

# The St. John Standard

VOL. XII, NO. 168.

TWELVE PAGES

ST. JOHN, N. B., FRIDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 8, 1920

FAIR AND COOL

TWO CENTS

## BAXTER FINDS ALL PROVINCE REVOLTING AGAINST WASTEFUL RULE OF FOSTER GOVERNMENT

Special to The Standard.

Campbellton, Oct. 7.—This was a big night for Campbellton. The metropolis of Restigouche was crowded with electors who gathered to hear the political issues of the campaign discussed by the Hon. Dr. J. B. M. Baxter, Leader of the Opposition. The people came in tug boats, motor boats, automobiles and special trains, all intent on becoming informed on political questions by a man whose reputation for honesty and fair mindedness had preceded him. Every settlement for a distance of twenty miles up and down the majestic river was represented by a large delegation. From the mill settlements tug boats, loaned to the workmen by the mill owners, brought crowds, while automobiles conveyed hundreds from the farming districts, and a special train came down the International Railway loaded to capacity.

### CROWDED THE OPERA HOUSE.

The Opera House was unable to accommodate the crowd that gathered. The floor, galleries and aisles were packed, in striking contrast to the two hundred that assembled to hear Hon. C. W. Robinson the night before. An overflow meeting was held elsewhere for those who could not get into the Opera House, and was addressed by prominent speakers.

When Dr. Baxter arose to speak he was given a tremendous ovation, and the demonstration continued for some minutes. It was a genuine tribute of loyalty to the man whom the electors will choose to follow on Saturday next. Dr. Baxter treated the questions of the campaign in a fair, broad-minded manner. In a dignified address, which at times reached superb heights of eloquence and oratory, arousing his hearers to enthusiastic outbursts of approval, he pictured the inconsistencies, extravagances and mismanagement of the Foster administration.

When he had finished, business men, professional men, farmers, lumber jacks and ladies shook hands with the Opposition Leader, pledging their support for his ticket in Restigouche County and assuring him of a rousing majority.

### MERCILESS IN HIS ARRAIGNMENT.

Mr. Baxter was in excellent form and gripped his audiences from the start. As he made point after point in his masterly arraignment of the Government every shot told and the result of the meeting will be a much larger majority than was expected for the Opposition candidates.

He took up the manifesto of the Premier, and said the only things which that gentleman seemed not to have claimed credit for were the sun, moon, stars and atmosphere. Everything else that had worked out for the good of the people had been seized upon by "his master's voice" and glory taken unto himself because of them, while as a matter of fact practically all the legislation for which they claimed so much credit was the work of the former administration. About the only credit to which the present one was entitled was for having sense enough to adopt a good thing when they found it ready to their hands.

### DID NOT GIVE WOMEN VOTE.

Take the woman suffrage bill. Mr. Foster was going around the country patting himself on the back and crying aloud to the women: "Behold, I am the man who gave the right to vote to you, ladies, and now I think as a matter of common justice you should all turn out on election day, and by those votes, which I, the Premier, gave you, return us once more to power." Premier Foster and his party could not in justice claim any great credit for the franchise bill. It was true they were in power and passed the Act, but it was only after the Opposition had practically forced them to do it. When the matter was first brought up, the "master of the administration, Hon. P. J. Veniot, had expressed himself as in favor of a limited franchise for women, and Premier Foster had threatened, if a bill was introduced and passed, to ask the Lieutenant-Governor to refuse his assent.

During the recess, however, they evidently saw a light. The Federal Parliament had given women the right to vote, and they had come to realize it could no longer be denied in this province. A bill was introduced and brought before the House. The Government intended no doubt that it should confer the right to vote on women, but on looking it over he had discovered that it was defective in many ways and would not accomplish the object aimed at, and eventually he himself had to put it in shape for them, and it was then passed by a unanimous vote of the House. Under those circumstances he failed to see how the Government could claim any credit for conferring the franchise on women. The women by their unselfish and heroic sacrifices during the war had earned the right to take a full share with their husbands, brothers and sons in conducting the affairs of the country, and instead of praise the present provincial administration was worthy of censure for refusing to pass the measure when first introduced by Hon. J. A. Murray, and thus depriving the ladies for one year of a privilege they had well earned.

