

POLITICAL NOTES.

A Glance at the Leading Measures Carried in the House of Assembly of New Brunswick, from the Year 1854.

By G. E. FENEY, Fredericton, N. B.

No. 15.

Debate on the Liquor Law Continued—Speeches by Sir Albert J. Smith—The Government's Conduct Berated—Toryism Rampant (See 2nd section in Reply to the Speech of the Governor)—Bill Introduced to Repeal the Liquor Law—Repealed—The Session Closes—Remarks by the Writer on the Whole Business.



HON. ALBERT J. SMITH.

Mr. Smith (late Sir Albert)—another member of the late Government—also made a lengthy speech in opposition to his Excellency's course. He spoke of the powerful influence the liberal party had to contend against in the last contest, in consequence of the antagonistic conduct of his Excellency. He denied that the late Council had tried to violate the principles of the Constitution; spoke of their determination to preserve inviolate the rights of the people, observing that they were fully as loyal as those who made such eternal protestations of loyalty. He asked if the Governor of the Province was anything more than a human being, and if he was not liable to be corrupt, and he repudiated a tame submission to the Governor's will when it was known that he was in the wrong. As an instance of an arbitrary Governor, he referred to the case of Sir Francis Bond Head in Canada, who threw his influence into a political contest in order that his party might be sustained. He maintained that if the decision was now adverse to the cause of political freedom that decision would ere long be reversed. He dwelt on the unusual course pursued by the Governor's advisers in pronouncing an opinion upon his motives as contained in the Speech and Address, thus throwing down the gauntlet, but not permitting a reference to such motives on the floors of the House. Mr. Smith declared that the Governor had other motives and considerations in view than those upon which he proposed to dissolve. He defended the resignation of the late Council who being men from the people were perhaps not congenial to the feelings of his Excellency. He alluded to the almost total absence of any evidence whatever whereby the Governor thought a dissolution was requisite, there being scarcely any petitions, and those from Westmorland did not represent one-fifth of the free hold population. He asked if the Council did not know better than his Excellency of the feeling on the subject, and he as one of them felt bound to resist this invasion of the rights of the people. He justified the declaration they made in their correspondence that the law was not wholly inoperative, in proof of which the Brewers had petitioned the House last winter for losses sustained by the stoppage of their works. He maintained that the Governor had listened to the advice of irresponsible men, and had been operated on by back stairs influence. He would not yield to the Governor in zeal and anxiety for the public welfare. The hon. gentleman also defined the anomalous and undignified position the Governor had assumed in respect to the Proclamation for a Dissolution, and also to his having rejected the advice of eight men in order to exercise the highest prerogative, and then call a smaller number (six) to his Council and take their advice.

Mr. Tilley said, I do not regard the dissolution of the House on personal grounds; but I still entertain the opinion that the public interests will not thereby be advanced. I have always considered the dissolution of the Assembly by his Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, in opposition to the advice of his Executive Council, an undue exercise of the prerogative, and without precedent in the Colonies since the introduction of Responsible Government, or in Great Britain for the last century and a half; and whatever may be the verdict of the people at the present time in this question, I feel assured that ere long it will be so considered by a majority of the electors of New Brunswick.

Many other gentlemen spoke on both sides; but the above "glance" at the discussion is enough to convey all that is necessary for public purposes. It very frequently happens that a whole subject is exhausted by one or two speakers.

On the 22nd the House divided on the

second clause of the Address in reply to his Excellency's speech, which read as follows:—

"We acknowledge with satisfaction the propriety of Your Excellency's having recurred to the sense of the People, and believe that so judicious an exercise of the power entrusted to Your Excellency by the Constitution, will not fail to be attended with the most beneficial effects."

Yeas.—Gray, Kerr, Barberie, Boyd, Street, M'Monagle, S. Z. Earle, J. Earle, Scovill, Wilmot, Lawrence, Desbrisay, Montgomery, M'Phelim, Harding, Allen, Macpherson, Botsford, Landry, Read, Hatheway, 14—22.

