

THE CHARLOTTETOWN GUARDIAN

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WHAT ABOUT IT, THEN?

By a striking co-incidence, there appeared in our yesterday's columns the report of an indignation meeting at Stanchel, and a letter from a "Citizen," both protesting against the continued existence of the Bell Government. Not in the history of this province has there been more general agreement about the incompetence of a government than exists today. From all sides and from every part of the province the same report reaches us. The Bell Government has proved worse than useless. The people of Stanchel made no bones about the matter; they called for the resignation of the Liberal member, the Hon. Mr. Crosby, and so that there might be no dubiety, signed the resolution with their own names. A glance at these names will show that the meeting and resolution were not the outcome of "Tory organization" as the Patriot alleged in connection with previous protest meetings. The indignant protestors are not ashamed to admit that they were fooled, that they supported the Bell Government candidates on the representation they made prior to and during the election campaign. The Bell Government having belied these pre-election promises, are in honor bound to resign and go back to the country--if there be any honor in them, that is. "Citizen's" letter deals trenchantly with the institutions which the Bell Government has, by its utter incompetence and neglect sent to the discard. Was there ever such indictment? The Dalton Sanatorium with its seventy beds ready for use for tubercular patients abandoned because the government says it would cost \$150,000 per annum to run it. Yet the same government fathers an agricultural boarding school with seventy-five beds which on the same basis, must cost \$160,000. But we know that the Government estimate for the Dalton sanatorium maintenance is as preposterous and outrageous as its other financing. The Bell Government is utterly incompetent to deal with financial matters. There is not a single member who apparently knows anything more about financial administration than is consistent with lending money on mortgages or other valuable securities. Such men never can make administrators, and their estimates of revenue and expenditure must be taken with more than the proverbial grain of salt. Then, as our correspondent points out, they have abandoned the Returned Soldiers' Employment Office; they have abandoned the Rena McLean Hospital; they have abandoned Government House; they have abandoned the Telephone Company, and left the subscribers to the tender mercies of a private monopoly whose avowed policy is to make dividends for its share holders. So far as any private dividend earning company is concerned, when the interests of the shareholders and the interests of the public are respectively at stake, the attitude of the directors is usually, that of the manufacturers of Ontario who declared that they "do not run their business for the glory of God, and the service of men, but to provide dividends for their shareholders." That being the case and the government knowing the circumstances, failed criminally to take advantage of the Commission appointed by the Arsenal Government to adjust matters between the Telephone Company, the province and the rural telephone companies before the Telephone Company's charter expired. Having thus failed to safeguard the interest of the province and telephone users and protect the Telephone Company, the Bell Government has placed every telephone user, as "Citizen" says, in the hands of the Telephone Company who are monopolists, and whose monopoly cannot be challenged. What are the people going to do in the matter then?

MR. DEWAR AS A LEADER

Mr. John A. Dewar does not seem to be happy in his new environment, or probably it is the other way about, the new environment does not seem to be happy with Mr. John A. Dewar thrust into it. No one who has followed the political career of Mr. John A. Dewar can fancy him as the leader of any party. Mr. Dewar has always prided himself upon his untrammelled independence, and that independence has consisted not a little in differing from the policies of his party. By some means or other unknown to the United Farmers of Peake's Station who initiated the movement here, Mr. John A. Dewar was mysteriously foisted on the new organization as its head. As a correspondent from Peakes pointed out, the farmers there do not agree with Mr. John A. Dewar, and therefore it is necessary to be consistent, for Mr. Dewar to declare his independence of the United Farmers of Peake's, and what follows then? A party without a head or a head without a party? At Stanchel also, one solitary farmer expressed a half-hearted desire to see the United Farmers in office here, but when Mr. Dewar's political record was explained he quickly withdrew his half-hearted support and when Stanchel and Peake's failed to give adherence to Mr. Dewar no other part of the province is likely to. We have, therefore, the melancholy spectacle of Mr. Dewar once more out in the political wilderness, alone.

CURRENT COMMENT

What has become of the Liberal party? It was once a big factor in the political machinery of Canada, held up to glorification by its press and stump orators, and at election, often produced a show to justify its existence. Today it has still a half-hearted supporting press and still, within much reduced limits, a coterie of followers, but the tide seems to have lost its old timidity and only the bold or the bold or forlorn of spirit can offer it reverence. There was a time when they had courage and strength to run the gauntlet of every by-election, and at times to score a victory, but now they shun these openings as the devil is said to shun holy water. Within the last year there was an election in Gloucester, in that province which they claim is so badly lost to the Tories, but there was no Mackenzie King candidate in the running. They showed a little more courage in Temiskaming in which they put up a candidate, WHO SUCCEEDED IN WINNING THIRD PLACE IN THE RACE. In Assiniboia they took another gambler's chance and THEIR CANDIDATE LOST HIS DEPOSIT. In Victoria, B. C., and Kingston, Ont., they were again without candidates afraid to meet what they so frequently described as a down-and-out Toryism.

But after all they did win one election but they don't expend the usual amount of crowing over it. It was in Quebec East, Sir Wilfrid Laurier's old constituency where the Liberal majority at former elections ranged somewhere over 4,000. To make sure of holding this seat they induced Mr. Lapointe their strongest man in Quebec to resign his own seat and contest this one. And he won out by a reduced majority but there is no Liberal crow of the result. It was their only win out of eleven by-elections. In Colchester they had no candidate, in St. John their candidate lost his deposit. In Yale they didn't venture to put up a man and in East Eglip their forlorn hope was snowed under an avalanche of votes out of which as far as can be learned he has not been resurrected. And yet the great bluffer the Hon. Wm. Lyon McKenzie King has been gallivanting around the country telling the people that the Government are holding on without a mandate and demanding an election. What better mandate could any government ask for than the repeated turning down of their recognized official opponents at every by-election held?

All has not been going just as well as the principal movers would wish with the United Farmers Government in Ontario. There seems to be undercurrents of trouble which do not promise well for the future. The difficulties are not big but cumulative. When Premier Drury who is rather a straight going man as-

sumed the leadership it was upon the understanding that the Farmers policy was one to be acted out and not merely a stepping stone to power. In several instances he has discovered the mistake that his supporting party were human like other politicians and that their aspirations were only improvised slightly differing in pattern from those of the old line parties for the purpose of waiting them into power. The Premier has tried hard to live up to his election promises but the party will not and herein comes the difficulty. Patronage was to be abolished, and Drury said yes, but the feelers have stepped in with an unyielding nay. When Mr. Clark resigned his seat to provide a constituency for Hon. Mr. Daugherty, newly appointed minister of the government, it was insisted upon that he was doing so without promise or hope of reward, but despite this the reward came in his appointment as high sheriff.

And so the Premier sees breakers ahead. He must either compromise his principles and become like other politicians, or stand to his guns and face disintegration. Gentlemen he has announced the line of action which he believes in, and which in all probability he will adhere to. It is to offset the inside defections by outside recruiting, and the chances of success in this venture are anything but promising. Apart from this there seems to be trouble looming up from other quarters. Liberals who anticipated a possible return of the farmer group to their own fold, were not hostile at the last session, but now that this hope is abandoned open opposition is threatened. At the meeting of the North Oxford Liberal Association, James W. Stewart, a farmer was chosen as President and John Calder, the sitting member, publicly expressed the opinion that the Drury Government would not last long. If the Liberals in the House turn against them a chance vote might precipitate an election.

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