Can. Pol.

MEREDITH

May 1880

Opens the Present Campaign.

AN ELOQUENT ADDRESS

To a Multitude of Toronto Electors.

HIS PLATFORM ENUNCIATED

In Language that Leaves No Doubt as to His Views,

WHICH ARE HEARTILY ENDORSED

By the Thousands of Voters Who Were Present.

A Speech that Will Live in History—Addressed to an Audience Such as Only Toronto Can Turn Out—The Pavilion Packed to Its Utmost Capacity—Hundreds Unable to Find Seating Accommodation—The Galleries Graced with the Presence of Ladies—Great Enthusiasm on the Appearance of the Leader—His Escort Composed of the Leading Conservatives of Toronto—Addresses Delivered by the Two Toronto Members—The Whole Affair a Genuine Outburst of Popular Enthusiasm—The Conflict is Now in Full Swing.

The Young Men's Liberal-Conservative Club of Toronto inaugurated the provincial campaign on Tuesday night by a mass meeting that for the numbers in attendance, the representative character of the audience, the brilliancy of the oratory and the splendid general effect produced has not been exceeded in the history of this city. The club has been an important factor in local politics ever since its inception, but it never more thoroughly demonstrated its usefulness than when it gave the opportunity of placing the gifted leader of the Ontario Opposition in communication with the loyal electors who have for so many years supported his honest and irreproachable policy and who are now under his command marching on to certain victory.

The gathering was held in the Pavilion of the Horticultural Gardens. This is the largest auditorium in the city, and with its two galleries seats some thousands of people. Last evening the doors were thrown open at 7 o'clock, and even at that early hour there were quite a number waiting admittance. By 7.30 the lower floor was well filled, and scores of ladies were assembling in the main gallery, which had been reserved for their accommodation, together with their escorts. By 8 o'clock the house was packed to the roof, and still electors eager to hear the political questions of the day discussed as only the talented representative from the Forest City can discuss them were attempting to crowd in at the doors.

At this time the view from the stage—as yet unoccupied—was one not easily to be forgotten. The great body of the hall was one dense mass of humanity, packed so closely that movement was practically impossible. Every ledge or step that could by any possibility form a resting place, either to lean or sit upon, had been seized. The rows of seats were jammed in a way that must have been, to say the least, uncomfortable. The broad aisle that runs around the house was filled with standing men, the centre aisles were fully occupied, the audience crowded up to the platform so as to incommode the reporters at their work, the doorways were jammed until further entrance was impossible, and even beyond that, as far as could be seen, was a view of the upturned faces of men who had no chance of seeing the platform, but who had hope of catching something at least of the strong, manly words that came rolling through the hall as the great leader defined the difference between right and wrong in the government of a country. The main gallery formed a horseshoe of brilliant colors, where the brightness of the ladies' toilets relieved the general sombreness of male attire, and even the steps were occupied, while up in the top gallery two policemen were so wedged in by the mass of people who had thronged up to the "gods" as a last resort that they could not have drawn a baton had they so willed. In a word, the numbers of the audience were measured only by the capability of the house to provide standing room.

While the audience was assembling, time was given to notice that the hall was splendidly decorated. The platform was a perfect bower of plants and shrubs in variegated colors, terminating at each of the wings with a towering cactus. Behind this forest of beautiful green, at the back of the platform, the loyal colors of two broad Union Jacks draped in heavy folds about a streamer bearing the inscription:

We Welcome Our Leader.

While immediately underneath was the motto:

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL.

Between the large supporting pillars of the building were hung streamers and bannerets, each bearing an inscription.

The combined effect, from a decorative point of view, was very pleasing indeed, while the inscriptions tersely expressed the views of a considerable majority of the people of Ontario.

While the audience was gathering a distinguished delegation of Conservatives had gone to the Queen's hotel to escort Mr. Meredith to the place of meeting. This delegation was composed of the officers of the different ward Conservative associations in the city and occupied some eighteen carriages. They created quite a sensation as they drove through the streets. It was but a few minutes after eight when a slight clapping of hands followed, as each eye was turned to the stage, by a perfect roar of applause greeted the appearance of the speakers of the evening. Mr. McPherson and Mr. Meredith came on the platform together, followed by the Two Clarkes, Mr. Creighton and the distinguished company mentioned below. As the leader was recognized he was greeted with a cheer whose heartiness bespoke how thoroughly he has entrenched himself in the affections of citizens of Toronto, as well as of the province generally. It was only when the chairman rose to open the meeting that quiet could be restored.

A word as to the reception of the speakers. Mr. H. E. Clarke was heartily received and was roundly cheered as he made point after point in his brief address. When the leader came forward the scene was one of the wildest enthusiasm. Ladies waved their handkerchiefs, nearly the entire audience rose, and the cheering was deafening. It lasted several minutes. Again and again while Mr. Meredith spoke this scene was repeated. The mayor was accorded a reception that, while it must have been exceedingly gratifying to himself, showed that he has not lost one whit of his popularity with the citizens of Toronto.

