

The Nest of Traitors.

During the last years of Conservative rule matters went from bad to worse, and it was no wonder the country did not progress. While the members of the Government were quarrelling and instigating election rascalities the people stood aghast in amazement; the people by their votes, however, turned the "nest of traitors" down.

The year 1896 will go down in history as the year in which Tory misrule received its quietus in Canada. It was in the early days of that year that the dissensions and bickerings which had been going on for months in the Tory Government culminated in the strike of the "Seven Bolters," which was aptly described by the then Premier, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, as "the blackest piece of political treachery on record."

The Ministers of the Crown, the sworn advisers of Her Majesty in Canada, had been quarrelling amongst themselves for months. It is a well-known principle of Constitutional Government that the Ministers of the Crown must be in perfect harmony one with another, and when they fail to agree a change in advisers is imperative. Yet here was a crowd of men, some of whom were not on speaking terms, and one of whom accused another of them of writing anonymous letters villifying his character, holding on to office week after week and month after month for the sake of gain. And all the time the Canadian public were being told by these same men "that never was the Cabinet more united than it is at the present time."

In the latter days of 1895 the Tory Government realized that its days were numbered, and that at the first opportunity the people of Canada would drive them from office. The gang of professional politicians who had been living on the Canadian public, men who could not earn a livelihood in any other way, and some of whom were actually members of the Cabinet, became alarmed and realized that something desperate must be done. They had to face the electors in a number of bye elections, and a conspiracy was hatched to make a scapegoat of the Premier, Sir Mackenzie Bowell, who was considered by them as a "stubborn old nuisance." Sir Chas. Tupper, who was then High Commissioner in London, was secretly sent for. He could be relied upon, at any rate, to let the Boodlers and Grafters dip into the public chest at their own sweet will. The general elections must take place immediately after the then coming session, and an immense campaign fund had to be provided if the gang were to have a ghost of a chance to hang on to office. In answer to the secret invitation of the conspirators, among whom was Tupper *filis*, Sir Charles left for Canada, ostensibly "to consult the Government respecting the Fast Atlantic Steamship Service." Parliament was called together for January 2nd, 1896, and meanwhile "the Cabinet was never more united."