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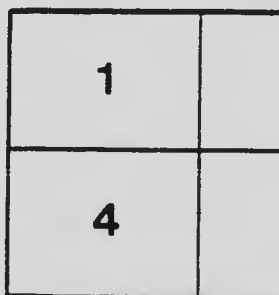
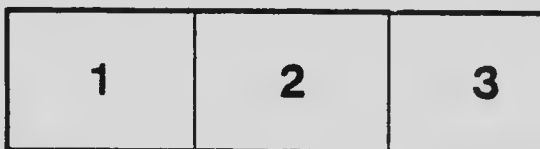
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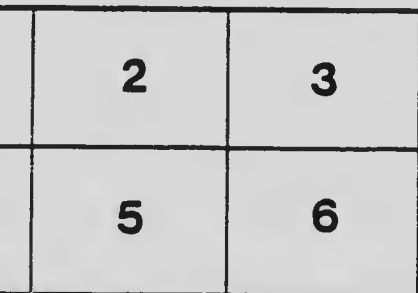
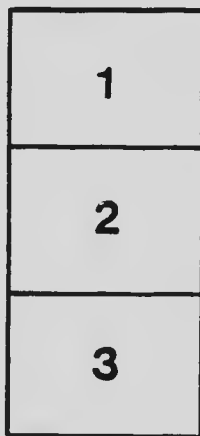
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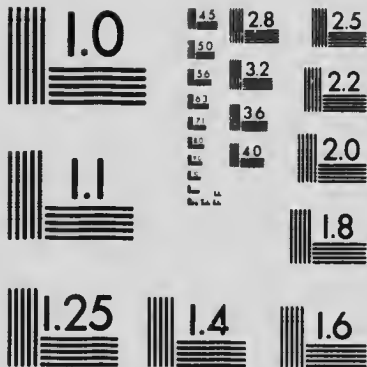
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Rev. D. C. Hossack on Whitney Rule

63

Premier Has Been False to Those Who Aided Him

LIBERALS HELPED IN 1905

Gerrymandered and Hived in 1908

Premier Whitney has Disappointed Those who Believed in Him—Is He Anything Else but a Tricky Politician?—The Gift of \$130,000—The Guarantee to Mackenzie—A Strong Protest.

(To the Editor of The Globe.)

Rather more than three years ago, when the last Provincial campaign was in progress, I addressed through the press some remarks to the independent electors. It is gratifying to think that in the interval the number of independents has increased. The tide is running that way. It means better days to come. We are now in the midst of another campaign, and it may be well to inquire, after reviewing recent events, what is the duty of independent electors at the present time? I have received inquiries from some Liberals who were not in accord with my opinions in 1905 as to my present views, and it has been suggested by some of them, and also by others who agreed with me on that occasion, that the present juncture was of such importance that if I had well-defined views upon public affairs I should not hide them. Under these circumstances, and as public discussion safeguards civil liberty and makes for good government, I offer no apology for reviewing recent events. My humble opinions, if not accepted, may incite a fuller consideration and so lead to a wise conclusion.

A Call to the Independent.

On November 14, 1904, Mr. Whitney called a conference to be held in Toronto on November 24th. The invitation was general. He said: "In addition, I invite representative men in each constituency, no matter what their party affiliations may be, and who sympathize with our

objects, to attend and help us by their advice and encouragement. In the presence of great public peril, party designations and differences are of secondary importance." Mr. Whitney publicly sought Liberal assistance. It was his privilege to do so. No one complained. But it is not forgotten that he did it.

During the campaign Mr. Whitney strenuously urged Liberals to support him. Independence of thought and action he urged at every meeting. At Brampton, Ottawa, Barrie, Ingersoll and many other places he denounced party prejudice. He spoke of the splendid record of the Liberal party in securing responsible government, of the glorious days of Baldwin and Lafontaine, and urged Liberals to rise superior to party prejudice. The Mail and Empire in its account of the Ottawa meeting reports a portion of Mr. Whitney's speech as follows:—"In England this was the way of politics, and by reason of the large number of public men who were ready to sacrifice party to purify the government of England was pure and strong. The result was that Governments were quickly and frequently overthrown, and a perennial cleaning occurred. In Ontario the opposite was the case, and the system worked itself out in direct opposition to the spirit of the English system."

