

# The Political Apprenticeship of Thomas Dufferin Pattullo

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While 1983 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the election of Thomas Dufferin Pattullo as premier of British Columbia, it also represents the eightieth anniversary of his entry into the world of electoral politics. On 10 December 1903 Pattullo announced his candidacy for the position of alderman in the city of Dawson, Yukon Territory. Although he was no stranger to the Liberal party in Ontario or the Yukon, this civic election was the first step in his long career in public office. But his aldermanic record in Dawson hardly foreshadowed his later success. In fact, he sat on the city council for only eight months. In that short time, however, he learned important political lessons, and the experience influenced his behaviour in the years which followed.

At the time of his nomination Pattullo was 30 and had been a resident of Dawson since 1898. He had come to the Yukon at the height of the Klondike gold rush as secretary to the first Yukon Commissioner, a position he had secured through his impeccable Liberal credentials and the patronage of Sir Richard Cartwright. On route, he had augmented his salary by reporting on the gold rush for the *Montreal Herald*.<sup>1</sup> Soon after his arrival at Dawson the Commissioner, James Morrow Walsh, resigned and Pattullo was left in limbo pending the appointment of his successor. In the interim he visited the goldfields and witnessed the activity in Dawson as the gold rush reached its crest.

During that short period Pattullo somehow incurred the animosity of the new Commissioner, William Ogilvie. According to Ogilvie, his predecessor, Major Walsh, had consorted with "low characters" and had been seen "sitting openly publicly in a box at one of the slum theatres with a harlot in his lap kissing her in sight of all who chose to look. . . ."<sup>2</sup> He was, understandably, determined to elevate the tone of the admini-

<sup>1</sup> See British Columbia Provincial Archives (hereafter PABC), T. D. Pattullo Papers, v. 1, f. 6. clippings.

<sup>2</sup> Public Archives of Canada, Clifford Sifton Papers, v. 295, f. Ogilvie 1898 (1), Ogilvie to Sifton, 3 October 1898.

stration. When Clifford Sifton hired Pattullo as chief clerk in the office of the Gold Commissioner, Ogilvie quickly objected. Pattullo, he argued, was undesirable because he had been too closely associated with the previous Commissioner. Rumour had it that he was Walsh's nephew and he was "very often termed Major Walsh's pimp by some of the best people here."<sup>3</sup> After the appointment was confirmed Ogilvie sent Sifton a long letter which charged, among other things, that Pattullo had personated his son Morley and asked for special favours from saloons and music halls.<sup>4</sup> Pattullo's friends in Ottawa, however, had greater access to the minister. They persuaded Sifton to overlook the allegations, and Duff Pattullo remained secure in his position.

In 1898 and 1899 the Gold Commissioner's office was the subject of much controversy. The popular discontent with Canadian mining regulations and with the royalty on gold production was compounded by the accusations of corruption on the part of the clerks who registered the claims. It is certain that some officials accepted bribes and that others contravened the law by speculating in mining properties. There are suggestions that Duff Pattullo may have engaged in some underhanded dealings but, even if they are true, his conduct appeared unimpeachable.<sup>5</sup> He was, indeed, one of the few officials not to be publicly excoriated. That fact enhanced his chances for advancement in the civil service, and it was not long before an opening appeared.

In the summer of 1901 the Assistant Gold Commissioner was suspended from office and then dismissed for misbehaviour. Duff Pattullo took over on a temporary basis with the expectation of receiving either the full appointment or the salary appropriated for the position. He received neither. Although he and his friends lobbied for the appointment, the government installed F. X. Gosselin in a bid to win the "French vote" in the 1902 by-election for the Yukon seat in Parliament.<sup>6</sup> When he realized that he was not to be promoted, Pattullo and his allies requested that he be paid the \$4,000 salary of the Assistant Gold Commissioner since he had performed the duties of that official for more than a year. Pattullo argued that he had brought the office out of "a state of pandemonium" and that his salary while doing so had been lower than that paid men with less experience and in less responsible positions. If he

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, f. Ogilvie 1898 (2), 12 November 1898.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 February 1899.

<sup>5</sup> See Yukon Archives, Diary of Benjamin F. Craig.

