

# Maritime Farmer.

FREDERICTON, N. B., July 26, 1883.

## Sudden Death of Hon. Dr. Elder.

"After Life's Fitful Fever, he Sleeps Well."

Hon. William Elder, A. M., LL. D., Provincial Secretary of New Brunswick, President of the Board of Agriculture, Editor and Proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, is no more for earth, having died suddenly at his residence in St. John, shortly after ten o'clock, on Monday evening.

His demise, we need not say, has given a great shock to the country throughout its length and breadth. Mr. Elder attended to his official and other duties Monday afternoon, and was in his usual good health and spirits. He sat in the *Telegraph* editorial chair until nearly nine o'clock, when he went home to take some refreshment, preparatory to entering upon the pressing work of his paper later in the evening. Shortly after ten o'clock, he spoke of returning to his office, but was persuaded by his family to remain home, and he accordingly sent a note to the office, stating that he was not feeling very well, and would not be able to go down town. He had scarcely finished writing the note, when he complained of a slight pain in his chest and head, and he laid down. He was never again to rise, for in a few minutes, Mrs. Elder, attracted to his side by his heavy breathing, was shocked to find him already in the throes of death, and before she could realize the position, or summon medical assistance, the spirit of her husband had taken its flight, scarcely a struggle indicating the transition from life to death.

Mr. Elder was a native of Malin, County of Donegal, Ireland, where he was born July 22nd, 1822, and had therefore just passed his sixty-first year. He was early intended for the ministry, and after a distinguished course of study at Belfast College and Edinburgh University, he studied theology, and was ordained a clergyman of the Presbyterian Church. Coming to New Brunswick as a missionary from the Mother Church, he was engaged in that work until 1854, when he assumed the pastorate of the Presbyterian Church at St. Stephen, where he labored ably and successfully till 1863. But his tastes were in the direction of literature, and during his ministry, he contributed largely to church magazines and the religious press. In 1850, he founded the *Colonial Presbyterian*, which became a powerful exponent of Presbyterianism in the Lower Provinces, and which in 1860 became the *Presbyterian Advocate*. He commenced the publication of the *Morning Journal*, a tri-weekly paper devoted to politics, news, and literature, which in 1869 was amalgamated with the *Telegraph*, a paper owned by Mr. John Livingston, the combined journals appearing as the *St. John Telegraph and Journal*, with Mr. Livingston as proprietor, and Mr. Elder as editor. He purchased the new enterprise in 1871, and under the name of the *Daily Telegraph*, to the time of his death conducted it with singular ability and success. Mr. Elder was one of the sufferers by the great fire in 1877, his office and plant being entirely swept away, but the flames had scarcely subsided, when the *Telegraph*, though small in size, made its appearance, and soon a magnificent building with one of the best equipped newspaper offices in Canada arose from the ashes of the destructive fire.

It was in his capacity as a journalist that Mr. Elder won his greatest fame, and at the time of his death he stood at the top of his profession in Canada. Few writers possess the wonderful facility he could exercise with his pen—polished, incisive, logical, keen in investive if he chose, and cutting in sarcasm, there was scarcely any character of newspaper writing of which he was not complete master. His articles in the *Telegraph* of late years were as easily distinguishable from those of other writers, although eminent men he called to his assistance, as if gold from the dross. He gave the *Telegraph* a name and fame throughout every portion of Canada, and handled every subject he treated in the same clever style. In his journalistic position he has done much for his adopted country. There was no subject that affected the interests of the people which he did not fearlessly and powerfully discuss, and while many may have called upon to differ materially from the views he enunciated they accorded to him a true desire for the objects for which he labored. As a journalist we pay our warmest tribute of respect to the memory of the deceased gentleman, who loved the profession in which he won his brightest laurels, and in which he sustained a deplorable loss by his sudden demise.