After the election Mr. Whitney admitted his debt to the Liberals. In a message to the Mail and Empire of January 26, 1905, he said: "All must acknowledge

the serious meaning of this emphatic expression of the people's will. I fully and gladly appreciate the fact that Liberals in large numbers joined in that expression." That his appreciation might be more generally known by the Liberal party Mr. Whitney wired the same message to The Globe. The day after the election the Mail and Empire acknowledged the assistance which Liberals had rendered in defeating the Government. On the same day The Toronto World said editorially: "An issue, indeed, so vital for the future of free government in Ontario could not be made a party question, and, as Mr. Whitney declared, the victory of his cause could not be regarded as a mere party triumph. And he will be the first to recognize that the sweep which he has made throughout the length and breadth of the Province has been due in no small degree to the independent and honorable action of the many Liberals who have subordinated for patriotic reasons their party to their principles."

Under the circumstances it was suggested that the new Government would be peculiarly free from party bias and be a Government for the whole people. Mr. Whitney in the campaign encouraged the people to entertain this hope. As reported by The News, which very ably supported him, he said at Barrie: "In Ontario they were not so strongly divided on public questions as in the Dominion Parliament, where the larger questions of trade-tariff and relations with the outside world were dealt with. But the time had come in Ontario when all the good men, all Christian men, all men who wished decent government, must get together or violate their consciences, and the Conservatives held that they had a right to ask for that."

The Government attained power under most favorable auspices. Hope was general. The people were discovering how great were their mineral resources. The bright prospects of the Province were attracting immigration. Everything seemed promising. The Government had such a majority that it was independent. The people—Conservatives and Liberals—had given it the power to resist sinister influences. No Provincial Government had ever had such a majority or such an opportunity.

How Independents Were Rewarded.

For a time the Government did well. None would deprive them of their due. The Liberal press was generous. But after a time complaints were heard. It was charged that, forgetting appeals for Liberal support and the acknowledgment of generous treatment by Liberals, the spoils system was being introduced. Dismissals were numerous. Certainly some of them seemed unnecessary. The independent press began to criticize. The News was able and vigorous in its opposition to the spoils system. Some Liberals who had responded to Mr. Whitney's appeal to "good men and Christian men," and who had begun to consider him as a superior politician, were wondering if they had been deceived, and if he were of the ordinary brand. It began to appear that the Government had obtained office by false pretences, and did not differ from the ordinary Government of party prejudice.

Having been returned by a huge majority and a large Liberal support, the Government might have

postponed a general redistribution of constituencies until after the census of 1910. The unbiased observer will call the redistribution a gerrymander.

The plan of electing two members in Toronto constituencies on separate ballots was adopted, not to promote independence, but to strengthen their party lines, make sure the nomination and election of the four old members, and generally to discourage independence. Middlesex and other counties were so arranged that Liberals should not have adequate representation in the Legislature. This is gerrymander.

Gerrymandering and Hiving.

On January 24, 1905, Mr. Whitney made a public appeal for aid, and declared that should his future conduct not be approved, the people might withdraw their confidence. Does Mr. Whitney feel that he has lost public confidence? He has so arranged many constituencies by hiving Liberals that the withdrawal of Liberal confidence will not affect the standing of the parties in the Legislature. On January 23, 1905, Mr. Whitney published his "glad appreciation" of the fact that "Liberals in large numbers" supported him. In 1903, apparently with the expectation of losing Liberal support, Mr. Whitney's appreciation is expressed by hiving the Liberals. There was a grim humor in the situation did it not savor so strongly of the very ordinary commonplace and tricky politician.

Law Reform.

At a meeting held December 22nd, 1904, Mr. Whitney expressed his views on law reform. The Mail and Empire gives the following report of his remarks:—"A few years ago the Conservative party declared its policy on several questions. It favored law reform. The Divisional Court was an anomaly. The expenses had been lessened and the results of litigation lessened. There should be one final Court of Appeal for the Province, and one only. If matters continued as at present, it would soon come about that no man but the rich could go to law and get his rights in Ontario."

The first term of the Government has passed. They have been in office nearly four years, and nothing has been done for law reform. There is need of relief; the Government have failed to give it. There has been a conspicuous failure and the people are disappointed.

The Three-fifths Clause.

When the Government passed the three-fifths clause of the local option act they were guilty of reactionary legislation. Ever since Ontario became a Province the majority in a municipality has had the right to decide upon the granting of licenses. These rights were firmly established and founded upon a sense of British justice and equality. Why have the Government tampered with them? Having been returned to power by a large popular vote composed of both parties, this, of all Governments, should have trusted the people.

This country is democratic, and one man's vote should be as good as his neighbor's, and no better. In every State of the Union in which local option prevails the majority vote is considered sufficient. Under the Government of Mr. Ross, local option could be carried by a majority. This was British fair play.