Nays.—Gilmour, M'Adam, Fisher, Connell, W. E. Perley, Tapley, Ferris, Gilbert, C. Perley, Johnson, M'Lellan, Waters, Sutton, Smith, Lewis, R. K. Gilbert—16.

This was a submission to his Excellency's course of proceeding, and an admission that a Governor has the sole Constitutional right to exercise the prerogative, when and how he thinks fit, without consulting his advisers.

On the 5th Paragraph the House also divided.

"We feel assured that Your Excellency has no wish but to consult the general welfare and preserve unimpaired the Constitution and we regard the promptitude with which Your Excellency has called the Legislature together, as affording an additional proof of your watchful care for the public interests."

Yeas.—Gray, Wilmot, Allen, M'Phelim, Kerr, Barberie, Read, Landry, Harding, Botsford, M'Pherson, Montgomery, End, Desbrisay, Lawrence, S. Z. Earle, Goddard, Hatheway, Street, Boyd, J. Earle, M'Monagle, Scovill, Gilbert—24.

Nays.—Fisher, Smith, M'Lellan, Waters, Johnston, Mitchell, Sutton, C. Perley, Ferris, M'Adam, Gilmour—14.

On the 25th, the Government introduced a Bill entitled—"A Bill to Repeal the Act to prevent the Importation, Manufacture, and Traffic in Intoxicating Liquors, and regulate the Sale thereof." This Bill passed after a very brief discussion—was sent to the Legislative Council and confirmed. Thus, by a bold stroke of the Governor, by the exercise of an authority, which even in the old days of irresponsibility, could not have been regarded with approval by enlightened public opinion, a law, the result of the utmost deliberation by both branches of the Legislature, is swept away, after having been in existence only seven months. The whole proceeding, from first to last, was a retrograde movement in Constitutional government, which, when the Liberal party came into power in 1854, (only two years before this) could not have been anticipated by the greatest opponent that Responsible Government then had.

The object of the Session having been accomplished, his Excellency on the 26th July prorogued the Legislature in a speech of about a dozen lines. Responsible Government received a serious set back on this occasion; for self-interest or self-indulgence seemed to be paramount with a majority of the people, more so than the political ground we had obtained, after more than a score of years of fierce struggle for Constitutional liberty. In supporting the action of the Governor, in allowing that he was the sole arbiter of the "prerogative," a precedent was laid down for any one of his Excellency's successors to act in a similar manner whenever his opinions did not coincide with those of his advisers.

NOTES ON THE LIQUOR LAW.

It was high water with the temperance organizations in New Brunswick in 1850; but not high enough to float successfully the plans contemplated for destroying the liquor traffic. Suffused with victory at the polls in helping to return a reform house and thought to be firmly seated, the temperance societies considered the time opportune for putting in practice the doctrines of the division rooms.

Several members who supported the measure expressed their opposition privately among their friends; but the pressure brought to bear upon them by influential portions of their respective constituencies was irresistible. They again they felt that even if the bill was sustained down stairs, it would be sure of defeat in the council, for the "old school" held sway in the council, by three-fourths, and understood too well the value of "old Port" to have it legislated out of existence. But up stairs proved a fatal trap for the government as will be seen hereafter. The upper chamber, it was thought at the time, conceived the plan of assenting to the bill, with a view of circumventing and striking a deadly blow at responsible government in the house of its friends, as their proceedings would furnish Mr. Manners-Sutton, the governor, with a capital opportunity of driving the radicals eye own "Annexationists" as they were called, to the wall, and so cripple them that the old compact would come in and enjoy a new lease of power. And so it turned out; and the Metcalf autocratic example was again imitated.