The chairman, Mr. W. D. McPherson, President of the Toronto Young Men's Liberal Conservative Association, briefly introduced Mr. H. E. Clarke and Mr. Meredith.

Mr. H. E. Clarke's Address.

Mr. H. E. Clarke, on coming forward, was received with loud applause. He said: I believe there is a story about the lamb who appeared before his king, and I am sure it has afforded me great pleasure to follow my leader. (Applause.) I have had the honor to represent you, and I may have the honor to represent you in the next Assembly, I think I may be permitted two or three minutes to refer to the platform laid down by Mr. Meredith. There is not a single plank in it that won't commend itself to the judgment of every patriotic man in the province of Ontario. It will bear the closest inspection. It gives equal rights to all, exclusive rights to none. That is the principle that runs through the whole platform of the local Opposition in the Provincial Parliament. That is a policy that must prevail, because it is built on truth and justice and must prevail in every constituency composed of the intelligent people of the province of Ontario. (Applause.) You must have seen that the *Globe* newspaper for the last two or three weeks has been making piteous appeals for a renewal of confidence in the Mowat Administration. They have been writing up their record, carefully concealing everything that tells against the Administration, and when it fails in everything else the *Globe* falls back on the personal character of the Attorney-General of Ontario. Now, I have not a single word to say against the Hon. Mr. Mowat. Personally I admire and esteem the man. I respect and esteem him personally; but Mr. Mowat is Prime Minister of Ontario, and as Prime Minister he is responsible for all the legislation passed through the House. He is responsible for everything to the Government. No act of that Government can be performed without his sanction, and I am bound to say I honestly believe many of the acts of that Government have been performed without Mr. Mowat's approbation. He is not the strongest man in his own Cabinet. (Applause.) He has a colleague sitting alongside of him who can boast that he has 60,000 of a solid vote at his back, and that 60,000 of a solid vote in this Protestant province of Ontario! (Applause.) Now, we may just as well face this thing, because we have been facing it for a considerable time. It is clear it is staring us in the face, and we must stare it in the face, we must look back at it. (Applause.) If you look up the figures at the last provincial election you will find that the Conservative Opposition had a majority of about 30,000 Protestant voters in the province of Ontario, but Mr. Mowat had a majority of 40,000 of the Roman Catholics, and that difference gave him the balance of power. Mr. Mowat sits in his seat to-day at the bidding and with the support only of this 60,000 of a solid vote. That is the thing we have to stare in the face at the present time. We had 30,000 of a Protestant majority. I am not saying a word against our fellow citizens of the Roman Catholic persuasion, but if they choose to band themselves together in order to support a policy or a party then I think Protestants have just as good a right to band themselves together. (Hear, hear, and loud cheers.) I am glad to see you agree with me in that. We had 30,000 of a majority, but I trust on this occasion they will amount to 100,000—to the Conservative candidates, and if they do then good-bye to Mr. Mowat—(loud cheers)—that will good-bye to the rule of the hierarchy—(hear, hear)—good-bye to tampering with our public schools and good-bye to a good many other things that we ought to have said farewell to long ago. (Loud applause.) After referring to the method adopted by Mr. Mowat to secure a representative for himself in Toronto, Mr. Clarke continued: Thus Toronto has only one vote, whereas she should have five or six representatives. (Cheers.) Is that honest government? (Cries of "No, no.") Under this system there is nothing to prevent the Government of the day from electing all their followers by Act of Parliament. (Hear, hear.) There is nothing whatever to prevent that. They can elect them without any reference to the people. In this way we are stepping towards the worst form of government that was ever invented, that of the French revolutionary form of government, where the Assembly declared themselves elected in perpetuity. What is the difference between a parliament electing themselves in perpetuity and a parliament electing a candidate who shall represent the minority by Act of Parliament only? The Act of Mr. Mowat has simply been to destroy the influence of the majority of the people of this city. (Hear, hear.) Now, it is that policy that we are thoroughly opposed to. I am not going to discuss it, because we will have other opportunities during the campaign of discussing these and other questions. It would be bad taste, indeed, seeing that we are all assembled here to hear Mr. Meredith, if I were to take up any more of your time. Mr. Meredith's platform is going to change all that, and is going to give us an honest Government. (Loud cheers.) Mr. Meredith's position is equality for everyone, and equal rights for everyone, with no special favor for anyone or for any party in the state. (Applause.) These are things that will all be discussed by-and-bye. We have been singing during the last week, Mr. Chairman, that Mr. Mowat's hour has come. Now, Mr. Meredith's hour has come. We know the hour has come, and we know the man. Both the hour and the man have come, and we are now ready to hear Mr. Meredith. (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

Mr. Meredith's Address.