The majority vote is sufficient because the enforcement of local option does not depend upon a three-fifths majority, but upon the sincerity and efficiency of the officials appointed for the enforcement of the act, and upon the ability of the whole department from the Minister down.

Experience is against the contention of the Government that a three-fifths majority is necessary to insure enforcement. In nearly all of the many municipalities in which the act was carried by a majority vote it is now in force. In these municipalities the Government have been able to enforce the law.

When the repeal of the act is considered, it is seen how illogical is the reasoning of the Government. If a three-fifths majority is necessary when local option is being carried it should be necessary in order to retain the act, when the repeal is being tried. Then a minority of votes may retain local option in force. When local option is being carried the law requires sixty votes as against forty in every one hundred; when the repeal is being taken forty-one votes for local option will defeat fifty-nine against it, and retain the act when a large preponderance of public opinion is against it.

The \$130,000 Gift

On account of the circumstances under which the Government came into power they were expected to avoid methods which have been employed by politicians struggling to maintain difficult positions. Many have been disappointed to discover that the Government are not only not as superior as they thought, but of a very ordinary brand.

The Larose mining interests received during the closing hours of the session \$130,000. There was no time for investigation. The explanation of the transaction was extraordinary. The members of the Government were not obliged to decide this case; the courts could have done that. Having constituted themselves judges, the members of the Cabinet should have exercised that sense of honor and of the fitness of things which usually characterizes our Judges. A Judge only a few days ago declined to hear a case in which his son-in-law was a witness. In the Larose case the brother-in-law of one of the Ministers was a claimant, and \$130,000 was given to him and his associates. The explanation is that the recipients of this large sum furnished valuable information to the Government. What was the information? The people paid for it and should know what it is. If the Ministers are to act as Judges their transactions should be public as are courts of law.

Niagara Power

The principles which should govern the distribution of Niagara power are not complex. The benefits to be derived from a gift of nature such as Niagara Falls should never become a private monopoly. It was with hopeful interest the people viewed Mr. Beck's efforts to secure this boon for them. It has been a matter for deep chagrin, however, to observe that his energy has been required to overcome not the enemies without, but the more than passive resistance of his colleagues in the Cabinet. When Mr. St. Aubyn came to the door of the Cabinet virtually looking for a purchaser for

the plant of the Electrical Development Co., why was not Mr. Beck consulted? Did Mr. Whitney fear that Mr. Beck would insist on the Province availing itself of this unrivalled opportunity? Or, if Mr. Whitney felt that the Province was under an obligation not to compete with the people to whom it had granted concessions, the city of Toronto was under no such obligations, and the Premier should have called the attention of the Mayor and Council to the occasion that so fortunately presented itself. But no; the sinister figures whose lobbyists have been seen leading members into committees to vote up what he wants up and vote down what he wants down—the same compelling personage to whose need of \$2,500,000 the Legislature so readily yielded appears at this juncture and snaps up what Mr. Whitney would not take for the Province nor give the city the chance of acquiring. These incidents are not in harmony with the main Cabinet and the Legislature which the people clothed with such ample power for good less than four years ago.

Guaranteeing Mr. Mackenzie's Bonds.

Perhaps the most conspicuous act of the recent session was the guarantee of \$2,500,000 securities for Mackenzie & Mann. That this occurred during the closing hours was suspicious. Mr. Whitney had on former occasions strenuously objected to bringing down railway subsidies at the close of the session. It is said that the explanation of this suspicious affair is a campaign fund. But with forty majority why should a campaign fund be required? It is useless for Mr. Whitney to try to justify the guarantee by saying that the Opposition did not oppose it. He is the man whom the people chose to manage their affairs and guard their interests. He is responsible to the people rather than the Opposition. The people are the source of his power and also his judges. It is difficult to imagine any friend of public ownership or of people's rights voting for such a guarantee. The people's money should be retained for their own projects and not given to an enterprise which is of a peculiarly private character.

What is the situation? An election is approaching. It is said that an election cannot be won by prayers. What is to be done? A fine chance to control the Niagara situation by obtaining control of the Electrical Development Company's rights and plant offers. Mr. Whitney shuts his eyes. Mr. Mackenzie acts. Mr. Mackenzie profits. The railway bonds are guaranteed. Again Mr. Mackenzie profits. What is the relation between the Government and Mr. Mackenzie? One is reminded of the receipt given by the somewhat illiterate partner—"We have received our money," signed "Me and Bill." It is a hopeful sign and worthy of notice that some of the Conservative members were opposed to this transaction.