Mr. Elder in 1872, contested St. John for the House of Commons and was defeated, but a vacancy occurring in St. John's representation in the Local Assembly by Mr. Coram's death in 1875, he was elected, and has since sat in that House, having been returned by a large majority vote in the General Election of 1878 and 1882. From the time of his entrance into local politics until the dissolution of the Legislature in the Spring of 1882, Mr. Elder was a follower and warm supporter of the then Fraser Government, but in the elections of last summer he was returned in sympathy with the opposition that were seeking to oust the administration. This change, perhaps, drew down upon him more criticism and discussion than any former act of his political course, but we shall not stop here to say whether he was ever able to fully justify his severance of those ties that had bound him to personal and political friends. In the new local administration formed in March last, Mr. Elder became Provincial Secretary and President of the Board of Agriculture, in the latter position taking an active part in the plans and preparations for the approaching Centennial Exhibition, a project, the successful realization of which always had his best and warmest regard. In his newspaper office, he was a most incessant worker, and every department was brought under his immediate supervision. It was this watchful attention that made the *Telegraph* what it is to-day, a powerful auxiliary in any project it may espouse. There is little doubt that the constant mental and physical strain this labor involved, coupled with the official duties in connection with the Provincial Secretaryship, the worry and

toil of the Exhibition arrangements, and the many social demands on his time and attention was the secret of his sudden and lamented death. In social life, the deceased gentleman was a favorite. He had a kindly word for everybody, and his personal friends are numbered wherever he was known.

As a parliamentary orator, Mr. Elder had few equals in this province, and when it was known that he was to address the House, the galleries were filled. His manner was easy and graceful, but when stirred his speech was fired with enthusiasm and dash, and though not often aroused to active defence, his speeches on such occasions were models of elegance and strength.

The political parties with which he was allied, will feel his loss severely, but it is yet too early to speculate on the probable effect his death will have on the course the administration, of which he was by far the ablest man, will take with regard to filling the vacancy caused by his demise. It is safe to say that that administration would not have been in existence to-day, had not the deceased gentleman allied himself with the party it represents.

We extend our kindest sympathies to his grief-stricken family, and unite with them in mourning the loss of a large-hearted, brilliant, and amiable man, whose life-work was devoted to the interests of the land, that was proud to call him her loyal and devoted citizen.

## Our Educational System.

There is an unpleasant impression abroad, that the result of our educational system, as at present administered, are not as full and satisfactory, as its best wishers would desire; that the principle upon which the system was established, and the splendid advance made thereunder during the earlier years of its existence, are being crushed and smothered under a too complex and far-reaching plan in its practical application to the real wants of our people. Whether there is good and sufficient cause for this impression, we are not, without further inquiry, in a position to say, but it is certain that some reason must exist for the almost universal expression, that the people of this Province are not receiving adequate return in educational advantages, for the amount of money they annually invest therein. We do not believe that any charge of neglect or insincerity can be brought against the educational authorities, but we do believe, that they are attempting too much with the materials at hand; that the system is forced by a hot house plan, which is in advance of the requirements of the general youth of the country; and that a retrograde movement is already observable in the character of our schools and their attendance, which is the direct result of this over-official zeal, manifested in the administration of the law.

The Common School Act, we take it, never intended that an education beyond what is generally regarded as a good training in the English and other rudimentary branches, should be provided to the whole youth of the country. When the fair English education, the state is supposed to be relieved from further responsibility in their training, and whatever additional knowledge individuals or countries may desire, it will be provided at private expense. But, our school system, as at present administered, seeks to go beyond this, by the introduction of a multiplicity of studies, which the pupil finds it impossible to master during his comparatively brief school life, and which, if mastered, would be of little practical utility in his after life. Here, then, perhaps, we have discovered the secret of present discontent, which even the highest educational authorities are forced to admit, exists at this moment throughout the Province, and which, perhaps, is the secret of the proffered ruin and decay, which the same authorities see for the future for our school system. They say, however, that the gloomy outlook is because of the pressing need of a system of secondary education, "secondary education indeed!" There is first need for the recovery of our former successful primary education, which is being sacrificed, as we have said, to an over-reaching zeal, to do more than our ability will admit.

