

REV. PRINCIPAL GRANT

ON

THE MOWAT GOVERNMENT.

Three Strong Reasons Why Every Elector Should Support It.

The following interview appeared in the *Toronto Globe* of May 23rd :

"Principal Grant, who is in the city attending a meeting of the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Committee, discussed the principal issues of the Provincial campaign in an interview with a *Globe* reporter yesterday, and gave many strong reasons why the Government of Sir Oliver Mowat should be sustained.

"Have you any objection to expressing your opinion as to the probable result of the general election?" he was asked.

The Issues Before the Electors.

"I cannot predict," said Dr. Grant in reply, "but I have no objection to say what seem to me the issues on which our people should make up their minds before voting. The vote is a very sacred trust, and the man who sells or otherwise dishonors it is a poor creature, like Esau. I am always willing to speak out what is in me when asked on behalf of the public, for a free country requires free speech as the best antidote to secret organizations, local or sectarian appeals, the clamor of faddists or the selfishness of individuals."

"What are, in your opinion, the most important issues before us, so far as Ontario is concerned?"

The Man in Charge of the Strong Box.

"The one point that our people everywhere must settle is this: Can we get administrators who are determined that the commandment 'Thou shalt not steal' must be observed? Till that is settled, it is useless to talk about anything else. Provincial rights, school questions, tariff reform, British connection, canals, cables, railways—what is the use of discussing these if we sink into being a nation of thieves? That is what we must become if we tolerate stealing in high places, for what is done at the top is sure to permeate to the bottom. Look at the revelations that we have had since 1891—corruption in so many quarters that we wondered if there was a clean spot anywhere; the people of Quebec robbed that M. Pacaud and his friends might have the joy of exploiting what he termed a gold mine! The people of all the Provinces robbed that the robbers might rule Canada! A recent instance is enough to show how deep and widespread the roots of the malady are, and to show how hard it is for a Government to act, even with good intentions, unless supported by a healthy public opinion. Two worthy gentlemen were convicted and sentenced to gaol. Prison disagreed with them, and they were set free. One is about offering himself as a candidate for Parliament; the other was taken from prison as a conquering hero. In Montreal, fine gentlemen received him at the railway station with cheers, took him to the Windsor and dined and wined him. He, in reply, said not a word about ill-health, but declared that the people would not allow the Government to keep him in prison any longer! When convicts get such treatment, ordinary men will not be much disinclined to be classed among convicts. As we think of the saturnalia that must have existed for a long time before such a state of public morals could become possible, we are forced to ask what might have happened to the richest Province in the Dominion if any easy-going politician had had charge of its strong box. What plunder there was for a gang! We have timber limits worth tens of millions; we could stand a debt of twenty or thirty millions as easily as Quebec. A politician of easy virtue would have lavished these millions on heelers and hangers-on, who, in return, would be enthusiastically voting him a god. Does not this thought throw some light on what we have escaped, and on what we owe to the man who has been in charge of our strong box for

twenty-two years. Assuredly, the revelations have had that effect upon me. **Our money is still ours, and our honor is safe. Thank God for it, and also let us keep our powder dry—that is, keep a good servant at his post. A man who will not read this lesson will not read anything. In one word, Ontario cannot afford to dismiss Sir Oliver Mowat.**"

"Are there any other important issues?"

"Yes, but the first is enough. I don't agree with the Government on all points. * * * * * neither do I agree with Mr. Meredith on all points. For instance, his proposal to have biennial sessions shows an astonishing lack of insight into the essence of the British constitution, fit only for free men, and on which ours is based. * * * * * If I am forced to choose, clearly **Mr. Mowat Must be Retained**, or else public intimation is given that we are indifferent to able, upright and economical government at a time when the attention of the whole world has been called to Canada as an example of the reverse.

British Connection.

"There is, however, another reason for voting for him that appeals to men who believe that British connection is indispensable to the growth of Canadian nationality. Mr. Mowat was always loyal, but in the last two or three years he has taken a decided public stand that has cost him some followers, and that in my opinion should win for him twice as many. His acceptance of honor from the Queen—and it is clear to me that as a rule politicians should neither seek nor refuse such honors—his Niagara speech, his dismissal of an official who defied him on a point of duty involved in his office to the Crown, these things should not be forgotten. When D'Alton McCarthy said, 'Though Sir Oliver Mowat has lost Elgin Myers, he has gained Mr. McCarthy,' a good many added, individually, 'and me too.' **In one word, those men who are in favor of British connection cannot afford to dismiss Sir Oliver Mowat.**"

Fair Treatment of Minorities.

"Is there any other reason?"

"Yes, but let me again say that the first is enough for all sensible men. One more may be added. There can be no doubt that **Sir Oliver Mowat stands now for the fair treatment of minorities**, and that is the only way to make possible a united Canadian people. Some Protestants seem to be scared now, and they will be ashamed of themselves by-and-by. We Protestants used to be fearless. We used to say that truth was great and would prevail; that truth needed only a fair field and no favor; but now some of us seem afraid of the rustling of a leaf. It is fancied that one Roman Catholic in a Cabinet can bind half a dozen Protestants, and that a feeble minority can deprive us of our liberties if they get their share of a number of paltry offices. The forms that this scare takes are so extreme that it is impossible for the thing to last any time. For instance, **there is not a more typical Protestant in Canada than the Hon. Mr. Gibson.** He is straight from first to last, incorruptible, every inch a man, capable, diligent and an honor to his city. Yet some good men are opposing him because they think him a slave to Rome. They might as well think him the King of the Cannibal Islands. I know the force of prejudice and passion, but it is difficult to believe that many of the intelligent people of Ontario will be carried off their feet by this scare. There are bigots on both sides, but the great mass of our people do not intend to sow dragons' teeth, and the great mass of Protestants have no intention of fighting God's cause with the devil's weapons.

P. P. A. Support of Mr. Meredith.

"I cannot help saying here that I wonder a little that Mr. Meredith does not speak out what he must feel with regard to the P. P. A. He might lose votes on this occasion by so doing, but he would gain in the long run. A brief tenure of office is not what such a man desires, but a permanent place in the respect of his countrymen. Surely it is clear that there can be no such thing as Conservatism in Canada, in any sense of the word, that is not based on a good understanding between our two great religious denominations. Coquetting with such an association, or even silently accepting its aid, must be fatal to him. It may be said that he is not coquetting. No, but the receiver is as bad as the thief. Such allies must have their price, and they are sure to act as a boomerang. I would like to hear from both leaders a distinct repudiation and denunciation of any organization that is based on the proscription of any class of our people on religious grounds. We need a union of all good men in Canada and we dare not say to any man that he must abandon the religion of his mother before he can be expected to be treated as a citizen. **On this third ground, then, I say, we cannot afford to dispense with the services of Sir Oliver Mowat.**"