<sup>6</sup> David Morrison, *The Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 48.

were not to receive the appointment, then the least he deserved was the salary, since the money had been appropriated and he had done the work.<sup>7</sup>

This request and a favourable recommendation from the Gold Commissioner had no impact on the Department of the Interior. On 27 October 1902 the deputy minister telegraphed: "Pattullo's wishes cannot be met regarding additional remuneration." In a letter of the same date he explained that a salary increase in Pattullo's case was impossible because "the rule of the Treasury Board will not permit of officials who are simply holding positions for a temporary period being allowed the salary which is attached to the position."<sup>8</sup> In response to the telegram Pattullo wired the minister directly to request his "personal consideration" and to tender his resignation effective 1 December. In a second communication he provided two examples where Yukon officials had received full salary while in acting capacities, but in each case Sifton refused to alter his decision.<sup>9</sup>

Pattullo then asked his uncle to intercede on his behalf. Andrew Pattullo was a prominent Ontario Liberal, proprietor of the Woodstock *Sentinel-Review*, and a close acquaintance of the Sifton family. He suggested to Sifton that Duff should have been rewarded "on account of the services which his father and I have rendered the Liberal party during the last quarter of a century and more" and he was anxious that his nephew not develop a "grievance" against the administration.<sup>10</sup> The minister replied that although Dufferin had been "a very exemplary official" as acting Assistant Gold Commissioner, "irregularities in his personal habits" had created difficulties in the early years. He added that the position required a man able, "morally and intellectually," to withstand temptation and advised that Duff had been overlooked in his own best interest. At the same time additional money was out of the question. The government did not pay it in principle because of the high number of acting officials in its service. He concluded that it was not unusual for Yukon employees to become dissatisfied "and it is surprising how large a grievance they can construct out of very small materials."<sup>11</sup> Despite this

<sup>7</sup> University of Manitoba, Dafoe Library (hereafter UMDL), Clifford Sifton Papers, mf. reel C541, p. 103925, T. D. Pattullo to J. A. Smart, 26 August 1902.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103930, J. A. Smart to Z. T. Wood, 27 October 1902; and *ibid.*, p. 103931, Smart to Wood, 27 October 1902.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103933, Pattullo to Sifton, 1 November 1902; and *ibid.*, p. 103935, Pattullo to Sifton, 3 November 1902.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103910, Andrew Pattullo to Sifton, 11 December 1902.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, reel C428, p. 725, Sifton to Andrew Pattullo, 17 December 1902.

discouraging response Andrew Pattullo pursued the matter, pointing out that it was only fair for his nephew to be reimbursed and citing precedents for action in similar situations.<sup>12</sup> His influence was an important factor, and Sifton eventually agreed to a special allowance for Duff Pattullo.<sup>13</sup>

This decision did not reach Pattullo in Dawson until late in the spring of 1903, by which time he had left the government service. In November 1902 he had signed articles of partnership with Emil Stauf, a Dawson real estate and mining broker.<sup>14</sup> In the following month there were rumours that he intended to seek office in the next civic election, but he did not file nomination papers.<sup>15</sup> He remained near the centre of political affairs, however, and continued to serve the Liberal party in a variety of capacities. In the fall of 1903, for example, he undertook to manage the *Yukon Sun*, Dawson's Liberal newspaper and the territory's official gazette. When a proposed amalgamation with another paper failed to materialize, Pattullo personally borrowed \$3,000 to keep the *Sun* in operation. He took out the loan on condition that the government provide him with official printing worth \$5,000.<sup>16</sup> Soon after that agreement had been reached the *Sun* office was destroyed by fire and Pattullo was forced to make an arrangement for the *Sun* and for the Yukon yearbook to be printed by the opposition *Dawson Daily News*. At that point the Yukon Commissioner, Frederick Tennyson Congdon, reneged on his deal with Pattullo. Rather than see the yearbook printed by a company hostile to the administration, Congdon and his lieutenant, William Temple, started a new paper, the *Yukon World*, and gave it the yearbook contract. They also repudiated the party's obligation to Pattullo and refused to pay off the debts he had incurred to protect his interests.<sup>17</sup>

This duplicity provided the incentive for Pattullo to enter civic politics in Dawson. He may have recognized that his election to the city council would give him some extra leverage in his relations with the Commissioner. At the same time he may have been tempted to seek public office on account of the salary available. Dawson aldermen received \$1,500, a sum attractive enough to a man with Pattullo's debts. Moreover, his real estate business must have been affected by the rapid decline in Dawson's

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, reel C555, p. 117818, Andrew Pattullo to Sifton, 13 February 1902.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117828, Andrew Pattullo to Sifton, 21 March 1903.