The educational question is one with which the Legislature will have to grapple at once. It is all very well for two or three scores of the two thousand teachers of this Province, to meet in solemn convocation, as was witnessed here the other day, and discuss fine-spun theories on educational questions, but the country is looking for a practical solution of the difficulties, that stand in the way of the success of our public schools. The *Globe* very truly remarked the other day, parents and other friends of education in this Province, do not intend that they shall accept what is thrown to them by the profession, but will indicate themselves, what they will have in the administration of our school system.

## The Grit Backdown in Halifax.

If there is one event more than another, that has most forcibly illustrated the genuine popularity of the Dominion Government in Canada, and particularly in the Maritime Provinces, that event is the complete backdown of the Halifax Grits, who have withdrawn from the contest, and permitted Hon. J. F. Stairs, the Liberal-Conservative candidate, to be elected there yesterday by acclamation. Halifax is one of the wealthiest, most populous, and influential constituencies in all Canada. At the general election in 1882 the leading Grit candidate was only seventy-five votes behind the lowest successful Conservative candidate. Since that time the *Chronicle* and *Recorder*, the organs of the Grit party, have been spoiling for another trial of strength, and have loudly proclaimed how completely their Liberal-Conservative opponents would be overwhelmed and defeated in such an event. The opportunity offered—Mr. Ritchey, M. P., resigned, to accept the governorship, and the Government promptly issued the writ for a new election. There, then, was the grand opportunity for the swaggering Grit party to make good their boasts. Mr. Stairs' nomination by the Conservatives followed the issue of the writ immediately, and the Grits summoned their clans to consult on the situation and nominate a candidate. What was the result? The only man they could put into the field with any certainty of polling a respectable vote, Hon. A. G. Jones, of "pull down the flag notoriety," absolutely refused to be led to the scaffold, and the whole programme of opposition to Mr. Stairs had to be abandoned. The organs the next day were compelled to admit these facts, the *Recorder*, which had been foremost in urging a contest, accompanying the announcement with the humiliating statement that, "We feel certain that this decision will be heard with surprise throughout Nova Scotia, and the Dominion generally, as there has been abundant evidence of a general expectation that the Liberals of Halifax County would be eager to engage in a fight for the vindication of the principles of Government, which on the platform and in the press have been enunciated during varying years."

Only a few days before, the same blatant organ, after recounting former election contests in Halifax, and stating their position of affairs political, said that:—"Under these circumstances, it would seem that it was the duty of the Liberal party to protest whenever and wherever the opportunity offered—not as directed against

individuals, but against the policy of heavy taxation—the People against the Surplus. By-elections afford a chance for this. By the time Mr. Mackenzie assumed in 1874, with a majority of about 50, down to 1878, the Lib-Cons, by vigorously contesting by-elections, had reduced that majority fully one-half, and were inspired by the continued successes to feel that a concerted onslaught "when the general roll was called" would ensure a victory for them. One after another, North Ontario, South Ontario, and the important constituencies were wrested from the Liberals to give momentum to the Tory Opposition, which thus gained an almost irresistible force, and swayed the Imperial Government. This is the moral of by-elections; and was one which we should have held that there never could possibly be any divergence of opinion about."

This is the moral of by-elections is the *Recorder's* admission, and we therefore can quote the same excellent authority with regard to the lesson of the latest by-election—that decided in Halifax yesterday, by the unopposed return of the Liberal-Conservative Candidate. What then is the moral? Within one month two constituencies in the Maritime Provinces, Albert, and Halifax, have been opened. In the former, a Grit M. P. had held undisputed possession of the seat for five years, previous to the General Election of 1882, when he was again returned by a majority of votes, though deprived of the seat on technical grounds. A new election is ordered, and the same gentleman is beaten by a majority of one hundred and nineteen votes in a small constituency. In Halifax, where, as we have said, the Grit Candidate in 1882, only one year ago, was just seventy-five votes behind his rival, the Liberal-Conservative Candidate in July, 1883, is triumphantly elected without opposition.

