

COUNCILLORS CAN TALK

AS WELL AS THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE.

The Characteristics of the Principal Orators—Dr. Atkinson on the Warpath—How Opposition Might Be Organized—Some Straight Tips and the Latest Gossip.

FREDERICTON, March 20.—And now perhaps you would like to know something of the orators of the upper house. Dr. Atkinson may call it a "political dead house," and the gay young member from Wayback may term it an "old ladies' home or asylum for played-out politicians," but there are some good live men in the legislative council. I want you to know.

Here is Hon. Robert Young, for instance. There is no denying the shrewdness, the origination genius, the faculty for leadership of the hon. member from Caraquet. It was he who caused Premier Blair and his cabinet to have some very bad dreams in their sleep a few years ago. He has always exercised a powerful influence in the house, a position which his astuteness as a leader and his knowledge of parliamentary usage and tactics justify entitle him to hold. He is not an orator, but has a ready command of language, and speaks with ease and impressiveness.

Hon. Mr. Hill evidently lays no claim to oratory. Perhaps if the subject were such as to arouse him from the air of philosophic repose which becomes him so well, we might be compelled to retract that estimate. But at any rate the president has speaking powers of a very superior order. His language is almost faultless, his thoughts naturally form themselves into logical order and consistency, he is persuasive because we are impressed with his fairness, and when he has no more to say, he says no more. He is a man of wide information, and can be relied upon not to give expression to an unreasonable view of the subject.

Perhaps the house has no more useful member than Hon. Mr. Jones. He has an extended knowledge of legislation in general, is quick to detect what he calls a "wildcat bill," and is a forcible debater.

Hon. Mr. Harrison is one of the least talkative members of the house. His opponents say he is rather too much of a "stickler" for usage and precedent, but his speeches have the merit of clearness and terseness, and are not infrequently pointed and pithy.

Hon. Mr. Thompson is a ready speaker, with a wide command of language. Like his relative, Premier Blair, his oratory is of the high-pressure order. While his addresses, as a rule, are not carefully prepared, there are times when he speaks with much force and eloquence, and not a little originality of expression.

Another of the younger members, Hon. Mr. Richard, perhaps has the fault of speaking too seldom. He speaks equally well, I am told, in French or English. Certainly, in English, he is an admirable debater, inclined at all times to take a just and equitable view of the case under discussion, and gives one the impression that, with a subject adapted to bring out his enthusiasm, he can speak with the eloquence and fire for which his race is famous.

There are other members of the house who, perhaps, are equally entitled to a word of tribute. They are, however, as a rule, not so prominent in the debates of the chamber as those whom I have named, while, at the same time, they are all capable of taking a hand in, if need be.

Returning now from these high latitudes to matters more mundane, I note that Dr. Atkinson continues to be quite a prominent feature of the house. As Jimmy Smith observes, he is "bound to keep his end up." His constant inquiries rather annoyed the attorney-general the other day, and probably no member ever received such a merciless castigation as did Marcus at his hands. Marcus did not fail to realize its force, and replied with spirit. And this was his closing reference to that gentleman:

Although the attorney-general has insinuated that there has been guilty of the unparalleled crime, writing anonymous letters, I would remind him that a distinguished authority on the British constitution has said that he who criticizes the actions of a government does a service to the state. And if I have been guilty of this heinous, this unpardonable offence, which I neither dispute nor affirm, I would remind him that I have a distinguished exemplar, a man than whom a more powerful writer, a more eloquent orator, a more distinguished statesman, has never been given to parliamentary life in Canada—I refer to the Hon. Joseph Howe—a man whose name and fame will be eternized in bronze and marble by his grateful countrymen long after the name and fame of the hon. attorney-general is covered with the dust and ashes of forgetfulness, or remembered only with execration.

And Marcus meant it, too. I wonder if there is any truth in the statement that Brother Hetherington is getting a big oration to be delivered before the end of the session. They tell me that Thomas has heard apostrophizing the moon the other night and one of the dogs of the house vouches for the fact that it was his voice:

The government house to be turned into a deaf and dumb asylum—shades of the mighty fallen! What a close, Mr. Speaker, to such an illustrious career! What a finale to the scenes of revelry and revelry, to the pride and circumstance of regal splendor witnessed within thy walls! Oh, that the vulgar should truly revel among their stately shades, that the common herd should amble freely through the classic corridors, and 'neath thy leaky roof, and at the wild, untutored airs of heaven should frisk and frolic in and out among the sacred precincts! Truly, the winds of public opinion have blown, the bolts of condemnation have come and beat upon

MAKING ASSURANCE DOUBLY SURE.



JACK SPOONER (who has managed to blunder through it).—Edith, dear, I—I hardly know just what to say—I am so happy and so agitated. It may seem foolish to you—but I put my sentiments in writing before I came—half intending to leave a letter!

MISS KORTON (with admirable foresight).—Well, John, dear, we understand each other now; but please do let me have the letter, too. I would so love to keep it as a memento of this happy evening.—Puck.

Three and thou hast fallen, for thou wert built upon the shifting sands of vanity, and not upon the rock of the people's affections.

Speaking about the proposal to convert the building into an asylum for the deaf and dumb, I may say that general opinion is against it. Certainly it would seem too large a building for such a purpose, and that a great deal of money would be required to maintain it from year to year and keep it in repair. It is said to be colder than a barn now. All the same the structure has been in its day the finest government house in the dominion.

