

which define the rights and powers of municipalities. Every ratepayer in an organized civic community understands that he is liable to be committed at any time to an enterprise of which he disapproves, if the majority of the other ratepayers are in favour of it. This is merely one of the inconvenient risks to which the circumstance of his being a member of that community exposes him, and he assumes it along with any other drawbacks which may attach to the membership. But a wholly different state of facts is presented when he is compelled by special legislation, as in the present case, to undertake financial liabilities which have not been sanctioned by the votes of the ratepayers. In such a situation, he may well utter the protest, *Non hæc in fœdera veni*.

A critic is naturally reluctant to ascribe to Sir James Whitney an inability to appreciate the singular weakness of the only ground of defence which he has vouchsafed to adduce for this most reprehensible statute. But it would seem that the only other method of accounting for his conduct is that he has made up his mind to override, for the sake of a merely temporary political advantage, the rights which municipal ratepayers possess under our system of local self-government. A good many of his fellow citizens, it is to be feared, have already adopted this explanation. This is an aspect of the question, however, which scarcely falls within the province of a legal periodical. Nor indeed is it very material what his motives and springs of action may be. All that need be considered at the present time is that a statute of this sort will inflict a very damaging blow upon the delicate framework of our political institutions, and injure most seriously the financial credit of Ontario, and incidentally no doubt of the Dominion as a whole. Under these circumstances, it is an extremely important practical question whether the persons who believe the validation of these contracts in the manner proposed to be a proceeding which will cause an incalculable amount of mischief have any resource against the evils which they anticipate.

As the Lieutenant-Governor has assented to the measure the power of disallowance by the Governor-General in Council