



The CANADIAN COURIER

The National Weekly



Vol. XV.

May 16, 1914

No. 24

THE Labour member in the Ontario House was having a real busy time all by himself. Studholme seldom does anything that anybody else does or the same thing the same way. So while Mr. Rowell, leader of the Opposition, tilted for two or three hours with Mr. Hanna and Mr. McPherson and the Speaker during the last debating session of the House before another election comes on some time before snow flies again, the member for Hamilton diligently changed his boots. He took the laces out of the pair he had on, strung them into another pair that he hauled from the inside of his desk in the front row, and pulled them carefully on. Then, without budging his black skull cap a 'steenth of an inch, he thriftily wrapped the pair he had discarded into a copy of the Evening News—because that in his way of thinking is a good way to use the News. Then he ferreted out a piece of string which was even more snarled up than the argument then going on about redistribution; and when he found he couldn't unsnarl it, he drew a pair of huge scissors out of a wooden scabbard, cut it in sections and tied it up again. Then, with one end of the string in his teeth, he tied that bundle of boots and laid them on the desk to wait until the adjournment immediately preceding prorogation.

Sir James was not present that day. He had not been in the House since last session. But on Friday he would be on hand to take part in the polite ceremony of proroguing the Legislature. Mr. Hanna, Mr. Foy and Dr. Pyne were all at their desks. Adam Beck was somewhere in the building. And the leader of the Opposition was having a very serious time, as he always does, trying to make the Government hew to a chalk line. It was just after the memorable affair over Mr. Hanna and Inspector Snider, out of which Mr. Hanna emerged as successfully as he did from the Central Prison affair last session. The Provincial Secretary has come to the time of life and experience when flies don't bother him like they used to. He is a humourist now, and somewhat blase. At the same time he has his coon-hunting eye peeled for what might possibly happen if Mr. Rowell and his supporters should be able to postpone the next election until after Sir James decides to retire. But Sir James has not retired. Not yet. He has gone through too much lately to let go what he has left just because it looks easy. He intends to lead the Government party in the next election. That will simplify things a good bit for Mr. Hanna and some other folk in the Cabinet. Because the Cabinet is still a unit behind Sir James; whereas without him—well, not even Mr. Rowell could tell what might happen.

AND Mr. Rowell was taking that last session of the House very seriously. Nobody ever knew Mr. Rowell to be flippant. He is always constitutional. Forty times that afternoon he rose, to remonstrate with the Government and Conservative members over redistribution. Every time he rose he took a sip of water. Every time he sat down he took another. Water is a strong element with Mr. Rowell. He intends to popularize water by abolishing the bar; and if the leader of the Opposition doesn't take lots of water publicly, he can hardly expect his supporters in the Province to take much of it privately.

So when Mr. Rowell faces Sir James Whitney for the first time outside of the Legislature, whether it be in summer or in fall, the issue will be clear enough. The liquor question never was so clear-cut an issue in Ontario politics as it is now. Foot-balled as it used to be by Ontario leaders, it is now a close-home, popular question which people are beginning to understand as never they did in the days when most of the anti-liquor crusading came from the churches and the temperance organizations. It is in

Ontario's Political Leaders

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE



Sir James Whitney at the prorogation of the Ontario Legislature on Friday, May 1st. His first appearance in the House for a year.

fact the one problem between the Ontario parties which the public clearly understand. Nobody imagines that Mr. Rowell will sweep the Province with his bar-closing programme. But with all the publicity of the party press on both sides, with the recent allegations concerning Mr. Hanna and Inspector Snider, with the almost as recent small sensation over the member for Frontenac, who was alleged to be in collusion with the liquor interests to the detriment of his own party, and with Mr. Rowell's clear-cut, decisive and personal stand on what is considered a great moral issue, it is quite likely that Ontario electors will have uppermost in their minds the one problem of how to reduce if not to abolish the consumption of spirituous liquors in the public houses of Ontario. The same question is

