

Choosing a New Chief

WHEN a tribe of North American Indians met to select a new chief it was a great occasion. When a provincial or federal party meets to select a new political chief it should be equally notable and deliberate. There is nothing in this country which at all equals in splendour, impressiveness or passion the great gatherings every four years in the United States when each party gathers to select a standard-bearer for the Presidential election.

The election of a new leader for the Liberal provincial party, in succession to the Hon. G. W. Ross, was a modest and unexciting event. And yet it was an occasion which meant a change of allegiance on the part of one half the voters of a great province. The King is dead, long live the King! Perhaps it was the disorganised and disheartened state of the party which accounts for the small interest taken in the event. Perhaps the fact that the party seems a long distance from its re-entrance into power was another factor.

To the newly elected leader, Mr. George P. Graham, the occasion must have been one of somewhat personal importance. It is no small thing for a man, no matter what his calibre, no matter what his ambitions, to have conferred upon him the mantle worn by Blake, Mowat, Hardy and Ross. The Province of Ontario is no insignificant part of Canada, and the Liberal

Party is no insignificant part of Ontario. To be chosen leader of such a party, even temporarily, to be given the privilege of blending colours for such a section of such a people is a considerable honour and responsibility. Mr. Graham must have felt that it was a great moment in his life.

Mr. Graham comes into the position, not only with the approval of the stalwarts of provincial Liberalism but with the good-will of the federal Liberal leaders. It is no secret that Ottawa sent word that it would prefer Mr. Graham to any other—to Mr. Harcourt, Mr. Mackay or Mr. Preston. Mr. Graham is well thought of at Ottawa. His organisation work in Eastern Ontario during the last federal campaign has been highly

praised. There is little doubt that if Mr. Graham had desired to go to Ottawa, a place would have been found for him.

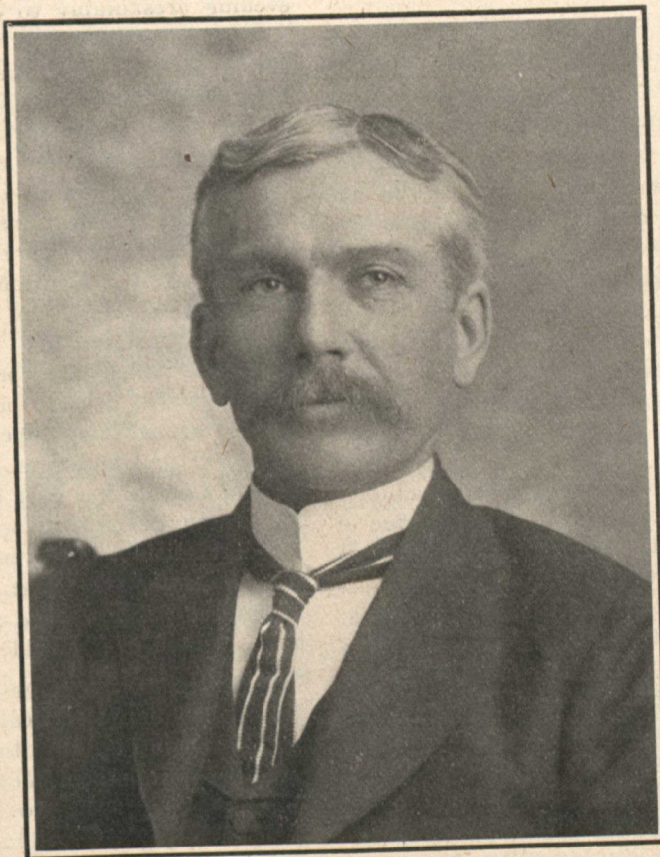
Mr. Graham is a pleasant man to meet. The jest and quip is ever on his lips. When three or four men meet together and Mr. Graham is one of them, there is ever a smile. Consequently he has few if any enemies, either within or without his party. When he speaks in public, his hearers if not impressed are always entertained. His humour savours somewhat of the side-lines, but then Ontario is mainly agricultural. Yet it is always kindly and only mildly sarcastic. The arrow is seldom barbed.

Mr. Graham commenced his journalistic career on the Morrisburg Herald, where for thirteen years he passed a quiet life. From there he went to the Ottawa Free Press and later to the Brockville Recorder, a paper which he still manages. In 1890, he was defeated in Dundas by the present premier of the Province. He did not enter the Legislature until after the election of 1890, since which date he has represented the city of Brockville. He is a Methodist by religious profession and the son of a Methodist clergyman.

Tall, and yet somewhat slight, Mr. Graham is yet not a man to be picked out of a crowd as an intellectual giant. His keen sense of humour obscures his look of intellectual strength. Only in his graver moods, in a personal heart-to-heart talk is it possible to discover the earnestness

which is undoubtedly a characteristic of the man. Then the smile narrows down, and the eyes reveal the spirit which animates him. He is far from being egotistic and consequently seeks constantly to conceal the determination and constancy which he undoubtedly possesses.

A great reform leader, Mr. Graham may never be. A fairly successful leader he is certain to become. What he has gained in life, has not come too easy. He has had to be patient and calculating, and his plan of campaign will be likely to bear the mark of these qualities. Ontario Liberalism needs a strong leader just now and it is likely to make one out of Mr. Graham. It is yet too early to say whether the greatest benefit will come to the party or to the country.



MR. GEORGE PERRY GRAHAM
The New Ontario Liberal Leader