

THE TAMMANY TIGER IN NEW BRUNSWICK POLITICS

Government Contracts and Patronage Appointments Must Yield Tribute to the Political Machine—An Ottawa Paper Seems to Understand the Situation

(Ottawa Citizen, Ind. Con.)

Premier Clark, of New Brunswick, would seem to be in the trying position of the man who caught hold of the tiger's tail: he cannot decide whether it would be safer to hold on or to let go. The tiger in New Brunswick was at large before the present premier succeeded Hon. J. K. Flemming. He inherited it; it is quite a representative specimen of the Tammany jungle in this country, and it is hungry.

What it has done for New Brunswick would seem to be a record in miniature of the unhealthy atmosphere of Canadian political life in general. Speaking at Fredericton a little while ago before the Provincial Union of Municipalities, Premier Clark expressed the following rather plaintive opinion:

"I believe we have too much politics in this province both in our provincial and municipal affairs, and until we do away with politics in things that closely affect the people we will not get results." He meant, of course, machine politics—the partizan business of greed and hate and lust for secret party funds to carry on election campaigns and to make it easy for special privilege to rob the community.

A report on the petty thieving carried on by members of the Legislature and provincial politicians has lately been given to the public by a royal commission. From a perusal of the report it would seem that almost every little government contract and patronage appointment is made to yield tribute to the political machine. The Federal Tammany organization of this capital city of Ottawa is rapacious enough. Before the well conducted and thoroughly worthy barber could get permission to shave the soldiers in Lansdowne Park last year he had to wait, cap in hand, at the office door of Ottawa's patronage master and make it right with the political incubus. New Brunswick has the Tammany disease to an equally demoralizing degree. How completely it has sapped public spirit may be gathered from the Provincial Government's method of sending "patriotic" aid to Britain. Shortly after the outbreak of war, the New Brunswick Government put through a special warrant as follows:

"The Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council having decided to make a contribution of 100,000 bushels of potatoes to the Government of Great Britain at an estimated cost of seventy-five thousand (\$75,000) dollars, for the use of the army and navy, as a token of loyalty of the people of this province, to the Motherland."

The "patriotic potatoes" went to the Motherland all right, but they are not being paid for by the people of New Brunswick—not just yet. Instead of paying for them from the revenue of the province, the Government will float a loan for \$1,500,000 in the near future, and the patriotic gift will be provided for out of borrowed money. A later gift of \$27,456.54 to the relief of the Belgians, is being made on a similar generous basis. The present provincial administration will take the credit of making it, and give posterity the pleasure of paying for it. But, here again, citizens of this noble capital need not hasten to assume a holier-than-thou attitude. Some of Ottawa's war gifts are being made on a similar basis at the expense of posterity.

But it is in the handling of the bigger sums, like provincial guaranteed bonds and federal subsidies for railways, that the politics of New Brunswick, in common with fellow politicians let loose on this fair land generally, seem to shine as apostles of frenzied finance. For the St. John Valley Railway alone the province has guaranteed bonds to the extent of \$3,165,521. The Dominion treasury has paid out at least \$500,000 in subsidies to the railway promoters; and what is the condition of the railway? Instead of being completely built and in operation between Grand Falls at the head of the province, to Rothesay, near the city of St. John—a distance of 214 miles—it is completed only for a distance of 120 miles, between Gagetown and Centreville. It is virtually a railway starting from nowhere and running to nowhere.

To finish the Grand Falls end of the line would mean to build it for forty or fifty miles along a narrow strip of territory parallel with the Canadian Pacific Railway and the border of the State of Maine. To carry the lower end of the line on from Gagetown to St. John will mean an expenditure of \$2,000,000 or more over two big bridges—in addition to the construction of a costly stretch of railway. Even so, with all the profligate bond guarantees and double subsidies, and though the railway is only built for 120 miles instead of 214, it has at the present time \$400,000 of outstanding liabilities on account of the completed mileage—and no one seems to know where the money is to come from to pay them off.

The St. John Valley Railway is one of the tragic examples of what has happened in Canada when political lawyers and company directors have been allowed a free hand with the public credit and consolidated revenue funds. Six years or so ago a shrewd gentleman named Gould came over from the State of Maine and interested the New Brunswick politicians in this grand railway scheme—to be called the Quebec and St. John Railway Company. The Provincial Government generously put up the credit for the construction of the line by guaranteeing bonds to the extent of \$25,000 per mile. In other words the private promoters were given permission by the provincial government to build themselves a railway at the public cost—a 214 mile railway—and they were at liberty to consume \$25,000 of provincial credit on every mile they constructed.

The Federal department, under the generous and even liberal guidance of Hon. George P. Graham at the time, not to be outdone in liberality, promised the St. John Valley company a subsidy (or free gift from the Dominion treasury) of \$6,400 per mile, if they could manage to spend the provincial bond guarantee of \$25,000 per mile in building the line. Of course the promoters managed to get through the \$25,000 easily on every mile, and the Federal treasury worked regularly in feeding out its \$6,400 mileage gift. After a while, with little more than half the line built, the provincial premier, the Hon. J. K. Flemming, put through an extra \$10,000 per mile bond guarantee.

Mr. Flemming shortly after faded out of public life—found guilty of taking money from government contractors. He is now Federal Conservative candidate for the county of Carleton, N. B.)