<sup>14</sup> PABC, T. D. Pattullo Papers, v. 1, f. 15.

<sup>15</sup> *Klondike Nugget*, 17 December 1902, p. 1, "Political Situation."

<sup>16</sup> UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C572, p. 136887, Pattullo to Sifton, 29 March 1904.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

population and by the transition toward capital intensive mining in the goldfields. Prices dropped annually as the gold rush ebbed and the demand for business and residential property fell as more people left Dawson than arrived. While the turnover in population guaranteed some work for real estate agents, there may not have been enough to allow Pattullo to satisfy his creditors.

In any case, on 10 December 1903 T. D. Pattullo officially declared his candidacy for the position of alderman on the Dawson City Council.<sup>18</sup> He was one of eleven men who sought the endorsement of the Taxpayers Association, an avowedly non-partisan organization which was dominated by Conservatives. On 11 December, the association voted on its nominees, the top six candidates to form its ticket. Pattullo finished eighth.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, he continued his campaign and sought election as an independent. On nomination day he was one of twenty-four aldermanic candidates, most of whom, according to one paper, were attracted by the salary.

The campaign itself was short and only lukewarm. There was one public meeting at which the candidates announced their platforms. Pattullo declared that taxes needed to be reduced and that the city charter had to be revised to give the city more authority in financial matters and greater independence from the Yukon Commissioner and Council.<sup>20</sup> As Dawson was not divided into wards, the six candidates who received the largest number of votes were elected at large. When the votes were counted on 9 January 1904, Pattullo received 259 of the 638 cast, the third highest of the candidates.<sup>21</sup>

At its first session the new city council organized its standing committees, and Duff Pattullo became the chairman of the one concerned with fire, water and light. In that position he was responsible for the Dawson Fire Department, which annually consumed almost 75 percent of the city's revenues. Pattullo was determined to reduce that proportion, even at the expense of the department's efficiency. In its second week in office and under the leadership of Pattullo, the city council cancelled orders for a kerosene engine and rotary fire pump which the fire chief had requested the previous year. The fire committee also refused to reimburse the company for expenses it had incurred in transporting the equipment

<sup>18</sup> *Yukon Sun*, 10 December 1902, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 December 1902, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 December 1903, p. 4, "Last Night's Carnival."

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 January 1904, p. 1. "Many Are Called. . . ."

to the west coast on the technicality that, in law, the city was not liable for any agreement lacking the seal of the municipality.<sup>22</sup> On 24 January the fire committee trimmed a further \$9,000 from the city budget by a sweeping reduction of the firemen's wages. When the chief protested, Pattullo replied that the city would run the fire department rather than the department run the city.<sup>23</sup> To emphasize his authority he occasionally turned in false alarms and used a stopwatch to time the fire brigade's response.<sup>24</sup> To compensate for this behaviour Pattullo bought fifty cords of wood for the fire hall to celebrate the birthday of the king of Norway and Sweden, a duty he felt obliged to perform since he was consul for those nations.<sup>25</sup>

The fire department became an even greater issue in April 1904. To appreciate the controversy it is necessary to understand the political situation in the territory as a whole. By that month Congdon's behaviour as Yukon Commissioner had split the Liberal party into two factions. Congdon had received the position in the summer of 1903, but he had set his sights on the Yukon seat in Parliament in the 1904 general election. To ensure his success he set to the task of assembling a powerful electoral machine. He used the patronage at his disposal to stock the civil service with loyal followers and to buy off men who had been outspoken opponents of the government. His lieutenant, William Temple, ran a shake-down racket which exacted contributions from the keepers of Dawson's saloons and dance halls in return for immunity from prosecution.<sup>26</sup> Those activities alienated many long-time Liberals and precipitated the schism in the party. Pattullo had been affected directly when Congdon cancelled the printing contract with the *Sun*, and he was outraged by the appointment of a "rank oppositionist" to edit the *Yukon World*.<sup>27</sup> Other Liberals were equally annoyed, and it was not long before the party was divided. The Yukon *Territorial* Liberal Association was filled with Cong-

<sup>22</sup> Yukon Archives, Yukon Territorial Records, Central Registry file 25238. The file contains all the relevant correspondence between the city and the James Leslie Company.

