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RICHIBUCTO, N. B., MAY 25, 1899

A WRONG RIGHTED.

It is pleasant news to the country that the wrong committed by the Conservative party by the infamous Gerrymander Bill of 1882 is to be redressed and matters restored as far as possible to their previous condition by the Redistribution Bill introduced by Sir Wilfred Laurier in the House on Friday last. Most of our readers will remember the outcry raised in Ontario and Quebec when in 1882 the Gerrymander Bill was passed changing the electoral divisions, adding part of one county on to another, and departing generally from the well defined municipal divisions which had previous to that time been recognized as the proper boundaries of electoral constituencies. Of course the Gerrymander of 1882 was nothing more or less than a political crime committed by the party in power with the hope of gaining thereby a considerable party advantage at the following elections. This was one of the things against which the Liberal party had strongly protested and which as a party their leaders had promised to set right when they should come to power. The introduction of the Redistribution Bill is the carrying out on the part of the government of one more anti-election pledge and all the blind fury and empty bellowing of that political "has been" who now leads the Conservative party in the house will not confuse the minds of the electorate as to the true issues involved.

As announced by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Redistribution Bill seeks to undo so far as possible the violation of the principle, so universally held by the people of Canada, that the municipal county organization is the proper basis of representation to the House of Commons. This principle was as common to those of the Conservative faith as to the Liberals until the Gerrymander of 1882. For instance, Sir John A. McDonald at the time of the first redistribution act of confederation in 1872 laid down this very principle as the only fair and equitable basis of representation in the following words so aptly quoted the other day by Sir Wilfrid Laurier:

"It is decided as much as possible to keep the representation within the country so that each county that is a municipality of Ontario should be represented and if it becomes large enough that it should be divided into ridings, that principle is carried out in the suggestions I am about to make. That rule was broken in 1867 in three constituencies, namely Bothwell, Cardwell and Monk; and I do not think on the whole that the experiment has proved a successful one. It is I think a grand system that the people of Canada should have the opportunity of choosing for political promotion the member in whom they have the most confidence and of whose abilities they are fully assured. All that great advantage is lost by cutting off a portion of two several counties and admitting them together for electoral purposes only. These portions so cut off have no common interests. They do not meet together, and they have no common feeling except that once in five years they go to the polls in their own township to vote for a man who may be known in one section and not in another. This tends towards the introduction and

development of the American system of caucuses, by which wire-pullers take advantage for their political ability only and not from any respect for them. So that, as much as possible, from any point of view, it is advisable that counties should refuse men whom they do not know, and when the representation is increased it should be by subdividing the counties into ridings."

The Redistribution Bill introduced by the Premier in the House on Friday last is based on this principle. It only effects one constituency in New Brunswick, namely the City and County of St. John, where the County is separated from the City entirely, the City electors not being allowed in future to vote for the County as well as the City member which they have hitherto done. This is following the change already made in Provincial elections, and seems a good deal more equitable as hitherto the City voters have had two votes and have by their numbers controlled the election of the County member.

Nova Scotia is not effected by the Act, while in Prince Edward Island the only change is by dividing the constituencies according to the Counties. No reduction or addition is made in the number of members by the Act which provides that Queens and Prince Counties shall elect two representatives while Kings County elects one. In Quebec, while some glaring inconsistencies are remedied, the changes are few in number.

The principal effect of the Bill is on the Ontario constituencies, where the old Gerrymander of 1882 had split up the Counties for political effect. Under the new Act, the County bounds are adhered to and where a County has sufficient population to entitle it to more than one member, the County is divided into ridings, making as many ridings as there are members to be elected. There is a provision for three Supreme Court Judges to act as a Committee to define the boundaries of these ridings and the giving of this power into the hands of a purely non-partisan board shews that no attempt is being made to gain any unfair party advantage.

It is of course provided that nothing in the Act shall operate to change the constitution of the electoral districts as they now exist until the dissolution of the present parliament.

The opposition members have been vowing to spend all summer in the discussion of this Redistribution Bill before they knew a single provision of it, or could possibly be in a position to judge whether it was a fair or a vicious piece of legislation. Now that its provisions have been announced we may expect the most bitter attack of the opposition upon it, but the effect of this antagonism has been nullified by the fact that it was formulated and announced before the provisions of the Bill were known to anyone outside of the Cabinet. Such opposition is too factious to be honest, too frenzied to be intelligent, and too full of spleen to be effective. The general public will view the Bill without prejudice, and judging from the outline of its provisions given by the Premier will agree that it is a long delayed remedy for the political crime committed by the Conservative Gerrymander of 1882.

A HOPEFUL OUTLOOK.

The wave of prosperity which Canada has been enjoying for the past two or three years has not been felt in New Brunswick in anything like its fulness on account of the marked depression in the Lumber Trade which more perhaps than any one single industry effects the people of this Province. Last year the lumber business was at its lowest ebb and the operators throughout the Province were brought face to face with a serious problem which threatened ruin to

many of them. The stocks held in the British market were so large that it was confidently announced that even if no Canadian lumber was shipped last year there would still be a depression in prices for several years to come. As a matter of fact the average operator was unable to hold his lumber, although in many cases logs were purposely hung up in the streams, and one of the biggest concerns in the Province was credited with holding over last year no less than a half million dollars worth of sawn lumber. The American market was in almost as bad a state as the British and the Spanish-American war caused a stagnation in the West India trade. Another such year would have been disastrous to many of the concerns interested.