Mr. Gould later on made a similar retirement from the New Brunswick political and financial arena. The province now has its unfinished railway on its hands, and a plentiful lack of information as to where all the guaranteed bonds and subsidies have been dissipated.

ON THE SAFE SIDE.

Bishop Hughes was talking about conversion.

"There is no efficacy," he said, "in such conversions as that of Gambler Bill."

"Gambler Bill got converted, and the revivalist said to him afterwards joyously:

"Bill, dear friend, we'll make a grand bonfire tomorrow night of your poker tables and roulette wheels and faro layouts and all the gambling paraphernalia in your cigar store."

"Not on yer life, parson! Not on yer life!" said Gambler Bill. "I might backslide and need that stuff."

He isn't always happiest who wears the happiest look.



Always ice your cakes
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Opposition Platform

The following platform was adopted at the Opposition Convention held in St. John recently:
In the event of the Opposition being returned to power, we pledge ourselves:—

NO PARTIZAN CONTROL OF CROWN LANDS.

1. We pledge ourselves to completely reorganize the Crown Lands Department, so that its administration shall be entirely severed from politics and administered on sound business principles under systematic plans by a non-partizan commission specially appointed for that purpose, responsible to the Legislature and working in co-operation with the Dominion Commission of Conservation.

TAKE THE HIGHWAYS OUT OF POLITICS.

2. We pledge ourselves to take the highways out of politics, giving the expenditure of the money collected from the people and the control of the labor, together with the Government appropriations, into the hands of supervisors, chosen by the people of each parish, to whom a detailed and audited account must be rendered every year at the annual meeting, and a duplicate thereof forwarded to the Department of Public Works, the work of the supervisors to be under the inspection of a competent provincial engineer.

We also pledge ourselves to set aside the money collected from the licenses upon automobiles and other motor vehicles, together with an equal appropriation from the revenues of the Province each year, to pay the interest upon the bonds to provide for permanent roads, which shall be constructed as rapidly as possible. PROHIBITION PROVINCE WIDE.

3. We pledge ourselves at the first session of the Legislature to pass a law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors within the Province to the fullest extent allowed by the Constitution, and within three months after the passage of said Act to submit the same by referendum to the electors of the Province, and should the majority of votes cast be in favor of the said law, then to bring the same into force by proclamation within one year thereafter.

ELECTION LAW.

4. (a) To amend the electoral law so as to make it impossible for members of the Legislature to traffic with the Government and still retain their seats.

(b) To make it possible for young men, when they reach the age of 21 years, to register their names and be placed forthwith upon the voters' lists, instead of waiting for the tedious machinery of revision as it now exists.

(c) To divide the counties into electoral districts which shall each be represented by one member.

(d) We will also consider amendments to the election law to make bribery in municipal as well as provincial elections impossible.

PROVINCIAL FINANCES.

5. To obtain at once a correct statement of the financial condition of the Province in order that the people may have definite knowledge of the vastly increased public debt and the enormous obligations of guaranteed bonds they will be called upon to pay; and to so reduce the cost of the administration of affairs and the number of useless officials as to avoid the necessity for direct taxation now confronting us.

AGRICULTURE.

6. To give the farmers all the practical assistance that the resources of the Province will permit, to improve agricultural methods and the quality and quantity of the stock upon the farm; to reduce the enormous salary list in the department, and to spend the educational grant received from the Federal Government without regard for political patronage.

VALLEY RAILWAY.

7. To complete the Valley Railway from a point on the Transcontinental Railway at or near Grand Falls, to St. John, and insist upon the Dominion Government carrying out the terms of the original legislation and allow the Province forty per cent. of the gross earnings thereof.

EDUCATION.

8. To always maintain and improve the educational service of the Province and to co-operate with the Federal Government in carrying out the recommendations of the commission upon technical education.

IMMIGRATION.

9. The inauguration of a vigorous immigration policy to properly place before intending immigrants, whose number will be large after termination of the war, the advantages of the agricultural possibilities of New Brunswick.

RUSSIANS TAKE 4,000 CAPTIVES

London, Jan. 25.—Four thousand Turks, including fifty officers, were captured by the Russians in the recent battle in the neighborhood of Erzerum, according to a despatch from Petrograd to Reuters. The Russians are also said to have captured scores of machine guns and enormous quantities of ammunition. The despatch says:

"The rout of the Turks in the battle which resulted in their being driven into Erzerum appears from later accounts to have been even more decisive than shown in the first reports. Apart from the Ottoman losses in actual battle the Russians captured during the pursuit fifty officers and four thousand men. They also took scores of machine guns and enormous quantities of munitions. The influx of 120,000 Turks in Erzerum is considered to reduce the defensive power of the fortress. "In the ripet marsh region of Volhynia the Russian positions are stated to be only four verst (two and three-quarters miles) from Pinsk, so successful have been the Russians in recent actions."

If a woman is going away on a visit she never finishes packing her trunk until after the expressman calls for it.

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HAVING A LOOK.

When the ultimate consumer's not consuming
An occasion which is very, very rare,
He likes to take a peek, if not presuming,
At the castle of the multimillionaire.
For the ultimate consumer brought the money;
He supplied it, with some others of his guild,
And it really shouldn't be considered funny
That he likes to see the house he helped to build.

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