<sup>23</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, 26 January 1904, p. 4, "Salaries Are Cut."

<sup>24</sup> Dawson City Fire Department, Daily Report Book, v. 4, 1904, 7 July 1904, 20 August 1904.

<sup>25</sup> *Yukon Sun*, 23 January 1904, p. 1, "He Celebrated. . . ."

<sup>26</sup> UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C578, p. 142447, Z. T. Wood to Fred. Wade, 28 November 1904. See also PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3038, p. 312, Z. T. Wood to Sifton, 2 January 1905.

<sup>27</sup> UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C572, p. 136887, Pattullo to Sifton, 29 March 1904.

don supporters, while the Yukon Liberal Association and the Dawson Liberal Club were organized by his opponents. Although the latter two organizations were nominally led by Thomas O'Brien, their spokesman was their secretary-treasurer, Duff Pattullo.<sup>28</sup>

In the spring of 1904 Pattullo began a campaign against the Commissioner. In a series of letters to the Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, Pattullo denounced Congdon and demanded his removal from office. In March he reviewed the newspaper question and wrote to Sifton that "the Commissioner is a man quite devoid of any sense of moral obligation."<sup>29</sup> In April he forwarded a copy of a resolution, passed by the Yukon Liberal Association, which declared that "the Commissioner of the Yukon Territory has by equivocation of statement, duplicity of conduct, broken promises and unrequited pledges forfeited the confidence and respect of the people of the Yukon Territory in general and the Liberal party in particular."<sup>30</sup> A month later he asserted that Congdon had aroused the opposition of the territory as a whole and that "nothing but the removal of the Commissioner can straighten matters out."<sup>31</sup> When Laurier expressed regret that patronage had caused the "quarrel" and urged Pattullo to restore harmony in party ranks, Pattullo retorted that harmony was impossible while the Commissioner remained in office. "Mr. Congdon," he continued, "has shown himself to be unreliable, impolitic, autocratic, weak and wholly lacking in ordinary judgment."<sup>32</sup> When other letters in this vein failed to move the authorities at Ottawa, Pattullo wrote to Sifton and threatened "to publish from one end of Canada to the other a history of Yukon legislation from the time when you assumed office until today." He was reluctant to embarrass the government, but he concluded that it had left him no choice but to appeal to public opinion.<sup>33</sup>

Congdon defended his position in letters to the same officials. Patronage, he contended, was the source of the conflict and there was never enough for all who expected reward. Many of his opponents, he added,

<sup>28</sup> *Yukon Sun*, 4 February 1904, p. 4. See also Morrison, *Politics of the Yukon*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>29</sup> UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C572, p. 136887, Pattullo to Sifton, 29 March 1904.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136901, resolution dated 6 April 1904. Pattullo had moved the resolution and Dougald Donaghey, the Dawson city solicitor, had seconded it.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136905, Pattullo to Sifton, 12 May 1904.

<sup>32</sup> PABC, T. D. Pattullo Papers, v. 2, f. 2. Laurier to Pattullo, 3 May 1904, Pattullo to Laurier, 1 June 1904.

<sup>33</sup> UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C572, p. 136919, Pattullo to Sifton, 10 July 1904.

indulged in agitation "as a cheap form of amusement."<sup>34</sup> When Sifton ordered a reduction in the size of the Yukon civil service and demanded an explanation for the feuding, Congdon replied that refusing to accept applications "does not put people in a particularly friendly frame of mind." He also alluded to "the desperate crowd" he had to deal with, pointing out that "the only way to treat them is to take them by the throat. . . ."<sup>35</sup> He finally charged that his opponents had embarked on a general policy of slander for the benefit of the opposition in the Commons, an argument that Sifton seemed ready to accept.<sup>36</sup>

This political conflict provided the background for events which occurred in Dawson. Pattullo was prepared to use his position as alderman to exclude all of Congdon's supporters from employment by the city and to weed out those already in its service. His first opportunity came in April, when the fire committee decided to reduce the size of the fire department. Although the committee first claimed that the four dismissals had been carried out for reasons of economy, one of its members soon confessed that the committee had determined "to wipe politics out of the department." The four all happened to be members of the Congdonite faction of the Liberal party. Pattullo described the most prominent of the four, a captain with four years' seniority, as "the creator of dissension among the men," and another committee member added that the captain had been "a heeler and deliverer of votes."<sup>37</sup> The fire chief registered a vigorous protest and Dawson's mayor, a Congdonite, argued that the chief should have decided who was to be removed, but Pattullo persisted and the city council accepted the fire committee's recommendation.