Mr. Meredith on coming forward was received with deafening applause. After the long outburst of enthusiasm had subsided the leader spoke as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I am indeed grateful for the warm welcome which you have given me upon this my first appearance before an audience of the city of Toronto assembled upon the eve of an election. And I may say to you that never in the course of my political experience, which extends now over a period of eighteen years, have I risen to address an audience with a greater sense of the responsibility that rested upon me, and of the necessity of my discharging my duty properly, fearlessly and justly in the face of the people. (Applause.) I know, Mr. Chairman, that the burning questions of the day are delicate questions. I know that they are questions with regard to which people who have been members of the Conservative party, who are to-day members of the Conservative party, are extremely sensitive upon. Therefore, in endeavoring to speak upon them to-night, I hope that no word that I shall utter will give offence to the sensibilities or the religious convictions of any man, no matter what his faith may be. (Applause.) It would, Mr. Chairman, be altogether out of the question that I should to-night enter upon an exhaustive review of questions which are to be presented for the consideration of the electors of the province of Ontario in the approaching elections. But it does seem to me that, at the expense perhaps of wearying you, it is my duty to go over them as briefly as I can before I reach those questions which are to my mind the burning questions in connection with the elections—those questions of general policy upon which we are at issue with the Government of Mr. Mowat. The Government of Mr. Mowat has now been in power for some seventeen or eighteen years in this province of Ontario, and it is again appealing to the electors of the province for a renewal of their confidence, and I perceive from the observations which are made in the press supporting the Government of Mr. Mowat and by those advocating his cause throughout the country that they challenge criticism upon the financial record of the Government, upon its legislation and upon its administrative actions, and with regard to these three branches I shall endeavor to say a few brief words, and I will ask your attention to the consideration of these topics. Now, I think that if I come to compare the Administration of the Hon. Oliver Mowat with any Administration in this country the fair comparison to make is with the Administration that preceded him in the province of Ontario, led by Hon. Sandfield Macdonald; not an entirely Conservative Government, but a Government largely Conservative in its essential features. Now, I see that the people are beginning to understand day by day what an excellent Government that was which first ruled the destinies of the province of Ontario. (Applause.) I see also that Mr. Mowat and those who speak for his Government talk, and any man may talk, with pride of the progress of the province of Ontario during the last eighteen years; they talk of the magnificent institutions, which speak to the humanitarian of the great charity and benevolence of the people of the province; of the magnificent drainage which has made the great western portion of the province which years ago was but a wilderness and swamp, many parts of it now are some of the finest portions of Ontario; they speak about the magnificent railway system which interlocks and interlaces the whole of the province of Ontario. Mr. Mowat's supporters speak with pride of these things, and point to them as something of their accomplishment. But I say that the man to whom credit is to be given is the man who inaugurated and set on foot this great scheme, the master mind who put them on foot, and upon whose footsteps Hon. Oliver Mowat has followed, the man who now lies silent in his grave, and who was driven from power by the Government which followed him, and which is now in power. I ask, sir, to compare the economical record of that Government with the Government of to-day. The accumulated savings for the four years while they had been in office was $4,000,000, almost all of which has been spent and almost nothing left in the treasury by the Government who succeeded him. Now, I do not propose, Mr. Chairman, to enter into anything like a review of the financial situation of the province of Ontario.

Administration of the Crown Lands.

I desire now to say a word or two with regard to the Crown Lands Department and its administration. You are aware that the Crown Lands Department is one of the revenue-producing sources of Ontario. Now, one of the matters on which the Conservative Opposition has taken issue with the Government of Mr. Mowat is with regard to the control of these timber limits. We maintain the doctrine of responsibility of Government. You all know the members of that Parliament are the representatives of the people; yet, sir, the Government of Mr. Mowat has persistently kept the right of selling these lands without going down to the Legislature and asking their consent to the placing of these timber limits upon the market. We have stated that this was not in accordance with true principle, and that the Government of the day, or any Government, was bound to come down as the people's representatives and ask them before they part with the timber limits and place them upon the market. Why, sir, the administration of Mr. Sandfield Macdonald thought it was not in the public interest that we should dispose of more of these limits, and what was the first act when Mr. Blake's Government came into power but to place five thousand square miles upon the market and to dispose of the timber standing upon this 5,000 square miles, and, sir, what was the result in regard to that sale? Instead of there being a demand for the timber that was there, for years and years not an axe was put in a single stick of the timber that was there, and the sales that were made in 1885 of lots which the purchasers at that sale in 1872 refused to take evidenced the enormous sum that the province of Ontario had lost by placing these upon the market. Instead of this advance passing into the coffers of Ontario it passed into the hands of the owners of these timber limits. Why, a return was brought down to the House of the sale, as I have mentioned to you, of some of these limits which the purchasers had refused to take at the sale in 1872, and which, therefore, may be taken to be the very worst of the lot, and one of these timber limits, 36 miles in extent (I am giving you the highest price), was sold for $70 a mile in 1872 and sold in 1885 for $900 a square mile. (Cheers.) These matters were never brought prominently before the public, who had no direct and immediate control through their representatives of the territorial revenues of Ontario. We on the Opposition have been very anxious that the province should take stock of their timber. Suppose anyone engaged in a timber operation would say "I am going to spend from year to year beyond my income and out of my revenue, but will take no stock of my resources." This I am prepared to say any intelligent business man would condemn. Well, this is the way Mr. Mowat has been going on. The Opposition proposed that a commission should be appointed to investigate and look into the timber resources of the province. That commission was voted down. The Government refused to permit that enquiry, although they granted a mining commission which was in a measure due to the result of the Opposition's request in connection with the timber enquiry. The Crown Land Commissioner says there are $136,000,000 belonging to Ontario. He cannot vouch for that statement, and I claim that we should insist upon an enquiry and examination into what the assets of the province are. The gentlemen who are supporting Mr. Mowat bring forward the idea that the timber policy of Ontario compares favorably with that in Ottawa. I say this is not the way in which this question should be dealt with. We have in Ontario settled upon certain ways to dispose of our timber, and it is idle to make any comparison with what is done at Ottawa and what is done here, and the electors ought not to be led away by a determination of what is done at Ottawa. My sphere is within provincial politics and I am not here to criticise any action of the Dominion Government, which should be properly dealt with there by the proper authorities. We are here concerned with the province of Ontario, and it behooves you to look at in that way.