Fortunately for New Brunswick's interest the closing of the American war with Spain and the impetus to business generally in the neighbouring republic caused a revival in the building trades and a consequent increase in the demand for lumber, so that the St. John mills chiefly interested in sawing for this market are running night and day to fill orders. The demand from the American market is good for all kinds of sawed lumber and includes plank, deals, scantling, boards, shingles and laths, so that the money is pretty well distributed in the labour required in marketing these lines. Prices run from \$17.00 to \$18.00 a thousand for choice sawn lumber in Boston, New York and Philadelphia.

Concurrent with the strengthening of the American demand, came the announcement of firmer prices in the British market which is of more general consequence to the New Brunswick lumber trade. The market there is understocked and at present large orders for deals are being executed, and the only fear expressed is that there will not be logs enough to supply the mills for the present season, as the cut last winter was not so large as in former years. However, in addition to the cut of last winter, the unusually high freshet of this spring has enabled the operators to drive out the logs hung up from last year, and this with the large stocks held over will probably enable the shippers to execute their orders. The drives on the St. John, Nashwaak, Miramichi and Restigouche rivers are all reported to be either in the booms or in the main streams and safe from any danger of being hung up.

Freights in the lumber carrying trade are reported low with plenty of vessels offering and the English price for deals from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per thousand better than last year, and this pleasant combination makes the prospect for a successful season in the lumber business very bright. This means better times generally for the people of this Province, prompter payments among the merchants, more purchasing power among the people and abundant work for the labouring classes. New Brunswick will this year share in its fullness the era of prosperity which Canada as a whole has been feeling for the past two or three years. Our people have been so accustomed to hard times that they are inclined to be suspicious of any promise of better things, but the present revival in this important industry is so general and far-reaching that its good effects have been already felt in the commercial centres of the Province.

THE OBSTRUCTIONISTS.

The freedom of debate in our Parliaments makes it possible for any party by concerted agreement at any time to obstruct public business, but hitherto it has only been at critical times in the history of Canada, when some bill of danger to existing institutions was

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under discussion, that any political party has descended to the abuse of a free debate. To-day at Ottawa the grand old Conservative party is being led into the lowest depths, and is fast becoming a party of mere obstructionists under the leadership of the Tappers and Mr. Geo E. Foster. Parliament is in its ninth week and with the avowed tactics of the opposition to make as much unnecessary delay as possible in the transaction of public business, it is somewhat doubtful when a prorogation will be reached. It is quite evident that at the present rate of progress and taking into consideration the amount of important business which still remains to be disposed of, it will be quite well into the summer before the session is ended. That there is a definite and concerted purpose among the Conservative leaders in this blocking of business is apparent from the words of Mr. Clarke Wallace when called to order by the Speaker for discussing the Yukon railway bill on the debate over the Drummond County Railway resolutions:

"We are opposing the Drummond County bill because we have no confidence in the government, and I am simply showing why we do not have that confidence."

As there never was an Opposition who did have faith in the particular Government they were opposing, this statement simply means that as these former watchdogs of the treasury have had their teeth drawn, they hope by a persistent but useless barking to delay public business, annoy the government and deceive the public into the belief that because they are such good barkers that they must perforce be of some use to the country. As a matter of fact these obstructionist tactics have brought upon the Conservative party the contempt of the general public, have disgusted many of the more intelligent men of their own party and driven them into the ranks of the Liberals, and has largely ruined the usefulness which an intelligent opposition should have in keeping a proper check on legislation.

The reason given by the Conservative leaders for blocking the

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public business is that nothing will be allowed to go through until the Government has brought down its Redistribution Bill, but this is equal to saying that the Opposition must insist on dictating the order in which the Government brings its bills before the House. The Government has sought and is seeking to get through with the business of the country as expeditiously as possible, having due regard to the public interests, and would have laid itself open to ridicule if it had brought down such a new measure as the Redistribution Bill before it had got through with the unfinished business, for to this latter class the Drummond County Railway resolutions certainly belong.

These obstructionist tactics of the Conservative party in the House are certainly more costly to the country than they are either annoying or alarming to the Government. It must be humiliating however to the Conservatives of progressive thought who look back on the time when under other leaders their party assumed a more commanding role, to find that under its present management the party has developed into a lot of useless obstructionists.

MUST SUFFER DEATH.

OTTAWA, May 22.—An order in council has been passed allowing the law to take its course in the case of the Galicians now in Winnipeg sentenced to be hanged on the 26th inst. (Friday), for the murder of another Galician and his four children for the sum of \$68, which the murdered man had. All five were dreadfully mutilated with an axe. Both will be hanged on Friday.

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A MOTHER'S HEROIC ACT.

SHE SAVES HER TWO CHILDREN FROM HER BURNING HOME.

An act of heroic devotion on the part of a mother was witnessed in Montreal last Saturday. She was living in a dwelling on Versailles St. which caught on fire. A stream of water was soon playing upon it, but soon the exciting news spread that Mrs. Deguire and her children were in the burning building. Several of the men of No. 4 station made a dash for the door, which yielded to their pressure, and Mrs. Deguire half blinded by the smoke and with her skirts on fire, staggered out, holding a child under each arm. Her strength and courage lasted her sufficiently long to enable her to carry the children to a place of safety, and then she fainted in the arms of one of the firemen. For the moment the devoted mother was the centre of attention, and the fire which was consuming her garments were speedily extinguished. The rescue was a rare example of heroism. She had to go through a room completely enveloped in flames to get her little ones, and after tucking them under her arms she crossed the burning building once more to reach the door.

A New Departure.

Dr. Marschand, the celebrated French physician, has at last opened his magnificently equipped laboratory in Windsor, Ont. There is a large staff of chemists and physicians at his command, and the men and women of Canada may now procure the advice of this famous specialist free of charge.

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