The feud in the Liberal ranks also affected Dawson's acquisition of a hydrant system. In its obsession with reducing the costs of fire protection, the city council considered purchasing a water system. When the Dawson City Water and Power Company, which supplied drinking water on a seasonal basis, offered its plant to the city for \$100,000, Pattullo rejected the proposal out of hand. He argued that the price was rather steep, but he also opposed the company because its owner and general manager was a close associate of Congdon.<sup>38</sup> Instead, Pattullo arranged for an

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, reel C562, p. 126131, Congdon to Sifton, 9 March 1904.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126205, Congdon to Sifton, 2 June 1904.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126222, Congdon to Sifton, 12 July 1904.

<sup>37</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, 19 April 1904, p. 4, "Politics in Department."

<sup>38</sup> The company was owned and operated by Daniel A. Matheson, who was also a shareholder in the *Yukon World*.



engineer to prepare detailed estimates of the cost of a water system in the belief that the city could install its own equipment at a much lower cost. After the engineer presented his plans and the city called for tenders, the water company announced that it held an exclusive charter, granted by the Yukon Council, to supply water in Dawson.<sup>39</sup> The city, however, went ahead with its plans until July, when the attempt to erect a civic water plant was abandoned because of costs and uncertainties about Dawson's future.

The summer of 1904 was a crucial period for Dawson and for its city council. The discovery of gold in the Tanana region of Alaska in the previous year had precipitated a stampede from the Klondike to Fairbanks, and the migration down the Yukon River continued as new deposits were uncovered. The rise of Fairbanks had severe repercussions in Dawson. As the population fell, the city went into a commercial recession. At the same time, as its tax base diminished its remaining residents faced the spectre of increased rates. For some residents, particularly the managers of large corporations and owners of property, heavier taxation was the last straw. They anxiously looked for ways to cut the city's costs, and a group of them seized on the idea of eliminating the salaried city council. These same people had opposed the incorporation of Dawson in 1901, and they quickly organized a petition appealing for the Yukon Council to revoke the city charter and replace the elected aldermen with appointed commissioners.<sup>40</sup>

At first the aldermen were not alarmed, and Pattullo suggested that no action be taken until the Yukon Council received the petition. He seemed confident that that body would make no decision without consulting its Dawson counterpart.<sup>41</sup> Congdon, however, had no such scruples. It was clear to him that a city council dominated by Duff Pattullo posed a real challenge to his power in the Yukon and to his political ambitions. As his opponents grew in number, the Commissioner needed larger amounts of patronage to keep his supporters in line, especially since Pattullo was getting rid of Congdonite civic employees. The petition of Dawson's corporate citizens provided him with a golden opportunity to resolve those difficulties. By responding to public opinion, as expressed in the petition, he could remove Pattullo from authority and get his hands on additional patronage.

<sup>39</sup> *Yukon Sun*, 18 February 1904, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> See *Dawson Daily News*, 26 July 1904, p. 2, "No Surrender . . ."; 4 August 1904, p. 4, "To Talk . . ."; and *Yukon World*, 27 July 1904, p. 3, "Ask Council."

<sup>41</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, 26 July 1904, p. 2, "Want to Change."

Thus, when the petitioners appeared before the Council, the Commissioner advised them to transform their request into a bill to establish a plebiscite which would determine Dawson's future. The Yukon Council gave the bill first reading on 15 August and second reading the following day. When it went into committee, Pattullo and two other aldermen appeared to state their objections, but they were not heard. The Commissioner and registrar of lands both defended the bill; in addition, Congdon sponsored a successful amendment which provided a rebate of one-third of the year's taxes if the people of Dawson voted to revoke the city charter.<sup>42</sup> The Yukon Council then passed the bill and the battle lines were drawn.