Laws Placed on Statute Book.

Credit is taken by the Government in regard to the laws they have placed on the statute book. No doubt they are entitled to a certain amount of credit for what they have done, but I claim the Opposition is entitled to an equal amount of credit for the laws which stand on the statute book. It has been admitted on the floor of the House by fair criticism that the Opposition merited this. There is some legislation we do not claim credit for. If there is a subject upon which we would expect improved legislation it is in regard to the purity of elections. The Reformers say their party is the party of purity. (Laughter.) I am dealing with the Mowat Government. Since I have been a member of the Provincial Assembly, in 1872, four or five men were relieved of their disqualification, and again Dr Dowling was relieved at the instance of Mr. Mowat. In connection with the trial of Dr. Dowling, I want to read you a letter from the Attorney-General. Now, on the 15th March, 1883, Mr. Mowat writes as follows to Mr. John A. Harvey:

MY DEAR SIR,—I have your letter of the 12th March. From what you say of your services to the Liberal party you certainly are entitled to every consideration. As your letter is marked private I cannot without your permission communicate its contents to Dr. Dowling. The appointment must be made on his recommendation though his nominee must be a fit person. With regard to your taking steps to unseat him, do not forget that by unseating Dr. Dowling, should this be in your power, you accomplish something much more important, and that is you do an injury to the cause which you have so long supported. I have not yet seen the copy of the Pembroke *Observer* which you mention in your P.S. as having sent me. O. MOWAT.

But that was not the last communication. On the 2nd April he wrote as follows:

MY DEAR SIR,—I have your letter of the 26th, which partly through absence from the city and partly from pressure of business I have not before acknowledged. It is really impossible to deal with the inspectorship except through Dr. Dowling. I am extremely sorry for the trouble that has arisen about it. I think it probable that I may have before long an opportunity of recognizing your continued services (as I have learned from you) to the party, though there is no opening in any of the departments just now. I hope that in the general interest you will do what you can to defeat the petition, which I see has been filed, and thereby afford another proof of your good feeling towards us.

Yours truly, O. MOWAT.

John A. Harvey, Esq., Renfrew, Ont.

I want to call your attention to the last words in this letter—"I hope in the general interest you will do what you can to defeat the petition which has been filed, thereby affording another proof of your good feeling towards us." (Laughter and cheers.) Here was the Attorney-General writing to a man who had declared that he had ground upon which a member should be unseated and disqualified. We have the Attorney-General appealing to this man not to press this petition, no matter if the law was not vindicated, lest it might hurt the Liberal party. So you see a good man can sometimes go a little astray. (Cheers.) Another fault I find with regard to

This Election Law

is that during the last two sessions Mr. Whitney, one of the members from the eastern portion of the province—from the county of Dundas—in order to secure purity at elections, in order to put down the debased, corrupt practice of purchasing men's votes—and I venture to think no more debased, corrupt, no more abominable thing can be spoken of than the purchasing or trafficking in the vote of the elector. (Hear, hear.) In order to put down that kind of thing, I say, he introduced last session and the session before a bill giving judges the power to impose imprisonment upon those who were guilty of these offences—indeed, I should say, to impose imprisonment as well as a fine. And what he said was that in this country, bordering on the United States, with only the river St. Lawrence between us and the American territory, the Americans came over the river and corrupted the electors and the constituencies, and Canadian voters were led to vote by designing men. He further said that we could not have pure elections unless, besides the power to convict by fine, there was the power to punish the party engaged in buying a vote as well as the voter who engaged in selling by imprisonment. And what would you reasonably expect Mr. Mowat to do in such a case? Do you not think he should have reasonably been expected to pass such a measure? No! Instead of doing that he and his supporters voted it down on both occasions and Mr. Whitney was unable to put it on the statute book as one of the laws of the land. I say, then, this is a matter which makes Mr. Mowat worthy of the condemnation of the whole electorate of the province. Now, Mr. Chairman, to the Reformers of this country, I have to give due largely the credit of having given to this province municipal institutions, and I think when they gave to the province municipal institutions they gave it one of the greatest boons that could be conferred on a free community—(applause)—because when I look I think there can be no better means of educating our people—our democratic people—to the high responsibility of citizenship and governing themselves than by bringing the power as near as possible to the people, as in the school districts and as in the municipal communities as they are formed throughout the country. And it seems to me the proper policy in this country ought to be to

