

# THE EVENING STAR

VOL. 1.—No. 45.

Toronto, Canada, Thursday, December 15, 1894.

PRICE TEN CENTS.

## MARTER ON PROHIBITION

The New Conservative Leader Develops a New Policy.

HE IS SATISFIED THAT PROHIBITION REFORMERS WILL NOT VOTE WITH HIM AND THAT ANTI-PROHIBITION CONSERVATIVES WILL VOTE AGAINST HIM.

HE RECOMMENDS DROPPING PROHIBITION FROM THE PLATFORM.

On Wednesday evening of last week the Conservative Association of No. 5 ward Toronto, held a meeting which was largely attended, and which was addressed by several gentlemen. The chief speaker of the evening was Mr. G. F. Marter, M.P.P. leader of the Opposition in the Ontario Legislature. It was the first occasion on which he had appeared before the public since the London election, and there was to obtain amount of speculation as to any reference he might make thereto, but nobody for a moment dreamed of what was coming.

Mr. Marter frankly took his audience into his confidences, told them exactly the cause of the party's defeat in London, expressed the opinion that a mistake, to a certain extent at least, had been made in the lines of the policy laid down, and announced his belief that there was neither London nor policy in continuing any agitation simply for the sake of agitation. That our readers may fully understand what transpired, we give the résumé of his speech as published in *The Empire*, as follows:—

The London election was a feature of Mr. Marter's discourse that was listened to with great interest. "I have had a great disappointment," said Mr. Marter; "after disappointment in London, I had come a little later in life, when I should be more seasoned as a leader, it would not have mattered so much, perhaps. We had a great many elements to contend with. In saying what I did in

London I was speaking out the sentiments of my heart; I am sorry to say that they did not meet with the response from the people who should have stood by us. It was because they deserted their principles that we were defeated. But I can stand defeat. We have been vanquished by those who should have stood shoulder to shoulder with us, if principle means anything."

Mr. Marter then went on to say that he was a man who believed that the party would be benefited by not being afraid to receive suggestions. "I think we could spend an hour probably now in talking of the policy of the party in a general way, every man having a suggestion to offer being allowed to do so. We want to be with the people and of the people."

On the abolition of the separate schools, Mr. Marter said that the views he had held at London and elsewhere had been given in all honesty. It was a pity they had never been introduced into the province. While holding these views other thoughts had come into his mind. After all, could the schools be abolished? "I have been told by eminent legal lights," said Mr. Marter, "that it is utterly impossible to abolish them, and I ask: Is it worth keeping up an agitation for agitation's sake? What would be the ultimate result the speaker could not say.

"If we cannot abolish that which has caused so much discussion," he continued, "is it worth keeping up agitation when that is all that can come of it?"

In the matter of teachers for the public and separate schools Conservatives wanted all to pass the same examinations, and Roman Catholics objected to this. Mr. Marter asked: "Is it our place to try and force it down their throats?"

He went on: "We say in the Local Legislature that the schools, public and separate, should be inspected by the public school inspector; he may be Protestant or Roman Catholic; we want one set of inspectors only. But we find our friends of the church opposed to us. We want the text-books the same; and we thought this would at least be a move in the right direction. But here are facts; We have been fighting this matter for about fifteen years, and what progress has been made on the question? I have no quarrel with any Roman Catholic, friends, and we should pull together, eye to eye, and towards the upbuilding of this province."

Mr. Marter then turned his attention to the situation down by the sea. In Nova Scotia, for instance, where separate schools had no right to exist by law, in districts where Roman Catholics were sufficiently numerous and asked for separate schools, the Protestant school commissioners always acceded to the request. Roman Catholics looked on the matter as a religious duty, and the commissioners consider the request a natural one.

"I say I don't think it is wise to keep up an agitation on the question solely for agitation's sake," declared Mr. Marter. "I don't want to do it. I am speaking for myself." He suggested that a conference be called on the subject.

The temperance question was equally interesting. "I possibly was foolish in my stand on this question," said Mr. Marter, referring to the London election. "I had more confidence in the temperance men than perhaps I should have. There is a lesson to be learned from it, and it is this. That it is foolish to trust for success on the Reform temperance men of the province of Ontario. (Applause). I am glad that those who are in the business have more confidence in us than in the other fellows. They estimate it this way: The Mowat Government has been in power twenty-two years, and they have not given Prohibition yet, and they won't as long as they are in power."

Referring to Hon. Mr. Ross' speeches at London, Mr. Marter said that, although Mr. Ross was an older man in the temperance field than himself, he had never referred once to Prohibition.

"If Prohibition is worth anything," Mr. Marter declared, "it is worth standing up for before every kind of a crowd."

There the *Empire* report ends on this subject, but, later, Mr. Marter said this: That the Reform Prohibitionists would not leave their party in support of that principle, while the Conservative anti-Prohibitionists took him at his word and voted against him. Did they propose agents to hand over a constituency to his opponents merely for the sake of displeasing a large number of his own supporters. Before saying anything further, however, we will give the editorial remarks of the *Empire*, which paper

undoubtedly speaks by the book and on the authority of the party:—

At a Conservative meeting last evening in the city Mr. Marter, the Opposition leader in the Legislature, discussed with much frankness the effect of the by-election in London and its relation to the policy of his party. The size of the majority given to the Government candidate in London was bound to give rise to reflections as to how far the adverse verdict was the result of the statements of Opposition policy put forward during the contest. Prominence was given in the public speeches of the candidate and his supporters to two questions, namely, the agitation against separate schools and the demand for Prohibition. The professing Prohibitionists in London undoubtedly did much to settle the fate of that policy as a practical issue in politics by piling up a large majority for the Government candidate, and they have no ground for complaint if there is a general tendency amongst Conservative temperance men to look with grave suspicion on professions of zeal which bear no result in the ballot box. In view of the London election, it is not possible that Prohibition can be made a party issue, or that any party can afford to sacrifice its strength in provincial policy for the sake of those who steadily desert the standard whenever it is raised, as the London Prohibitionists did. In view of an agitation against separate schools, Mr. Marter is to be commended for his frankness in enquiring whether, in view of the fact that the constitution so clearly provides for their existence, it is wise to continue an agitation merely for agitation's sake.

There are sincere men who desire to promote temperance by attempting to carry Prohibition, but they will be the first to admit that it cannot be made a party issue in the face of elections like that of London. Nor would it be possible to make it part of the provincial Conservative platform without a clear mandate from the rank and file of Ontario Conservatives. On the question of separate schools, any serious proposal for abolition raises at once with even greater distinctness the clear duty of a Conservative leader. These schools exist as part of the bargain made in good faith at Confederation, and are engrained in the constitution, so that an agitation to change the constitution is not warranted by any declarations ever made by the Conservative party in this province, and could not be undertaken without the consent and approval of that party. Mr. Marter is wise in recognizing the plain facts of the situation.

Taken altogether then the result is this: The Conservative leader, backed by the Conservative organ says, we placed two issues before the electors, one the abolition of separate schools, the other Prohibition. In doing this, says Mr. Marter, I spoke my honest views and convictions,

Underham & Worts "1884 SPECIAL." Fully Matured in Wood,

AND GUARANTEED  
TEN YEARS OLD