The combatants had their first skirmish over the appointment of a returning officer. Congdon appointed the city clerk and empowered him not only to issue voting certificates but also to count the ballots without witnesses.<sup>43</sup> The aldermen dismissed the clerk and appointed Duff Pattullo acting chairman of the finance committee to ensure that the duties of the city clerk were freely executed. The discharged clerk, however, retained the assessment roll, and he and a band of territorial officials took possession of the city hall. Denied entrance through the doors, Pattullo climbed through a window and reported that he had found evidence that the list of voters had been doctored.<sup>44</sup>

While the city hall was under siege, both sides held public meetings. At those called by the aldermen, Pattullo defended the charter and objected to the manner in which the petitioners had bypassed the city council.<sup>45</sup> The only attempt at effective opposition occurred when a Dawson real estate broker applied for a judicial injunction against the plebiscite on grounds that the returning officer had wrongfully issued voting permits and had closed his office hours ahead of schedule.<sup>46</sup> Mr. Justice Craig of the territorial court rendered his decision on the evening before the vote. He declared:

My own views are that no fair expression of public opinion can be obtained under the election to be held tomorrow under all the conditions as they now

<sup>42</sup> *Yukon World*, 25 August 1904, p. 1, "Yukon Council."

<sup>43</sup> See J. N. E. Brown, "The Evolution of Law and Government in the Yukon Territory," in *Municipal Law in Canada*, ed. Morley S. Wichett, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1907), p. 17. Brown was clerk of the Yukon Council.

<sup>44</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, 10 September 1904, p. 6, "Territory Is. . . ."

<sup>45</sup> *Yukon World*, 8 September 1904, p. 4, "Taxpayers. . . ."

<sup>46</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, 12 September 1904, p. 1, "Injunctions. . . ."

exist, both as to the time given for issuing the certificates and owing to the doubt existing in the public mind as to the legality of the certificates issued.

But he refused to grant the injunction. The plebiscite could proceed, but the judge advised Fred Congdon to exercise "reasonable discretion" in deciding to proclaim the result.<sup>47</sup>

The plebiscite was held on 13 September 1904, and the result revealed the extent to which the Congdon machine had rigged it. The voter turnout was very small, about half the number of the previous civic election. Only 381 votes were cast — 289 for revocation and 92 against it.<sup>48</sup> The *Dawson Daily News* attributed the result to a combination of a fraudulent ordinance, a "complaisant city clerk," a powerful territorial government and a disfranchised opposition.<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, on 19 September Congdon proclaimed the result official. On that day, Duff Pattullo's first experience in public office abruptly ended as the Dawson city council ceased to exist.

In his official report to the Minister of the Interior, Congdon defended his actions and cited a number of obscure British precedents to justify irregularities committed by the returning officer. He did not emphasize his own role in bringing about the plebiscite; nor did he mention his tax rebate proposal.<sup>50</sup> Privately, however, he telegraphed Sifton that the vote represented a "strong endorsement of his administration."<sup>51</sup> In a confidential letter, Congdon explained that revocation of the Dawson city charter was "most essential" in the government's interest. "The City Council," he averred, "had become a hot-bed from which sprung [*sic*] all sorts of agitation and movements averse to the Government, and the end of its existence will mark the end of much trouble." He denounced Mr. Justice Craig as a "vain and vindictive" Tory and suggested that the aldermen and their supporters had received exactly what they deserved.<sup>52</sup>

In the end, all Congdon's machinations went for naught. His opponents had learned their lesson, and they organized to fight him in the

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 September 1904, p. 1, "Judge Craig." The full text of the decision appears in *ibid.*, 15 September 1904, p. 1, "Judge Craig's Decision."

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 September 1904, p. 2, "Yesterdays Election."

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> PAC, Interior Department Records, v. 949, f. 959610, Congdon to Sifton, 26 September 1904.