Extend as Far as Possible

the power to these municipal bodies. (Applause.) But, instead of doing that, the whole policy of the Government of the day has been to withdraw this power from the municipalities and to throw doubt upon the advisability of extending these powers in the direction which, I say, they ought to be extended; and one of the offences which I charge against the Government is that it has been stretching out its hands in all directions, centralizing power and bringing it into use to the advantage of the party in power for the time being. I took a little memorandum within the last day or so of what they did within a short time with regard to one, or two, or three classes of offices, in order to show you the extent to which this system, centered in the Government, is used, and to show you that such power in the public interest ought not to be in their hands. They have taken into their hands the appointment of 321 Division Court clerks and 347 Division Court bailiffs, making a total of 668 in all. These officers draw salaries or fees varying from $50 to $2,500 or $3,000 per year each. Then they have appointed 279 license commissioners, 52 jailers and other officers, making a total of 1,095 appointees, to say nothing of police magistrates and the army of officials in connection with the departments, particularly the Crown Lands Department. Now, with regard to this matter of the appointment to offices, I say it is one of the evils of the present day the number of young men who are looking out for Government offices. There should be as few of these offices in any Government's hands as possible. It is not well in a country like ours that the Government of the day should be possessed of the enormous patronage that from time to time the Government of Mr. Mowat is gathering to itself. When we come to discuss these questions let us see whether the Government discussed them on the grounds of public interest. And in this connection let me mention

Two Instances

familiar to those present, because they affect the city of Toronto the taxpayers of Toronto. We have adopted the principle that where the fees payable to an officer exceed a certain sum beyond a reasonable remuneration the surplus should be given back to the public chest. There was one man holding the office of sheriff of Toronto who received fees to the amount of about $16,000 per year, but instead of giving back the surplus fees to the city Mr. Mowat divided this office into two, so as to lengthen his list of patronage. No, I am not finding fault with Mr. Mowat's son, who holds the office of sheriff. (Laughter and applause.) I think the persons who formed the deputation that proposed to Mr. Mowat to appoint his son were the most grievously disappointed, seeing that instead of finding him standing like adamant against such a course, he graciously accepted the position on behalf of his son. (Laughter.)

Toronto Registry Office.

Then, Mr. Chairman, another question is the question of the registry office of Toronto. There is another case of this kind. What did this Government do? Instead of increasing the amount which should go to Toronto, they said, "Here is a case in which it is our right to provide for one of our friends." I have not a word to say as to the friend they have provided for. He has done yeoman work for his party, but I hope he will cease to do any more yeoman service, and attend to the duties of his office. (Laughter.) However, instead of the Government increasing the amount that should go to the city they divided the office and made Peter Ryan a second registrar. And these two gentlemen, I believe, sit in the same office and take in the money instead of the surplus passing into the hands of the city of Toronto. (Hear, hear.) I come now to the question of

The License Law.

