

Sectional Representation in Maritime Provincial Cabinets Since 1867

by EUGENE FORSEY

IDEALLY, a Cabinet should be made up of the best men available, regardless of race, creed or place of residence. But in a country like Canada this is a counsel of perfection. The immense distances, the wide diversity of economic interest, the existence of provinces with strong local traditions and loyalties, the deep religious and racial cleavages, make the "federalization" of the Dominion Cabinet inevitable. Dunkin, in the debates on Confederation, had foretold this with singular accuracy. Macdonald felt its full force in 1867, when the competing claims of Irish Roman Catholics, French-Canadians, and Quebec Protestants, nearly wrecked his attempt to form an Administration and forced the exclusion of Tupper and McGee, two of the ablest of the Fathers of Confederation. Macdonald and some of his colleagues and successors hopefully professed to regard sectional representation in the Cabinet as a merely temporary necessity, and to look forward to a day when the Canadian Prime Minister could choose his colleagues as the British Prime Minister chooses his. But no Canadian Prime Minister has ever yet found himself in this (relatively) happy position, and probably none ever will. French-Canadians simply will not be represented by English-speaking Protestants, or English-speaking Protestants by French-Canadians, or Irish Roman Catholics by French Catholics or English Protestants, or British Columbians by gentlemen from Montreal, Toronto or Halifax. Least of all, perhaps, would the Maritime Provinces tolerate a Cabinet made up exclusively of people from the other provinces, even with a liberal sprinkling of such Maritimers *in partibus infidelium* as Mr. Bennett, Mr. Cahan

or Mr. Ralston. Sectional representation in the Dominion Cabinet is here to stay. If anything, it is more firmly entrenched than in 1867. Representation of Prince Edward Island and the Quebec Protestants is no longer an invariable rule, but representation of French-Canadians from outside Quebec is fast becoming so; and the tendency to earmark certain portfolios for certain parts of the country, and either the Post Office or Public Works for French Canada, is as strong as ever.

To what extent has this sectional representation any counterpart in the provincial Cabinets of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island? Representation of the French-Canadian and Irish Roman Catholic groups is of course easy enough to trace. Regional representation is a more difficult matter. Any division of each province for this purpose is bound to be somewhat arbitrary (though the grouping of counties for the Dominion House of Commons may presumably be taken as offering some guidance); and there is perhaps a certain temerity in undertaking it at all without a more profound local knowledge than I possess. However, a rough sketch with no pretensions to exactness, and offered in a spirit of tentative inquiry, may perhaps have some value, if only as a stimulus to others to improve upon it.

Subject to the considerations just noted, Nova Scotia may be divided into six regions: Halifax (city and county), Cape Breton Island, the South Shore (Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne and Yarmouth), the Annapolis Valley (Digby, Annapolis, Hants, and Kings), Cumberland-Colchester-Pictou, and Antigonish-Guysborough. New Brunswick, similarly, may be divided into six regions also: Saint John-Albert, the northern and northeastern counties (Madawaska, Res-

EDITOR'S NOTE: Eugene Forsey, Ph.D., an economist, formerly on the staff of McGill University, is now with the Canadian Congress of Labour in Ottawa

tigouche, Gloucester, Northumberland and Kent), Carleton-Victoria, Charlotte, the central counties (York, Sunbury, Queens and Kings), and Westmoreland. In Prince Edward Island, the only definable "regions" would appear to be the three counties: Queen's, King's and Prince.

Assuming that these divisions will serve the purpose, what results emerge from a review of the various provincial Cabinets since 1867?

In Nova Scotia, most of the "regions" have usually had representation in the Cabinet. Halifax has ordinarily had one to three Ministers, Cape Breton Island the same, the Annapolis Valley one to four, the South Shore one to three, Cumberland-Colchester-Pictou one to three, and Antigonish-Guysborough one or two (the only notable exceptions being the Rhodes and Harrington Governments). Halifax tended to have a rather larger representation in the earlier Cabinets than in recent ones. The French-speaking population has usually had a Minister without portfolio, since 1882. The Irish Roman Catholics ordinarily had a Minister, sometimes with portfolio, sometimes without, from 1867 to 1875, and this has usually been true also since 1918. There is no indication that in Nova Scotia any particular portfolio has been regarded as the preserve of any particular part of the province, or of any group.