The bill was carried, (17 to 21 in lower house) and all but unanimously in the upper house and received the governor's assent and became law—to take effect 1st January, 1856. The old bill provided that no liquor should be imported or exposed for sale unless for medicinal, mechanical or scientific purposes—and inspectors were appointed in towns and cities to see the law faithfully carried out. So unpopular, however, was the measure that it would have been as easy to prevent the tide from rising in the harbors, as to close up the shops, as a general thing, or keep down the clamors of the thirsty, aided and abetted on all sides by the Tory party, whose politics ran in any direction that might have a tendency to overthrow the Liberals. No matter how good or bad the law, it afforded a fulcrum upon which to plant their lever, and an excuse to many

of them who had joined the Liberals a year or two before to upset the former government, and seemed anxious to get back again into the old fold, probably through jealousy of the young men who had joined the government, or were disappointed in their expectations for office, which then as now, seemed to be the guiding star of their political principles. (Groups of men might have been seen gathered at the street corners—Chubb's corner especially, the great "Rialto" of St. John—discussing the pros and cons of the liquor law, as to its workings, and the good or bad it was doing. Liberals and Tories might have been found in the same group, fraternizing in conversation over their cups, or rather the stoppage of their grog. The old issues were for the nonce hushed between them. The Liberal and the Tory in many cases were as one upon the same question—opposed equally to the law, and both as determined to have the monster strangled; and this was the feeling evinced all over the province. The cholera or the small-pox could not have proved a bit more virulent to their imaginations. A requisition most numerous and influentially signed by citizens of St. John, Liberals (alas!) and Tories alike, was sent to the lieutenant-governor, requesting him to dissolve the house and appeal to the country upon the liquor law, notwithstanding the house had just come from the people and passed the measure, as they had a right to do, "in accordance with the well-understood wishes of the people, as expressed by their representatives."

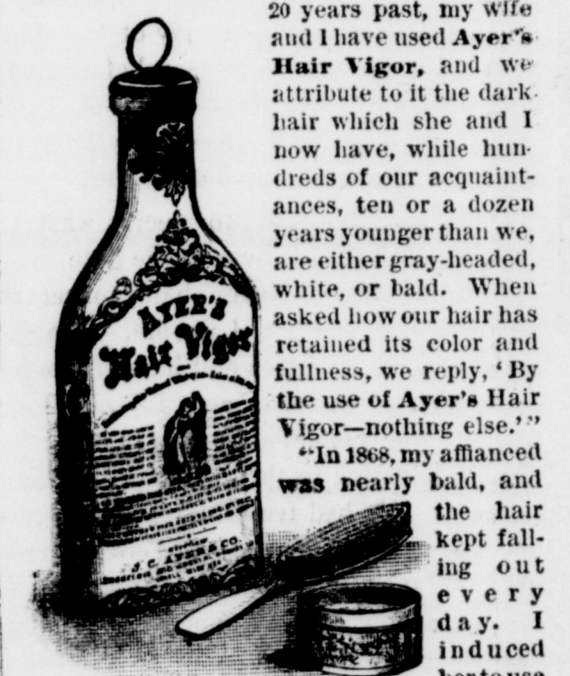
Old Liberals and fast friends who had stood shoulder to shoulder for years, in contending for self-government and at daggers' points, politically speaking, with the Tories, lost their heads on occasion and divided into hostile camps, losing sight of the great constitutional question, as to whether the people had the right, in their representatives, to rule and pass laws, no matter how obnoxious, and calling upon the governor to usurp authority and dissolve the house (as Mr. Metcalf had done) without reference to his council; in short, old Liberals who had a long struggle for the upheaving of the former system, and were death upon the usurpation of former governors, now called upon the governor to exercise the prerogative and dissolve. Was there ever greater inconsistency? Liberal journals also broke ground and fled from their old folds; and from that time afterwards those that remained true and the recalcitrant took opposite sides and became political opponents. Reasons other than for the great issue itself for this journalistic change were assigned at the time, but they are not material now.

Cycles with Sails.