The inference is easily drawn. On the result of the election, we before mentioned the remark, that it was an excellent indication of the feeling on Dominion matters the country over, and how much more emphatic has that feeling been indicated by the humiliating defeat of the Grit party in Halifax. "He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day," is an old adage, but the Grit party can take small comfort from it in contemplating their miserable retreat in Halifax.

When shall we have the constituency of York in line with the party whose wise and successful administration of public affairs, has driven its opponents into complete demoralization and disorganization. Is York less intelligent, and less alive to its own interests, than other constituencies of the Province and Dominion? We shall not admit that, for we do not believe that the choice of a representative has been decided on political grounds on any occasion since Confederation. The political issue has yet to be fought out in this constituency, and when that time arrives, we have little fear that the progressive Liberal-Conservative party, that party that has made this great Dominion what it is today, will not meet with an enthusiastic endorsement, as has been uttered in Albert and Halifax.

## The Striking Telegraphers.

On Thursday last, at noon, occurred probably the greatest labor strike ever known in the history of America. Over one thousand telegraphers throughout the United States and Canada, having failed to get the concessions asked for by their employers, in a body left their instruments, and for a time at least the telegraph business was almost paralyzed. An exchange aptly represents the position preceding the strike, when it says:—"At fifteen minutes to noon, the 'sounders' were clicking away over the whole North American continent. The operators were at their posts; messages were being handed in and flashed over the network of wires and delivered a few minutes later hundreds of miles away. The merchant in Chicago spoke to his agent in New York, and the shipper in St. Louis to his consignee at New Orleans. Friend spoke to friend, and from the shores of the stormy Atlantic to those of the Ocean of Peace, all over the continent to the mouth of the Mississippi, intelligence of one kind or another was passing. The little ringer at both ends of the cable swung his hands, and the sun and moon, the left Valencia with the sun at noon, outstripped the great luminary, and arrived here two or three hours before time."

"The change came over the scene. A boy stepped into the general office of the Western Union at Pittsburgh and handed in an innocent looking message. The clerk at the receiving desk took it without comment, and sent it to the operator's room. But the words had a meaning, which none but the initiated could understand. The operator understood it, however, and a few minutes later the 'sounders' all over the continent were ticking out the order to strike. Then from New York to San Francisco, and from New Orleans to Winnipeg, the telegraphers 'switched off,' and the strike was an accomplished fact."

The strike was directly instituted by the Brotherhood of Telegraphers, an organization that has its branches all over the continent. The telegraphers asked for more pay, shorter hours, extra pay for extra work, and equal remuneration to lady operators, who do an amount of work equal to the men. We believe that the popular feeling is largely with the strikers, and that their demands are not unreasonable. There may be labor organizations that are not to the public benefit, and organizations that are arbitrary and extreme in their demands for concession. Against these, public sympathy generally arrays itself, but in the case of the telegraphers, and what better index can there be of the justice of the strikers' claims than this fact alone. Besides this, the strikers have won friends since taking their decisive action, by their orderly conduct, and the tenacity with which they are holding out. They are backed by other organizations, with abundance of capital, and it really appears as though the Telegraph Companies eventually will have to succumb. The demands of the country cannot be fully met by the present force of unskilled telegraphers, who have been gathered up in an emergency, and are to fill the positions, and if the Brotherhood hold firmly to their present purpose, they must win in the end.

The *Chicago Evening Herald*, is after the chronic grumblers with a sharp stick, but not one bit too sharp. It says: "Wouldn't it be an excellent idea to shut up all the grumblers in a huge floating ark, and then send it to the bottom of the ocean? There are men who haven't brains enough to go in when it rains, who grumble their way through life, and find fault with every detail of the most insignificant things, but they have no conception of their difficulty. As a general thing the ignorant man is the most persistent critic, and as a matter of course, the most incompetent one. He never approves of anything fully, because he is an ass. Now, if all the idiots in town, who are continually yawning about things they know nothing about, should appropriate these words to the whole business? 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