## Opposition Leader In Great Rally At Campbellton, After Tour Through New Brunswick, Greeted With Tremendous Enthusiasm. Merciless Arraignment Of The Inefficiency Of Liberal Party Now Piling Up Huge Debt And Deficit Steadily.

The "Workmen's Compensation Act" was another bit of legislation the Foster-Veniot combination pointed to with a great deal of credit, and for which they were claiming great credit. As a matter of fact, there had been workmen's compensation legislation long before the present Government had ever been thought of. The first law was based on the English measure; this was amended from time to time to meet changing conditions. During the Clarke-Murray administrations, he, as Attorney-General, had been asked to look into this matter and draft a new law. Realizing that a matter of this kind needed careful consideration from men in touch with the subject to be legislated on, he had suggested the appointment of a commission on which capital and labor would be represented, and this course had been followed. The commission was made up of two members representing the employers, two representing labor, and a chairman. For the position of chairman he had chosen a man he believed well qualified to fill the position, an insurance man and a lawyer, and none of these men were chosen for their political affiliations, for the chairman was a candidate for the party politically opposed to his party at the previous election. Would the Foster Government in similar circumstances have done the same? Their record hardly bore out the supposition that they would.

### TOOK FORMER GOVERNMENT'S MEASURE.

This commission had made a thorough investigation and had prepared an Act which was now on the statute books of the province. To whom by all fair standards of justice did the credit for the Act belong, to the men who realized in the first place the need for such legislation and appointed the commission, or the men who simply took the good the gods provided? Again he claimed the only credit the Foster-Veniot combination were entitled to was in having sense enough to know a good thing when they saw it. Then there was the "Independent Audit Act," about which they cried aloud to the heavens, "Look and behold what we have done to protect the finances of this province." But what had they really done? They had changed the name of the auditor-general to comptroller-general, had provided for the signing of all cheques issued by the provincial secretary and imported a set of chartered accountants to go over their books, and by the way, last year their accountants had not given them a clean certificate, but had simply certified the accounts were a correct copy as they appeared on the books. They carefully refrained from placing themselves in the position of endorsing those books. These were the only changes made; the greater part of the law was enacted just as it was before they got into power. When the Act was passed they made a great ado about the section requiring the counter signature of the provincial secretary to all cheques. But what had really happened? This signature had been affixed by a clerk in the department office, who used a rubber stamp. Truly a great protection! This turned out to be such a foolish provision that it was rescinded at the next session of the House. Was this any indication of wise and prudent government?

### "THE WONDERFUL HEALTH ACT.

Then there was this wonderful Health Act of which the Government were so proud. In some respect the Health Act was all right, and he would be the last one to deny the need for legislation along the lines of protecting the health and well-being of the community. It had been charged by Dr. Roberts that he wanted to repeal the Health Act. This was not true, the Health Act would not be repealed, but it would be trimmed of the frills and furbelows, which added nothing to its usefulness and did add greatly to its cost to the several municipalities. Had this Health Act really accomplished anything, except to make positions for a number of friends of the Government, which had not been done under the old Boards of Health at a much lower cost? Every municipality in the province had been called to assess anywhere from one to three times as much for the carrying on the work as under the old practice. He understood Mr. Veniot had been saying some good things about this legislation, but he would like that gentleman to explain to him why this wonderful organization had failed to prevent the outbreak of typhoid in the Hon. Peter's town of Bathurst, and why, after the out-

break, it had taken it some considerable time to discover the cause. Was this a fair sample of the efficiency which was claimed for this child of the Honorable Minister of Health, and, if it was, should it be given as much credit as its godfather claimed for it?

### THE OPPOSITION LEADER



THE HON. JOHN B. M. BAXTER.

After his selection as Leader of the Opposition, at the meeting held recently in St. John, the Hon. J. B. M. Baxter issued the following statement of policy: "The Opposition Party, of which I have been selected as the leader, will go into this campaign resolved to re-create itself in accordance with the best traditions of its past history.

