

La Grip



"WE IN CANADA SEEM TO HAVE LOST ALL IDEA OF JUSTICE, HONOR AND INTEGRITY."—THE MAIL, 26TH SEPTEMBER.

Canadian cartooning grew on the end of John A. Macdonald's nose. That nose, invented by J. W. Bengough, was more than flesh and cartilage. It was the prow of the ship of state, a red warning against intemperance, a national treasure and a comfort to mothers of small boys with exaggerated features. Mr. Macdonald's natural nose was robust and bold, but it became, in the popular mind, only an imitation of the triumphant beak that Bengough had created. Voters viewing the real thing for the first time were often disappointed.

Mr. Bengough was the founder, owner, editor and cartoonist for *Grip*, a phenomenally successful weekly magazine, and a man of many passions. He was emotionally in favour of women's suffrage, free market economics and the prohibition of hard drink. He thrived as long as Macdonald did — which was, of course, a very long time. He was a critic of both parties, though not precisely evenhanded.

The Conservatives and Liberals had evolved from the Tories and the Reformers of the colonial legislature. The Liberals and the Conservatives worked together for confederation in 1864; but as soon as the British North America Act passed in 1867, the Liberals reasserted their independence. Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, a Conservative, wished to see Canada unified by a

railroad all the way from the east to the west coast, as soon as possible. Alexander Mackenzie and the Liberals took a more conservative stance. (Canadian party labels can be confusing.) They were not so much against the railroad as they were against the unseemly rush and the intrusive interest of business tycoons.

The Liberals and Mr. Bengough got their great opportunity when word leaked out that Canadian and American railroad interests had contributed satchelsful of money (possibly as much as \$350,000) to Conservative campaigns. One of Mackenzie's cohorts turned up a telegram in which Sir John unabashedly asked the railroad magnates to shoot \$10,000 to him immediately to meet a political emergency. Bengough let John A. have it with the full force of his pen, and in 1873 the Liberals took control. (In a unique succession, Macdonald resigned, and the Liberals simply walked across the floor of the House of Commons and sat down in the seats vacated by the Conservatives.) Five years later Bengough helped get Mackenzie out and Sir John back in.

Meanwhile off in Quebec, the Liberals' next champion, Wilfrid Laurier, was building new fences. He would have a splendid companion cartoonist all his own.

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