Ronald.

Mr. John Coffey, having completed his commercial course in Saint Michael's College, Toronto, is spending his holidays at his home in town.

Dr. Charles Powell is spending his vacation with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Powell.

Mr. Sullivan of New York, Professor of Christian Doctrine at St. Michael's College, Toronto, is in town the guest of Mr. and Mrs. P. Lynch, Mulcaster street.

A. O. H. CONDOLENCE

At the last regular meeting of Div. No. 1, Ladies' Auxiliary to A.O.H., the following resolution of Condolence was unanimously passed:

Whereas it has pleased our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom and Justice to take to Himself Mr. Downey, the beloved brother of our worthy sisters, Mrs. M. Fahey and Miss L. Downey, therefore be it resolved that while we deeply sympathize with the members of the family in the loss they have sustained, we humbly pray that God may give them strength to bear it.

Signed on behalf of the Auxiliary—Mrs. P. Mohan, Miss M. Rahelley, M. E. Mallon, secretary.

Canadian Party In Imperial Parliaments.

It is a curious fact that Canadians who have ambition to be members of the Imperial House of Commons mostly take to the Liberal side in politics. The fact mentioned by English contemporaries in connection with the candidature of Mr. J. Allan Baker for East Finsbury. Mr. Baker, it is confidently expected, will win the seat. With his advent there will be a Canadian Liberal Party in the House larger, as an English paper points out, than the famous Fourth Party ever was. "First of all there are two former Liberal members of the Canadian Parliament in the Commons — the Hon. Edward Blake and Mr. Charles Devlin, the member for Galway. Both are Canadian born. Then comes Dr. Macnamara, the Liberal member for Camberwell, who is a native of Canada. Mr. C. D. Rose, who won a notable victory at Newmarket for the Liberal cause the year before last, is a Canadian, and the son of Sir John Rose, Bart. Mr. G. M. Brown, the Liberal member for Central Edinburgh, son of a prominent Liberal in the Dominion, also ranks among the Canadians; and if Mr. J. H. Lewis, the Liberal member for Flint District, is not a Canadian, he at least lived in Canada, and received part of his education at Montreal University. As against this, the Protectionist and Tory side of the House of Commons has succeeded in producing two Canadians—Sir Gilbert Parker and Mr. Bonar Law. We need not allude to the fact that Mr. Parker has been seeing ghosts of Tory friends, but rumor is still quiet about Mr. Bonar Law. The Register hopes after the general election to see Mr. Hamar Greenwood also sitting on the Liberal side.

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