I see one of those mottos on the wall, which the Young Conservative Association has placed there—"Non-partisan License System." I am glad to see that there, because I think that one of the most grievous sins of the Administration of the day is their administration of the liquor license system in this province. (Cheers.) Now, Mr. Mowat and his friends throughout have been persistently saying that they took this upon themselves reluctantly, that they did not want to do it, that petitions came in from the temperance people of the country pressing upon them to take control of the license system or they would not have done so. Members of the House had heard this statement so often that by the almost thought this was so, until my friend Mr. Creighton, who is somewhat of a doubting Thomas, says: "This does not strike me as being a fact." He hunted up the petitions, and he produced them last session, and confronted them with the petitions, and nothing of the sort was voiced in those petitions. (Applause.) You will recollect, gentlemen, that at the time of the appointment of the commissioners in the first place, Mr. Mowat promised, in order that the thing should be perfectly fair and just, that one of these commissioners should be appointed from the Conservative party. He had nothing to conceal; he was going to be perfectly fair. That is the way your liberties are taken away—fair professions and perhaps honest practises for a little while, and the true thing is ultimately carried out. He did appoint a few Conservatives on the boards, but he did not do it long, and ultimately there were none but the hottest Reformers to be found on these boards. What was the excuse? Conservatives could not be found to carry out the law, and the Administration were bound to have persons in sympathy with them to carry out the law. I say that was a foul slander upon the Conservative temperance people of this country. Now then, you have had some experience of the working of this system in Toronto. I want to know whether you think it works fairly. I want to know whether you think it is an honest system, or whether it is not an administration to a large extent in the interest of the party of the day. (Cries of "Yes, yes.") The public press denounced it. When we came into the House one does not like to act simply upon the unsupported statement of the newspapers, but with regard to these matters with which the newspapers were dealing, it is pretty difficult for one of these hotelkeepers, because his business depends upon getting his license, to open his mouth and state what he knows about these things. I believe the case will be on the 5th of June, when you sweep out this Government—(loud cheers)—that there shall be such an opening of the mouths of these men that there shall be stories told enough almost to make the walls of this house tumble down. (Cheers.) Now it is stated, perhaps with some truth, that these hotel keepers have to pay through the nose, no matter what their political complexions may be, for the election funds of the Reform party, and other little side shows of that kind for the Government of the day. I don't wonder, therefore, that Mr. Mowat and his friends hang to this licensing system if it is doing all that for them, as well as enabling them to control to a considerable extent the people in the business. I don't wonder at their hanging on to it. (Hear, hear.) Now, we have fortunately under oath the examination of a prominent brewer in connection with this matter. We have his statement. It has been in print, and no doubt this audience, a reading audience, have seen it. He swore upon his oath that in a Dominion election he went around with Mr. Mackenzie, a license inspector, to the tavern-keepers of Hamilton for the purpose of influencing them. Mackenzie, the license inspector, and the brewer did not go to anybody else but the hotelkeepers. He advised them to vote for the Reform candidate, because it was in the interest of the liquor dealers to be on the side of the Mowat Government. Now, I ask you, gentlemen, why would it be to the interest of the liquor dealers to be on the side of the Mowat Government, unless the Mowat Government could improperly refuse them what they ought to get, or improperly give them what they ought not to have. This is a fair and legitimate conclusion to that statement. What we say in regard to that matter is that we have confidence in the people. We say we do not want these license commissioners appointed on the nomination of the Government candidate for the constituency, whether he is elected or defeated. That is just the way it is done. Now, let us illustrate that. Here in Toronto you have a gentleman elected by Act of Parliament representing the minority of the citizens of Toronto, a respectable minority likely. Who appoints the license commissioners for Toronto? John Leys, the minority representative for the city of Toronto. (Loud laughter and applause.) Now, what is the policy that the Opposition propose? We say in cities and towns separated from counties that three commissioners shall be elected directly by the people; then you would have the very best men in the community. You would have no party heelers. I don't want to say anything to hurt the feelings of anybody who has occupied the position of a license commissioner in Toronto. But, take these men from the first time appointed until now, with perhaps two or three spasmodic virtuous exceptions on the eve of an election, and how many of them would be elected by the city of Toronto? (Cries of "None," "None of them.") I want to know how many of them would be elected that way to administer this important branch of the public service. Then we say in other portions of the country, because there are difficulties in having a direct popular vote with regard to them, the commissioners should be appointed by the county councils. Some say, "Oh, but these county councils would be just as partisan as the Government of the day." I admit that there is a certain amount of partisanship in the county councils, but it is not entirely partisan as under the present system. The evil now is that in the long run the whole of the traffic will be at the mercy of the Government of the country, and sometimes the Government of the country, at the mercy of this traffic, which, by combined force, can demand concessions which are not in the public interest. (Applause.) Therefore I hold that there ought to be decentralization in regard to this system and that each locality should have the appointment in that locality of men whom they have confidence in to administer this important branch of the public service. (Applause.) That is one question upon which, if we have the opportunity of doing so, we intend to place a law on the statute book of the province of Ontario. (Applause.) But some temperance people who have been led away on this question say you are restoring to the municipalities the power of controlling the traffic and they point back to the time that the traffic was controlled by the municipalities, when the evil of intemperance more widely existed and claim that the law was not as much in the public interest as it is now. But these gentlemen forget that one great feature of the Crooks Act, the best feature of it, which limits the number of licenses to be granted in each community, makes matters different now so that it would not be as it was before when a commission chose to grant as many licenses as they pleased. And is nothing to be said about the great advance in the temperance sentiment of this community during the last fifteen or sixteen years? I am glad to say that an immense wave of temperance has swept throughout the country during the last eighteen years, that there has been a great decrease in the drinking habits of the community—(applause)—and that to that is due the increased and improved condition, and which is increasing and improving throughout the province of Ontario, and because whatever opinions men may have upon the license system or prohibition everybody must agree that to lessen the amount of drinking in the community and make the people more temperate must be eminently in the general interest, and should be promoted by any honest citizen. (Applause.) I come now, Mr. Chairman, to say a word or two to you in regard to

The Education Department.