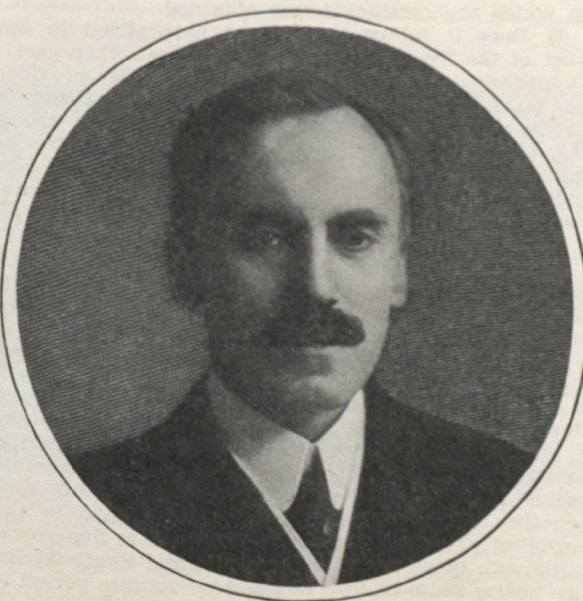
face to face now with the electors of Manitoba, where an election is imminent, very largely on that platform.

It is not pretended that Mr. Rowell is more anxious than Sir James Whitney to moralize Ontario. It is quite certain that a man of Mr. Rowell's stamp could adopt no other platform so efficiently as "abolish the bar." He believes in abolishing the bar. He has always believed in it. Mr. Rowell has never been in a bar-room. He is a moral agent. He is not a politician. He is a crusader. Being a young man he naturally believes that it is time for a change in the government of Ontario. He prefers to forget that the Liberals held Ontario down for thirty-two years, till the Conservatives, with the uncompromising Mr. Whitney at their head, took a large broom in 1905 and swept them out. He probably does not deny that the Conservative administration of Ontario has been on the whole vigorous and effective. He very likely knows that even now Sir James could bristle with righteous indignation over the sins of the Grits in the days of the old regime. And as long as Sir James remembers those ungodly Grits, it is of little use for Mr. Rowell to work up any fine indignation over the sins of the Tories. Sir James can give him a Roland for his Oliver at every turn. Because Sir James, and before him, Sir William Meredith, were a long time waiting for a chance to "turn the rascals out." Now, if possible, Mr. Rowell would turn Sir James out—largely on the liquor question.

BUT can he? Probably not. Sir James is more popular now than ever. His appearance at the prorogation as pictured on this page was the occasion of a great tumult of appreciation. Even Mr. Rowell must have been officially glad to see the Premier back in his place, after at least one Conservative newspaper had published the news of his death. But he knew what it means. He knows that Sir James intends to have a Tory Government in Queen's Park once more, even though he himself should decide to retire after the election, if need be. Had Sir James decided to retire now, it might have been different. Because Sir James has made his regime a matter of personality. The once autocrat of Queen's Park has still the tenacity that made him able to get the Premiership when it was mainly a matter of morals who won the day.

Things have happened since then. The Ontario Cabinet has become a Whitney Cabinet. It has probably become blase. It has revived the old Tory doctrine of one in power, in for as long as possible. It has buttressed up the doctrine by a vigorous administration, some of it following along the lines sketched out by Sir George Ross. It has opened up New Ontario. A new community has arisen in the hinterland. New cities have grown up on Lake Superior. Cities in old Ontario have doubled in population. Toronto, the capital city, has two hundred thousand more people than it had when Sir James took office; hence one need of redistribution. But Toronto is still Tory. Adam Beck has come into prominence with his Hydro-Electric, which, when Sir James became Premier, was only a dream.

The Workmen's Compensation Act has become law. The Ontario statutes have been revised. The Provincial Secretary has established his celebrated Prison Farm. In conjunction with the Attorney-General he has organized the Provincial Police. Many changes have been made in the Education Department, so brilliantly evolved by Sir George Ross, and still by some cynical experts declared much behind the times. The bilingual problem has been stirred up and somewhat settled. The Province has added to its area in the north and has got a right of way strip to the seaboard on Hudson's Bay. The government railway has been junctioned with the Grand



The Ontario Leader is a Serious Man.

(Concluded on page 16.)