In New Brunswick, Saint John-Albert has practically always had at least one Minister (though occasionally he has sat for some outside constituency), often two, sometimes three. The northern and northeastern counties have had from one to four Ministers, usually two or three. Carleton-Victoria had two Ministers without portfolio in the first Government after Confederation (1867-1871), and one with portfolio in the King Government (1872-1878) and again (except for a short interval) from 1905 to 1921, and from 1935 to 1939. In the present Government, the Premier and one Minister with portfolio sit for Victoria, but the Premier found a seat there only after being defeated in

York. Charlotte had a Minister with portfolio in the first three Governments (1867-1878), and again in the Blair and Mitchell Governments (1883-1897). Except for about three years under the Tweedie Government, when it had a Minister without portfolio, it appears to have been without Cabinet representation from 1897 to 1908. It had a Minister with portfolio from 1908 to 1917, and again from 1925 to 1933; two Ministers from 1933 to 1935; and one since 1940. The central counties have ordinarily had from one to three Ministers, often two or three. Westmoreland has usually had one or two Ministers, though occasionally its representative has sat for an outside constituency. Under the Hazen, Fleming and Clarke Governments (1908-1917), and again under the Murray Government (1917), it appears to have been without a Minister, except for a short time in 1916, which ended when it defeated the newly appointed Minister of Public Works. In subsequent Governments, it has usually had two Ministers,

The New Brunswick French-speaking population has had at least one Minister ever since 1878; from 1917 to 1923, and again since 1939, two. In striking contrast to Nova Scotia, where no French-speaking Minister seems ever to have held a portfolio, New Brunswick French-Canadians have often held important portfolios: Public Works (1878-1882, 1900-1908, 1917-1925), Provincial Secretary or Secretary-Treasurer (1882-1883, 1914-1917, 1925-1939), Agriculture (1897-1900, 1908-1914), Health and Labour (1939-). From 1923 to 1925 there was a French-speaking Premier.

New Brunswick Irish Roman Catholics have almost always had a Minister, except in the last two Governments. They have usually held a portfolio, not seldom that of Public Works.

In Prince Edward Island, the three counties have usually been represented about equally. The French-speaking population had a Minister without portfolio from Confederation till 1876, and again from 1879 to 1889. Since early in this

Great Britain has early in the war set up throughout the whole country a system of day nurseries which guard children of pre-school age during the whole day and older children outside school hours. The United States have, since their defence program got underway, taken similar steps. Now Canada is moving in the same direction. With the assistance of the Dominion and the provinces day nurseries will be set up in industrial centres. The scheme has, at least for the time being, been confined to Ontario and Quebec. In view of the recent growth of war industries in the Maritimes and the scarcity of manpower in the area it may be hoped that the scheme will soon be extended to industrial centres such as Sydney, Halifax, Amherst, Saint John and Moncton. The costs are borne in equal parts by the Dominion and provincial governments.

At a meeting convened by the Women's Division of National Selective Service, a number of important decisions concerning the organisation of the work were taken. It was agreed that the task of child care which is to be performed by the day nurseries is mainly professional and will necessitate the employment of

skilled assistants, whether voluntary or professional.

It was further agreed that standards for central administration agencies should be set up after experience has given local committees, provincial advisory committees, and the federal government, a basis to appraise requirements.

In provision for health care, there will be physical examinations of children before their admittance to units, emergency first aid, and provision for isolation before a child's ill condition is medically checked.

A nutritional program will be adopted by the centres, the children to receive two or three good meals a day, as required. The committee agreed that the minimum size for a plant should be three playrooms, the size of these depending on the number of children, with adequate washroom, kitchen, and cloak-room facilities, a staff room and fenced outdoor playgrounds.

Each nursery will have whatever play equipment is necessary for a suitable program of play and study, as well as cots so that children may rest at certain intervals during the day.

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century it has usually had a Minister, always without portfolio except from 1917 to 1919, when there was a French-speaking Premier and Attorney-General. The Irish Roman Catholics had a portfolio from 1876 to 1879, and the Premiership with a portfolio from 1879 to 1889. From 1911 to 1919 they had a Minister without portfolio, and since 1926 they have usually had a Minister, sometimes with portfolio, sometimes without. It is noteworthy that since 1935 they have held the portfolio of Education.

The evidence provided by lists of Cabinet Ministers does not afford conclusive

proof that Maritime Premiers when forming Cabinets feel obliged to give representation to various sections of the community, but it seems fairly clear that they have in fact given it. If any particular region or group fails to elect a Government supporter or supporters, it must of course ordinarily take the consequences, and resign itself for the time being to doing without a Minister. But apart from this case, it seems probable that no Premier could long neglect to give Cabinet representation to any considerable section without jeopardizing his Government.