There are several matters which the public will consider in passing judgment upon the course of the Government, but space does not permit a discussion of them.

The Growth of Expenditures

The annual expenditure of the Province has increased rapidly and materially. In the last three years there has been an increase of per capita ex-

penditure equal to the increase of the preceding thirty-two years of Liberal Government. Of course there has been an increase of revenue, but there must be a halt in the increase of expenditure.

In some respects the Government have gone far towards Socialist radicalism, and on some occasions have surrendered to privileged corporations.

The tendency to appoint members of Parliament to office seems to still prevail. Mr. Morrison may be a good man for the office he received, but there is the danger that a man who is ready to accept an appointment will not be free and independent.

The money for the university should be voted openly and directly, and the Board of Regents should be representative of the Province. Sixteen of the twenty regents are resident in Toronto. The teaching profession and farming community should have representation on the board.

The lobbying system has developed rapidly, and is now pernicious and dangerous. The Government alone can provide the remedy. The favorites of the Government—lawyers and others who trade on their ability to manipulate the members of the Cabinet and their supporters—are the potent forces of the lobby. The Government are aware of this and should give redress.

There has been a tendency to shirk responsibility and to conceal what should be public. Work for which the departments should be responsible has been handed over to commissions. By special statutes salaries of Ministers, increased as they have been, and other expenditures, have been somewhat concealed. In this way the passing of appropriations is avoided.

When criticized the Government appeal to the record of the former Government, and the defence is that they are no worse than the former Liberal Government. Mr. Whitney compares his gerrymander with other gerrymanders. When he is questioned in regard to the guarantee he says Mr. Ross did something similar. It is time that the ashes of the burnt ballots were at rest. The sins of the Ross Government relate to electoral methods. Their majority was small and their condition desperate. Mr. Whitney has, with the pigeonholes in his possession, for years, not discovered any scandal relating to the departments. Be that as it may, Mr. Whitney has supplied a standard for himself. At Ingersoll January 8, 1905, he said:—"The question for the electors to decide to-day is whether or not improper acts can be done now without punishment being meted out."

Mr. Ross came into office with a small majority and a party which had been too long in power. Mr. Whitney came in under different auspices. There was no occasion for him to yield to political exigencies, for on account of non-partisan and Liberal support he had been made independent of any unfair political or corporate influence.

The Present Duty.

What is the present duty? It seems clear. Had the Opposition been stronger and the supporters of the Government in the House more independent the Government would not have been so autocratic, and some things would not have occurred which have brought discredit upon the Province.

It is the duty of all, Liberals and Conservatives, to elect independent representatives and to return a really strong and capable Opposition. It will be a calamity should the Opposition not be able to make the Government move with caution and give the fullest information upon every matter which it brings to the attention of the House. The close of the session witnessed a rapid degeneration in the Government. Their acts have been suspicious, and the Province should be on the watch.

Appeal to Independent Conservatives.

Mr. Whitney appealed during the last campaign for Liberal aid and received it. There is as good reason now to appeal to independent Conservatives to strengthen the Opposition. To do so will be in the true interest of the Conservative party and of all the people. Mr. Whitney believes in independence. It is a pleasure to quote him on this subject. The *Mall and Empire*, reporting his Ingersoll meeting of January 8, 1905, says: "In an eloquent plea for the shaking off of party shackles and the assertion of the people's right to vote independently of party ties when the occasion demanded, Mr. Whitney stated that in Great Britain forty-five or fifty per cent. of the entire electorate refused to be dragged at the chariot wheels of a party leader who had forfeited their confidence. There the downfall of a Government once convicted of wrongdoing or maladministration was swift and sure, thanks to the independent attitude of a great mass of the electors. There it was that the atmosphere of British politics was kept always pure and clear and undefiled. And it was this undue partisanship in Ontario which accounted for the fact that the political atmosphere here was not kept pure and clear and undefiled."

When Mr. Whitney denounces partisanship everyone knows that he is right. Partisanship must not obscure the true interests of the Province. The party system cannot succeed without a vigorous Opposition. In 1896 and on other occasions many Conservatives were true to duty. They will not fail now. Every Liberal—and there are many—who from a sense of duty supported in the last campaign the party now in power, when he considers the present situation will perceive that the same sense of duty will compel him to labor for a strong and able Opposition, that in this Province, which we all love so well, there may be the best administration of public affairs which the system of government by party can provide.

D. C. HOSEACK.

Toronto, April 27th, 1908.

The General Reform Association for Ontario, 36 Toronto Street, Toronto, Ont.

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