One hears of wars and rumors of wars in regard to the opposition in the house. But as yet there is no sign of any organized formation. I rather think the government would welcome the appearance of a reasonably stiff organization. It would make less mouths to feed and give the executive a foothold from which they could urge reason and forbearance on the part of their friends, but as yet none such is visible. If you add together the members elected in opposition, the North Shore members who are getting rather restless on the stumpage question and throw in those who have private grievances you would have about half the house. And if Mr. Hanington had any tact as a leader doubtless something might be done. But he has abused them all so roundly in times past that there is not much chance of their gravitating in his direction.

The men from the North invaded the capital again last week. Reinforced by the members from their locality they charged up the steps leading to the executive chambers, axe and peevie in hand, and swooped down upon the government. Premier Blair seized a poker, the chief commissioner made a flank movement for the ante-room, Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Ritchie went over the table while Messrs. Turner and Harrison with equal celerity went under it. For a moment things looked bilious. Had not Mr. Tweedie, with great presence of mind seized a pike pole from Adjutant Miller and hoisted his bandana on the end of it, the result would have been serious. However, all hands quieted down at last, the pipe of peace was smoked, and the delegation went away, after an hour's breezy discussion, in a more amicable frame of mind. The premier it is said told them that while he could not consent to a reduction of the stumpage, the government were willing to grant an extension of the leases now held for a portion at least of the territory to which they applied.

In my sketch of the orators of the house, several notable omissions occur. Speaker Pugsley is a polished as well as very persuasive debater. When he is well posted in his subject, none can present it more effectively. Mr. White, of Kings, says little, but what he says is to the point. Mr. Phinney is a pleasant speaker, and not the less effective because he usually takes high conscientious ground. Mr. Hetherington mows a very wide swath in the field of rhetoric, and in his own peculiar way, generally gets at the root of the argument. Mr. Ryan is not an orator, but is capable of making a very effective and convincing address. The provincial secretary, too, disclaims possession of the gift divine, but when the discussion gets a little sultry, he is liable to make a spirited as well as practical address. Mr. Mitchell has little to say, but that little he puts tersely and well. I am afraid I did a slight injustice to the premier, if I conveyed the impression that he always spoke at high-pressure. When the subject has no element of antagonism in it, Mr. Blair speaks with admirable coolness and calmness, and there are not a few who appreciate him at such times, even more than when he is scourging the foe in the heat of debate. It is not easy to rail off the orators from the rest of the house; there are not more than a dozen members in it who do

not possess a creditable degree of speaking talent.

The special commissioner of the Sun did some able work for his paper on the occasion of his visit to Fredericton last week. He discovered that sword-bearer Perks and messenger Biggs of the Legislative council were American citizens, and said there would be an investigation. The facts are that Mr. Perks visited a relative in Houlton for a few weeks this winter, and that Mr. Biggs, who has a widowed mother to support, found and accepted a chance to work for a couple of months near Boston. And then the "special" must have a slap at Mr. Palmer of Queens. He represents him "in his ignorance" as accepting, while chairman of the committee of the whole, a petition which Mr. Murray solemnly presented, and which, of course, could only be offered when the speaker was in his place. No such petition was really presented at all. This comprised the entire labors of the "special" while in this city.

Strange to say, the house is almost entirely free from the lady lobbyists who did so much to make life agreeable to the members in former years. Mrs. Jones has departed this life, and Madam Pickett is in Fairville. But we have still Mrs. Murphy with us, the size of whose claim against the province bids fair shortly to exceed the national debt.

HERE AND THERE.

Readers of PROGRESS will not be sorry to know that they have heard about the last of the stumpage question. The delegation went home delighted, and the North Shore members of the house have again wheeled into line.

I hope Dr. Alred will wear his prospective honors meekly. He is to be the attorney-general when Marcus forms his cabinet, I am told.

Mr. Gregory and Marcus are in daily consultation now, they say. The former makes the balls, and Marcus fires them. Now that's a heavy business for you to be into, Globe, isn't it?

The Globe correspondent rather made a mess of it, the other day. In response to a telegram from that paper, the attorney-general gave that pensive young man a synopsis of the franchise bill. Whereupon the p. y. m. gave the Gleaner an order on the telegraph company for the copy. Pretty cool business, wasn't it? The premier blocked the little game promptly; whereupon the Gleaner had to go to the expense of getting it telegraphed back from St. John, after the Globe was issued. But that was nothing for Jim. Jim used to telegraph all his editorials from Ottawa when he was there lately, you know.

Mr. Hanington is still thundering away at the Kent circuit, and hasn't been heard in the debates lately. Just raise your voice a little, Daniel, and we'll have no trouble in hearing you. Next time Daniel speaks in the house, Mr. Kidson intends to place a delicate boilerplate transmitter in the building, I am told, for the benefit of the Deaf and Dumb institution.

There is no prospect of any appointments being made to the legislative council at present. This is the straight tip for PROGRESS. Abolition is the word.

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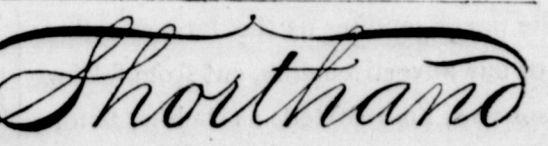
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