I think, sir, that the times are beginning to satisfy most people that we made a huge mistake when we put a political head in control of the Education Department. (Loud applause.) I know that the great weight of Dr. Ryerson's name is given to the change made, but those who have followed the history of the subject must have seen that Dr. Ryerson did not always entertain that view, and it was with great reluctance in the declining years of his life he expressed that opinion. But, whatever views Dr. Ryerson might have entertained, and however great Dr. Ryerson's experience might have been, I venture to say that the House was mistaken and that it was a great pity when that change was made. If there is one thing more than another that ought to be kept high above ordinary political strife it is the education of our children. (Applause.) I do not sympathize with those who are always talking about "the mad of politics"; I do not sympathize with those who live in the higher atmosphere of the social and moral plane, who are always sneering at those engaged in political life. (Applause.) This is an every-day business world, and in the battle of political life the liberties of the people are fought out and the government of the country carried on. The people attend to these things, and I say belittle it never—(loud applause)—but, however pure you make politics, as long as men are men, and as long as men will become partisan, so long will it be dangerous to bring the education of the children within the arena of political strife. Let me ask any intelligent, honest, fair-minded man in this province to answer me this question: Does he not believe that if the Government, having a responsible Minister at its head, is committed to a particular line of policy that Government's supporters in the House will not defend its policy more readily so as to strengthen the Government's hands? So, on the other side, the men opposed to it are more likely to attack the Government than they would be if the department were non-partisan. Therefore, I say that the system which is the best for the country is the system which has not a political chief at the head of the department, but a non-political head existing, as in the old system, with some kind of a council of public instruction comprising the most experienced educationists in the country. (Applause.) That system is the system we advocate, the system which I think is in the best interest of the people of the country. I want to point out this, that every one of those amendments to the separate school law has been made since the Education Department was presided over by a political head. (Applause.) I don't say whether that is a coincidence or a consequence of this matter which I have been speaking to you upon, but I simply wish to point out to you this fact, that every one of the changes made in the separate school law has been made since a responsible Minister was placed at the head of the department. On the occasion of my London address a few months ago, I referred to the increase in recent years which has taken place in the number of the separate schools of the province, and that this increase has also taken place since, and began when a political head was placed in control of the Education Department. I don't say that the argument is conclusive, but the circumstance is worthy of consideration.

The French Schools.

I now come to a question upon which I desire to speak with the utmost frankness. I come to the question referred to in this motto before me, "English Schools in Ontario." (Loud applause.) I recognize, Mr. Chairman, that there never can be greatness in this Dominion, composed of different races and different nationalities, if we are constantly quarreling one with the other. I recognize that our French-Canadian fellow-citizens are in the main loyal to this great Dominion and to the Mother Land; I am willing to testify to the services rendered by them to Canada and the Mother Land in regard to the preservation of this glorious Canada as a part of the dominions of the Mother Land; I am willing to recognize the beauty of the French language; I am willing to recognize it as one of the most beautiful languages on the face of the earth; but at the same time I say in this English province of Ontario we are bound to have our schools English schools. (Loud applause.) I am not going to say anything about French as it exists in the province of Quebec. By the law of the land the French language exists there, but that has nothing to do with Ontario, and I am talking about Ontario. I say that in Ontario it is the fundamental duty of the people to see that their schools are made English schools at once. (Loud applause.) We are willing in this land to receive foreigners from every land; from old France, from Germany, Switzerland and every country under the sun; we tell them they will find this country the finest in the world, that they will have free homes and free institutions, but we say to them, you must come here and be obedient to the laws, you must come here and learn our language. (Applause.) On these conditions we tell them that we are ready to receive them. Now, there is a peculiar condition of things with regard to French in the eastern part of the province of Ontario. We have upon one side of us the province of Quebec with one of her counties crossing the Ottawa river and forming a wedge in the province of Ontario. Alongside of that has grown a settlement mainly of French people. We cannot permit that portion of the province of Ontario to be practically a part of the province of Quebec. While we welcome these French-Canadians within our borders we must say to them, "When you come in make your schools English and become English-speaking citizens of the province of Ontario." I do not mean to say that they shall forget their mother tongue, but I do say that in the schools which they attend the language shall be the language of the public schools of Ontario. That is the more important in view of the position taken by a section of the province of Quebec. We have had the declaration made by a leading public man of the province of Quebec that they intended to establish upon this continent a French and Roman Catholic nation, and that they are going by a peaceful conquest ultimately to have Ontario.

A Voice—Never.

I do not mean to say that there is any danger of the people of Ontario allowing that to be done, but I do say that when you find a portion of our people holding to a view of that kind, it is of the utmost importance to see that when they come within the province of Ontario they should conform to our laws and the language of English schools in that province. (Cheers.) I do not blame the Government for the state of things they found existing there in the first instance. Unfortunately, in years gone by it was permitted that the French language should be the language of these schools.

