

ROBLIN WINS AGAIN

SIR WILFRID WAS THERE TOO—NAUGHTY MANITOBA!

FOR the third time, Hon. R. P. Roblin, the Manitoba provincial Conservative Leader, has scored a notable political victory at a general election. The conqueror of the Hon. Thomas Greenway appears to be invincible. If his health were better, he might remain in public life long enough to win three more victories, because it seems to be a Canadian characteristic that once confidence is given to a public man it remains until a cataclysm or an earthquake intervenes.

It is only thirty years since Rodmond Palen Roblin went west and became a farmer and grain-dealer at Carman. He was born in Prince Edward, one of the counties in older Ontario which have given so many of their sons to the making of the West. He is of German descent, yet that does not prevent him being an ardent imperialist. His career in the West was of the usual kind. Being a graduate of Albert College, Belleville, he was at once elected school trustee. The rest followed as a matter of course, because educated men were none too common in the earlier days in Manitoba. He became Reeve, then Warden, then member of the Legislature. He was in the latter body only a dozen years when he was called upon to form a government in 1900. He chose to be Minister of Agriculture and Railway Commissioner and as such he has since remained. In this week's election he was opposed in his own constituency by Professor Osborne, but was re-elected with a record majority.

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AT the Walker Theatre in Winnipeg, in the closing speech of the campaign, last Saturday evening, Mr. Roblin gave three reasons why the general election was held a year before constitutionally required. First, the Opposition charged that he had lost the confidence of the electorate. Second, the introduction of the principle of government-owned elevators required the confirmation of the people. Third, his stand on the Boundary Question was a matter he desired to submit to the people. "These are the reasons why we should have an election at the present time."

As for the record of the Roblin Government, it must be freely admitted to be the most paternal of all Canadian Governments past or present. It has done what all other provincial governments have done, and then added government operation of telephones under a commission, and government operation of elevators. In the famous Canadian Northern Railway deal, which occurred early in its history, it paternalised to some extent in railways—it bought and sold a railway, getting control of rates for a bond guarantee. In these moves on the commercial checkerboard, Mr. Roblin has gone farther towards paternalism than any other Canadian statesman. Sir William Mulock wanted the Dominion Government to take over the telegraph lines throughout Canada, but he never got any distance with his project. Mr. Borden wanted the Dominion Government to build and operate the new Transcontinental, but the Government preferred to make a bargain with the Grand Trunk Pacific. Mr. Roblin is the only public man who has had advanced ideas concerning public control of public utilities and has had the courage and the opportunity to put his plans into operation. Sir James Whitney has gone in for public control of a power-transmission line, but it is doubtful if even Sir James can claim equal honour with Mr. Roblin in respect to paternal legislation.

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WHILE Mr. Roblin appealed for support because he had done these things for the people of Manitoba, his biggest play in this campaign was undoubtedly his appeal against Sir Wilfrid Laurier's refusal to enlarge Manitoba's boundaries and to place

Manitoba on a financial footing equal to Alberta, Saskatchewan or Ontario. There is not the slightest doubt that Manitoba resents the treatment it has received at the hands of the present Ottawa administration. Rightly or wrongly, the people are with Mr. Roblin and against Sir Wilfrid on the "Better Terms" question, and Mr. Roblin has lost no advantage which might possibly accrue to him from this situation. He gave no quarter, and he expected none. He threw down the glove and dared the Liberals to do their worst. He has won his reward fairly, as politics go in this country where unfairness in politics is exceedingly common. His government may have stooped to tactics which are not to be highly commended, but it has gone no farther in this respect perhaps than other governments, Liberal and Conservative, in other provinces on similar occasions.

Courage and daring are the attributes of Mr. Roblin and his colleagues. In this they display the true western spirit. Personally Mr. Roblin's reputation is good, and except for the case of the Eli Sand Pit he has no question mark in his record. He has served his province faithfully and well. If he had a sharp corner to negotiate, he took it in truly western style. That his qualities are such as would enable him to play an equally prominent part in federal politics, should he choose to change his theatre, is an open question. So far as he has taken excursions into the broader political field he has been somewhat unsuccessful. It is hardly likely that he will ever make any further broad attempts in this direction. His health is not good, and rumour says that he has seen quite enough of the game to satisfy him. However, he will be a striking figure so long as he cares to play out his part in public life.

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MR. ROBLIN'S chief lieutenant is the Hon. Robert Rogers, Minister of Public Works.

Indeed, the administration is usually spoken of as the "Roblin and Rogers" government. Rumour has often announced that Mr. Roblin has long desired to give place to his chief lieutenant but the latter seems to prefer second place. Mr. Rogers was born at Lakefield, Quebec, and migrated to Manitoba about the same time as Mr. Roblin. He too made his earlier success as a grain-dealer, and even now takes an occasional "flier" in wheat. He entered the Legislature about ten years later than the Premier, but has been a member of the Executive for the same length of time.