"It will stand essentially for prudent administration of the Province, avoiding increase in the bonded debt for services which can be met out of the annual revenue;

"For increase of that revenue without imposing undue burdens upon any section of the people;

"For government on constitutional lines by the people through their representatives and for recognition of the right of all the people to share in the administration of the affairs of the Province without any distinction based upon race or class or creed."

JOHN B. M. BAXTER.

### THE REAL TROUBLE.

The great trouble with the measure was that the head of the department was more concerned with gathering a lot of useless statistics than he was in the real work of such a department. When his Government came into power the Health Act would be shorn of some of these trimmings and more attention paid to the real functions of a department of health.

Premier Foster was saying a great deal about his hydro-electric development policy and had announced that three developments would be undertaken at once at different parts of the province. He only claimed to have one million dollars to spend on water power development, and how was he, with that amount, going to do this work, for any one of the three mentioned would take over a million dollars itself before any current could be obtained.

He recognized as well as any person else the need for hydro-electric development in this province, and he was well aware of the fact that some water powers could be utilized at a reasonable cost, but none of them should be touched until the most careful investigation had been made into their possibilities and what the unit cost of the power would be after it was developed. It would be of no practical benefit to the manufacturers of the province to go ahead and develop water power if after it was ready, it would cost them more than they had to pay for coal.

### POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

The policy of the Opposition in regard to this important subject was to make the fullest investigation into the subject, give the people

the facts as they existed, and here he reminded them that up to the present the only persons who knew what the report of the engineers on the developments proposed by the Foster Government was were the members of the executive. They had not taken the public into their confidence in the matter. If the developments already promised by them were feasible at a reasonable cost for the unit of power delivered and they really intended to proceed with the work, why had they not made public the report? His policy would be to lay the cards on the table and let the electors know just what was going to be done and why it was being undertaken.

The Government professed to be a business man's government. A record of their performances hardly bore out that contention, as he intended to show by their own records, printed by themselves. Instead of a proper business method of carrying on the affairs of the province there had been waste and extravagance in every department. Was it good business to go on year after year spending more than the income of the province on ordinary expenditure and piling up a huge mortgage for work which could not by any stretch of imagination be called permanent? He did not think so, and he was inclined to think the great majority of the people of the province would not think so. Yet this was the very thing the Foster party had been doing ever since they had assumed the reins of power.

### ROLLING UP A HUGE DEFICIT.

In the two and a half years for which the accounts of the province were available they had shown deficits on ordinary expenditure of over \$300,000, and this in the face of greatly increased revenues. They had increased the bonded debt in two years by three and three-quarter millions of dollars, making the total increase in the debt over four and a half million. Yet in the face of such a record, taken from their own accounts, they claimed to be a business administration. For this year it was expected the showing would be even worse and it was very generally suspected that one of the reasons for the calling of the election just now was to get rid of acknowledging the biggest deficit of their regime.

They claimed to have increased the teachers' salaries. Well, they had done so, but how? By making the municipalities pay it. As a Government they had actually paid out about \$19,000 less to the teachers in 1919 than was paid by the old Government in 1916. Was any credit due them for that?

They had introduced two new things. They had bought some seed wheat, which had to be cleaned before it could be sold to the farmers. This resulted in an expense of about \$5,000. Mr. Tweeddale had also imported some "scrub" sheep, of which, no doubt, he was very proud, but the farmers who purchased them from the department certainly were not satisfied.

### FEAR THE FARMERS' WRATH.

They had, while in Opposition, made a great deal of talk, because during the war period the Government of that time, had failed to hold by-elections in constituencies from which Government supporters had retired. But what did they do, shortly after election of 1917, one of the Opposition supporters from the County of Carleton died, and the Foster administration had never opened up the constituency. Why did they do the thing which they said was wrong for the old Government when they got in power?

One of the reasons why they did not open Carleton was because they were afraid of the farmers, and this was one of the reasons why the election was called on now, to head off the farmers. During the three and a half years the Foster Government had been in power they had added three and three-quarter million dollars to the bonded debt, and had gone behind over \$800,000 on current account, making a total addition to the debt of over \$4,500,000.