What I Do Blame the Government for

is that, when their attention was called to the fact, they denied the state of things that was there, and persisted in their denial until they were forced to change it. The public press had in the first place, with that enterprise which characterizes them, gone down into the counties of Prescott and Russell, and they published the state of things that existed there. Mr. Craig had his attention called to the matter. He was a thoughtful man, a Christian man and a credit to the province of Ontario, and my only regret is that he may not have a seat in the coming House. Mr. Craig called attention to the state of things and made a speech in the House. Mr. Ross rose, following him, and instead of accepting Mr. Craig's statements and the evidence which he produced, met him by the positive denial of that state of things which Mr. Craig said was existing in these counties. He said the condition of these schools was fair. The whole matter would have passed off there and then with nothing more being done, because I am bound to admit that what Mr. McCarthy and others said is probably true, that the Government would have done nothing had not public sentiment been worked up. Then this commission was appointed to go down and examine those schools. That commission was appointed from the friends of the Government of the day. I do not mean to say that the commissioners wilfully misstated anything, but I do say that the commissioners went there with the intention of not injuring the Government any more than was absolutely necessary by the investigation they made and the report they made to the public. What was in that report? What did it indicate? It indicated that in many of the schools the teachers were wholly incompetent to teach a word of English, that in many of the schools the teaching of English was practically nil, that in many of the schools—the public schools of the province bear in mind—books containing religious education in the Roman Catholic faith were in use, although objected to by the parents of Protestant children attending these schools, and there were also put in evidence the facts that some religious emblems peculiar to the Roman Catholic faith were found in these schools. I ask, was that a creditable thing in the province of Ontario, and should that state of things exist in our public schools? It seems to me it was not, and it was Mr. Ross' duty—who is paid a reasonable salary as a public servant to perform these high duties—to have himself gone down and made an examination, and see how matters stood, and I venture to say if he had done so he would not have answered Mr. Craig as he did. Why, sir, the very book which Mr. Craig produced in the House, which was denied by Mr. Ross as having been used in the schools, was reported upon by the commissioners as having been used to a considerable extent in the schools, and reported as a book that ought to be sent out from the schools at once. And more than that. In the report, which I have now in my hand, it is stated that Mr. Ross had received from his own inspector—Mr. Summerby—a list of the books in use, and this Syllabaire des Ecoles Chretiennes was one of the very books used. Yet in face of that document Mr. Ross hooted Mr. Craig's statement and denied it in toto, and as I said before there would have been no enquiry had it not been that public feeling was greatly aroused. Then what did Mr. Mowat say last session when this matter was being discussed in the House? He said the report of these commissioners brought out nothing that was not known to the Government. If what this commissioners' report contains was known to the Government, then that in itself, I say, is sufficient to induce the people of the province to say that they are no longer worthy of the confidence of the people. (Cheers.) To bring this matter to a point what did the Opposition do? A bill was introduced last session—I have it here—by Mr. Craig for the purpose of dealing with this subject, and unless I tire you by doing it, I should like to mention what some of the principal features of this bill are. (Cries of "No, no" and "Go on.") The first section of the bill provides that English shall be the language of every public and separate school in this province. (Loud and prolonged cheers.) It then provided that except as to section 7 no other language than the English language shall be taught in any public or separate school in the province. It then provided that no teacher should be employed or permitted to teach in any public or separate school in this province unless capable of speaking the English language and conducting the proceedings of the school according to the programme of studies in the English language. It provided that if a child could not receive instruction in English it may be permissible for the teacher to instruct him in the tongue he could understand. That was to meet the case of a little French child who goes to school not knowing a word of English and who, it is contended, cannot be taught in any other way. Perhaps there is some force in that, and it was intended to meet that plea in the provision I have referred to in this bill. There is, however, a school of languages, which is making some progress, which does not believe in teaching through the language known by the pupil, but instead they take an object and instruct the pupil in the word of the particular language which stands for the particular object. In the face of this system I don't think the objection is quite as strong as some of the gentlemen who urged it said it was. Then, in order to see that this law was enforced or carried out, it was provided that it should be the duty of the school inspector to report once in every six months upon every school under his charge in which any other than the English is taught, and in such report to certify as to whether the provisions of this Act were complied with, and any violations thereof which had taken place, and also to report at least every six months the number of pupils attending each school under his charge who are not able to receive instruction by means of the English tongue. Then it was also provided that the teacher who should be guilty of a wilful violation of the provisions of the Act should be no longer a teacher in any public or separate school of this province. This was a drastic proposition, but it was necessary to have the law properly and fairly carried out. It went on to provide:

And whereas, in certain portions of the province it has been permitted for many years past that a language other than the English be taught in the schools, and it is expedient to make temporary provision with regard to the schools therein; it is therefore enacted that in those parts of the province in which schools now exist wherein any language other than the English is taught, such other language may, until the Legislature shall otherwise enact, be continued to be taught for such period, not exceeding one hour per day, as the trustees may direct.

You will see there that the teaching in a foreign tongue was to be then as a temporary means in those places where it was then being taught, and was limited to one hour per day. Then it was provided, if it was found by the report of the inspector that the provisions of this Act were not in good faith in any school being carried out, then that exception which I have read should no longer apply to that school. I ask you, gentlemen, was that not a fair bill? Is there any provision in that bill unjust to any class of the community? (Cries of "No.") Well, that bill was voted down by the Government of the day. That bill, it was said, should not become law, and, as I said, it was voted down. What is Mr. Ross' excuse for all this? What did he say? He says: "Two years before any announcement was made about this matter I had commenced to deal with the question, and already had made some prov