An innovation in cycling, is the use of sails for safeties. A Californian enthusiast first tried the experiment by lashing a mast fifteen feet high against the centre of the handle-bar, and rigging up a sail on a boom eight feet long. The sheet runs down the mast, through a pulley under the seat, and is held in the hand, so that in the event of a fall the rider can immediately drop the sail. In spite of the fact the whole weight of the canvas was on one side, he attained a speed of fifteen miles an hour, and found steering no more difficult than handling the tiller of a yacht. Cyclists take up quite enough room already on our country roads without clearing everything before them with an eight-foot boom; besides if you sit on a machine and go along without touching the pedals all the time where do the fun and exercise come in?

A Gentleman

Who formerly resided in Connecticut, but who now resides in Honolulu, writes: "For 20 years past, my wife and I have used Ayer's Hair Vigor, and we attribute to it the dark hair which she and I now have, while hundreds of our acquaintances, ten or a dozen years younger than we, are either gray-headed, white, or bald. When asked how our hair has retained its color and fullness, we reply, 'By the use of Ayer's Hair Vigor—nothing else.'"



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CURES PILES.

Platonic Love Defined.

Love has been defined as the marriage of souls, the term having its origin in Plato's theory that an individual human soul is incomplete without its other half, and must remain so until a perfect complement or affinity is found. Platonic differs from ordinary love in that the idea of sex does not enter as a disturbing factor; from friendship, in being invested with a halo of imagination which tinges it as though of celestial birth. It is like love, it is like friendship, but different from both and superior to either; for as one star differs from another in glory, so does the platonic love from that ordinarily felt. The term excites a smile among many who hear the expression, as though the thing were Utopian, an idle dream of novelists and poets. The average man and woman will admit the possibility of friendship between man and man, between woman and woman, but not between man and woman. It is, therefore, with evil eyes that most men look on an intimacy between persons of opposite sexes, as though naught but evil could result. Others, more lenient, admit the possibility of platonic friendship among persons of another age or country, living under other circumstances, but deny the existence of such a feeling among their own circle of acquaintance. Let a gentleman, married or single, show a preference for the society of a married lady of his acquaintance and the tongue of gossip at once begins to wag. "Follow a vulture and it will lead you to a carcass," and in like manner the guidance of a self-constituted moralist will generally lead you to a scandal, for too often the Monitor of human morals is like the flash fly, interested only in corruption; and as the fly will detect the scent of carrion, though the cause of the odor be concealed beneath an alabaster slab, so the self-ordained critic, under the purest appearance, will discover the taint of vice.

C concussion of Guns at Sea.

To one unaccustomed to the experience, it is anything but pleasant to be on board of a line of battle ship at sea when the big guns are being fired. Before they are discharged the decks are cleared for action, and all the chairs in the cabin are laid down and tied together, while every bit of movable furniture is secured. The doctor goes round and makes sure that every man has had his ears stopped with cotton wool. The concussion when the charges are fired is tremendous, and the ironclad quivers from stem to stern with the vibration; in fact, the shock of the explosion is so great that every pane of glass in the skylights is invariably shattered, and much of the ornamental wood-work is splintered. After a few hours of this rough play the carpenters have a busy time in making things look presentable once more, for the ship resembles a wreck when she has finished her practice. Nobody likes it. The sailors standing by the big gun sometimes find themselves thrown all of a heap across the deck and after an hour or two officers and men become as black as sweeps. It is impossible to be well out of the way of annoyance, though, perhaps, the one place in the vessel where the guns trouble the crew the least is down in the engine room, which is below the level of the deck upon which most of the armament is put.

When She Wasn't Hurt.

Police Magistrate.—"What's the charge against this man?"
Officer.—"Beating his wife, your worship; but here's a statement from his wife that he didn't hurt her."
Police Magistrate.—"Why isn't she here to testify in person?"
Officer.—"She doesn't like to come into court with two black eyes and a broken nose, your worship."
When marriage is a failure, the chief bankrupt usually puts it all in his wife's name.



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