### GOT A GOLD BRICK.

The Premier, through his Minister of Agriculture, was claiming all sorts of things for his agricultural policy, but the only thing for which Mr. Tweeddale deserved credit was in not destroying the good work done by his predecessors in office. When he had undertaken anything on his own initiative he had made a lamentable failure of it, as witness his importation of "scabby" sheep. Then, again, when he started to give the farmers lime instead of giving them fertilizer, he gave them

a gold brick, and this was true of the Government in general.

The policy of the Opposition was to give the country good government and place all on equality without reference to class, race or creed, and also they might depend on it that this would be carried out when the party came into power.

### SOME THINGS TO CHANGE.

Mr. Baxter said there were some things which needed revising in connection with elections. For instance, there was the list of voters, of which not a single copy was available for the use of the Opposition or the public generally when the election was called in St. John. Every copy in existence had been secured by the Government, which through the facilities at their command they are able to do. The present Government party called itself the Liberal party, and this practice was a part of the machinery which the so-called Liberal party employed in the hope of getting ahead of their opponents. Such tactics, however, did not pay in the long run. A free ballot list should be provided so that every one could obtain copies. It was one of the fundamental principles of constitutional government that all parties should be equally represented, and there should be equal rights for all.

In the course of the campaign the Government's record had been fully dealt with. First of all, there was the Government's extravagance. He might himself be thought a little old-fashioned perhaps, but he had been brought up in a somewhat narrow school. Just the same, however, he felt that the teachings of that school were not out of date by any means. No Government, any more than any individual, could exceed their income. It is all right to spend money as long as you had it, but the man or Government who spends money they haven't got must sooner or later find themselves in trouble.

### MUST SPEND MONEY WISELY.

It is not a question of how much you can spend, but how much can be spent wisely, and it is quite correct to borrow money to buy permanent things, but for ordinary services the ordinary revenue should bear a much greater portion of the expense than was the case at the present time, before the people were asked to burden themselves with additional bonds.

The question must be considered how far was it possible to increase the public revenue without unduly pressing upon the people? There were many cases in which the revenue might have been increased, but the Government was so scared of offending some of its friends that they had preferred to let the revenue go and issue bonds to provide the necessary funds. Moreover the money that they had expended had not been spent with a reasonable regard to economy. Money had been easily obtained and it had been thrown about in all quarters and nothing substantial or lasting had been obtained in return.

Another thing with regard to the present Government was that it was top-heavy. There were too many members and several of the departments might possibly be amalgamated. If the present Opposition should be returned to power that would be their policy and he thought it was a policy which would be approved of by the electors.

### WILL NEVER GAIN EXPERIENCE.

In the time of the late Government it was urged that time should be given to properly consider measures brought down to the House, and when the present Government came into power it was widely heralded that they were going to have a business man's administration. In the first year the Opposition had not unduly criticised because they recognized that the Government members were new to their jobs, as well as inexperienced. But that was not the case in the last session of the House, by which time they should have gained experience enough to learn to conduct their business properly. In the last session the greater number of the important measures that were brought down were brought down at the eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute previous to the end of the session. Bill after bill was brought in and hurried through without any attempt at proper consideration or intelligent discussion. There was no time, and among these bills was the famous water power bill. So outrageous did the practice become that he had stated from his place that they had better pass these bills as they stood without reading them. And yet they call themselves a business government.

Mr. Baxter was given a tremendous ovation when he ended his speech. Cheer after cheer was the reward of a magnificent review of the political situation.

It seemed that the great audience would hardly allow Mr. Baxter to end his speech and would demand that he continue. Everywhere in the crowd electors were heard to declare that never before had the provincial issues been so clearly outlined in their district and that there would be few votes cast for the Government candidates on Saturday.

It is regarded here as clinching the seats for the opponents of the Foster-Veniot power and adding another to the long list of defeats awaiting that party in the appeal to the electors of the province.

Friends of the Government are not talking tonight; indeed after the speeches by Mr. Baxter and the candidates tonight the Frederickton crowd has few it can rely upon here.