<sup>51</sup> UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C563, p. 126276, Congdon to Sifton, 13 September 1904.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126290, Congdon to Sifton, 26 September 1904.

general election of December 1904. Pattullo and his Liberal faction joined forces with the Conservatives, and their combined weight matched Congdon's forces. In the face of this opposition Congdon's coterie resorted to their old tricks. The lists of eligible voters disappeared, and the Chief Returning Officer defied the Secretary of State when ordered to post duplicates.<sup>53</sup> Three days before the election Pattullo telegraphed Ottawa that "bloodshed" would result if "bona fide voters" were denied their rights.<sup>54</sup> That same day William Temple and other Congdon organizers were formally charged with violating the Elections Act. This scandal ensured the victory of Dr. Alfred Thompson, and he trounced the former Commissioner by 600 votes.<sup>55</sup>

Congdon's defeat and resignation, and a subsequent reorganization of the Yukon civil service, restored harmony in the Liberal ranks. In the personal conflict between the Commissioner and Pattullo, however, the Congdonites had last word. Early in October 1904 Congdon appointed a commission to investigate the causes of a major fire which had destroyed much of the hotel district in Dawson. At the commission's first sitting the fire chief testified that his department had been undermanned, and he chastised the former city council for reducing the firemen's wages, as competent men would not work for the pittance offered. He added that he had outlined the danger in a letter to the chairman of the fire committee but had received no reply.<sup>56</sup> The commissioners heard other evidence and then prepared a report which was released in February 1905. Although they cited the fire inspector for carelessness, the chief for negligence and the firemen for poor judgment, they aimed their greatest volley at the former city council. They indicted Alderman Pattullo for hindering the chief in his duties and for ignoring his requests. The report continued:

This tactless handling of the department created undue friction, engendered a lack of 'esprit de corps' which is very essential in a public body of this nature. . . . In the opinion of this commission at the time this fire occurred the staff of the department had become so reduced as to make it wholly inadequate to cope with a fire of any seriousness.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Morrison, *Politics of the Yukon*, p. 67.

<sup>54</sup> UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C572, p. 136931, Pattullo to Sifton, 13 December 1904.

<sup>55</sup> Morrison, *Politics of the Yukon*, p. 67.

<sup>56</sup> *Yukon World*, 7 October 1904, p. 4, "Fire Commission."

<sup>57</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, 14 February 1905, p. 2, "Fire Commission."

This stinging rebuke did not put Pattullo in his place. Not only did he continue to believe he had done no wrong; he and two other former aldermen persisted in their claims to the salary which ordinarily would have come to them in the last quarter of their term of office. In the fall of 1905 Yukon Commissioner W. W. B. McInnes decided they were right, and they received the balance owed.<sup>58</sup>

Pattullo remained in Dawson for another three years. In that period he continued to serve the Liberal party as an organizer and spokesman, but he did not offer himself as a candidate for office. Although he left for Prince Rupert in 1908, he maintained close business ties with Dawson until the First World War. Then he concentrated on his political career in British Columbia, first in local government and then at the provincial level. It is impossible to trace his economic and social philosophy back to 1904, but his experience in Dawson clearly affected his concept of politics in Prince Rupert and Victoria.

In part, Pattullo's views were influenced by former Yukoners who became active in the Liberal party after migrating to B.C. The party's provincial vice-president in the 1930s, for example, was Dugald Donaghey, the city solicitor in Dawson during Pattullo's eight months as alderman. But this northern coterie was not the only factor. Undoubtedly, Pattullo learned important lessons from Fred Congdon, and he was careful to avoid his enemy's mistakes. He assembled a powerful political machine in northern B.C. and made it clear that trust and reliability were essential ingredients in its operation. He kept a firm grip on the Liberal organization and maintained his own position through close contact with the members of the party executive. His reluctance to engage in private political wranglings stemmed from his experience at Congdon's hand, which gave added meaning to his assertion in later life that he had never knowingly double-crossed anyone. From Congdon he learned the value of good public relations, and he endlessly sought support from the media, even though it was not always forthcoming.

Pattullo's time in the Yukon unquestionably affected his politics. The territory was remote and culturally immature, and its economy depended on the exploitation of its natural resources. There he encountered the insensitivity of a federal government which did not appreciate the demands of an outlying region or the special problems of civil servants on the scene. His distrust of federal officials made him pragmatic and willing to gamble on local solutions instead of following the rules laid down by a

<sup>58</sup> *Yukon World*, 7 October 1905, p. 4, "Aldermen Were Paid."

distant authority. In Dawson he first expressed the spirit of adventure and independence which characterized his behaviour as alderman, minister and premier. Dawson was the crucible in which Pattullo's political mettle was tested, and his abbreviated term on the city council marked the beginning of a remarkable public career.