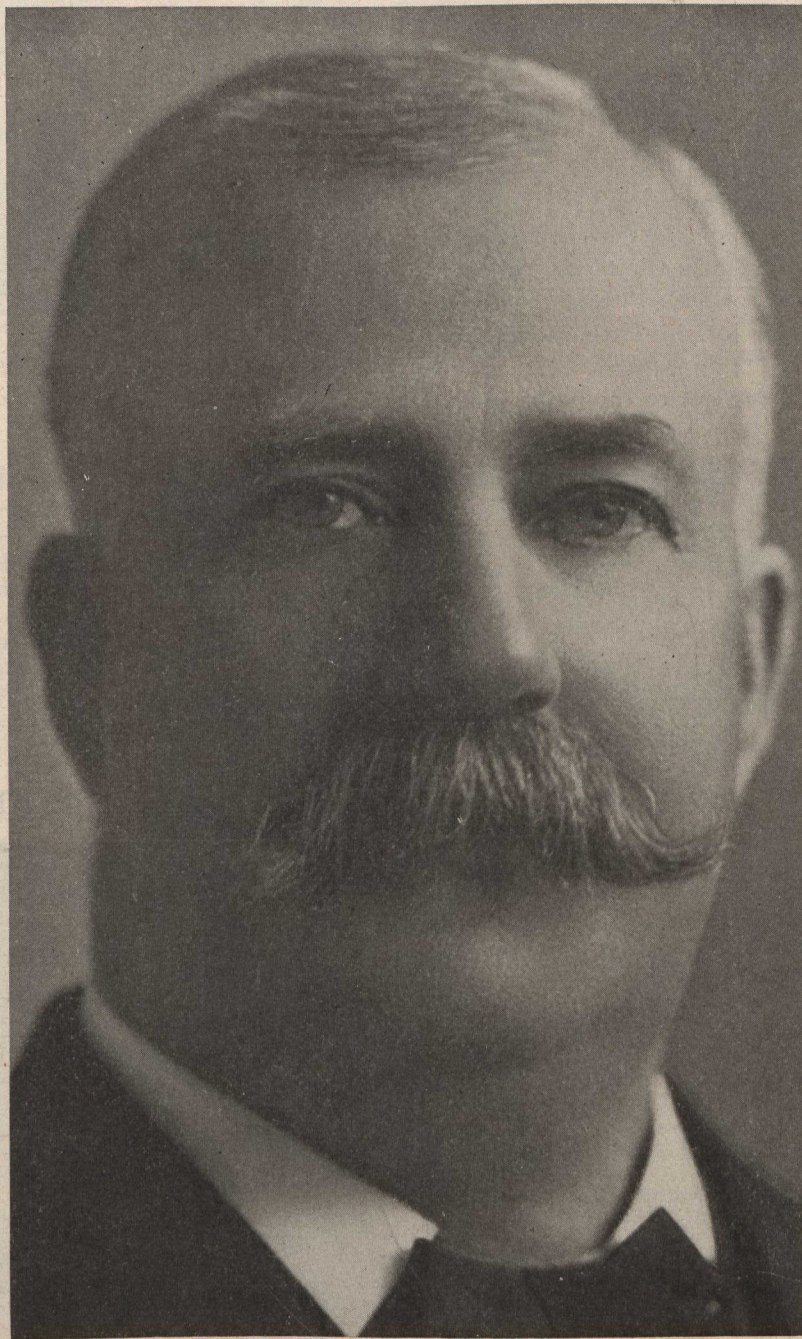
Hon. Colin Campbell, Attorney-General, is a strong man also. He became a barrister in Ontario in 1881 and of Manitoba in 1882. He soon became one of the prominent legal lights of the province, and his promotion was fairly rapid. He represents the constituency of Morris.

Hon. G. R. Coldwell, Minister of Education, is a Trinity College man who went west to practise law in Brandon. He was a member of the Brandon Council for twenty years and has not been long in the Legislature. It was thought that he would have a hard fight in Brandon this year, but his majority was surprisingly large.

Hon. Hugh Armstrong, Provincial Treasurer, was born in New York in 1858—the only member of the ministry not from Ontario. He was educated at Richmond, Ont., and moved west about the same time as Messrs. Roblin and Rogers. The fish export business gave him his start in life. He was in the Legislature from 1892 to 1896, and returned again from Portage la Prairie in 1902.

As a public speaker Premier Roblin is something of a whirlwind. He has become a type of orator not common in the east. A few years ago he was one of the chief speakers at a Conservative picnic at Hanlan's Point, Toronto. As brown as a grain of No. 1 Hard, thick in the chest as a bear and with a bull-dog jaw of rat-trap precision he thundered to the amazed easterners about the illimitable areas and potentialities of western wheat—in a day when most of the wheat was grown in little Manitoba, before Saskatchewan forged to the front as a wheat-producer. Mr. Roblin was big with optimism then. He is just as optimistic now.

If Mr. Roblin has succeeded in getting the public mind of Manitoba away from speculation about crops to thinking about elections he has achieved pretty nearly the impossible.



RODMOND PALEN ROBLIN, THE INVINCIBLE.

The Czar of the Postage-Stamp Province laughs at the Laurier entourage