

THE M. P. FACTORY

Recollections of the General Elections

By GEORGE FISHER CHIPMAN



THERE have been horrible creakings and groanings and mutterings from shore to shore. Dirt and smoke have been in the air. Canada's greatest factory has been working to its utmost capacity. Through daylight and darkness have the wheels been turning, shaping wonderful things—Members of Parliament. They have been made—two hundred and twenty-one in number. Seven million hands were employed to pound into (or out of) shape, trim, temper, sandpaper and polish these current commodities. Twenty-five thousand hands were set to work to manufacture each Member. In only two cases was there no strike. In all the other units nearly half the workmen quit and began competition. They set to work on a new brand but didn't get it finished when needed. It was therefore cast aside. In this unique factory there were neither union hours nor wages. Some worked all the time and some not at all; some got nothing and some got everything in sight on which they could lay their hands. Many hands lagged and required inspiration. Some took it in liquid form; some in fumigation; some from jobs or hopes of jobs; some from children's kisses and the rest from HOPES. Through appeals, cajolings, threatenings and rewards many a sloth was urged to his task. The order was filled and the factory shut down. The hands got a four-year vacation. The rumbling ceased; the air is clear.

The People were the hands in this great factory. It was their day of reckoning. Into bundles of twenty-five thousand they tied themselves and from each bundle sent forth one of their number. For four years he is their mouthpiece at the great council fire—Parliament. The council fire burns at Ottawa. The Members are inflicted with beliefs as numerous and nebulous as lunar lights. Generally they divide according to opinions; into two Parties. The largest Party is the Government Party; the other the Opposition. The Government Party choose a chief—called the Premier. He makes the laws of the land, and selects a committee to help him. This committee is the Cabinet. The rest of the Government Party is kept to protect the Cabinet from the Opposition. The Opposition get their name from the Greek word "oppo," which means cold. They sit on the cold side of the council fire, and try to blow the smoke the other way.

Every four years the Members wear out or need repolishing. This process is called a Campaign and the conclusion of the renovation is the General Election. The Premier is the only man who knows when a General Election will be held. General Elections are preceded by Signs and Campaigns are carried on by Stages. Ever since Canada was organised immense public works and projects have been kept in Cold Storage as molasses for the People. The Opposition keep their eyes on the Cold Storage plant for signs. Soon the warmth comes and there is a buzz and a hum around the plant. Sudden and stupendous needs arise for great waterways, great railways, immense canals, drastic reforms and prolific schemes for the People's weal. The Signs never fail and the Premier announces the date.

The Opposition admit the necessity of the great progressive schemes but point out that the Government have not the proper methods. Their plans are obsolete and extravagant. Thus they pass through the Mild Stage. If the People are not fooled, then the Opposition claim that these schemes were their own. History proves that away back the Opposition thought it all out and but awaited the proper moment to begin. Proof positive is shown that a heinous crime has been committed. A Policy has been stolen. The People are the only court in the world before whom such a trial can be held. Strange it is that the People never understand a Policy. Policies are remarkable for their indefinite airiness around which a halo can be thrown but upon which a point can never be made. Neither Government nor Opposition understand the Policy but it is used to build up a maelstrom of opinion in which the People are to be drawn to vote.

Meantime the Government has announced that no one else can make proper laws. There is a great work to be done and the sun must be kept shining and the rain falling. Traditions show that

the sun was under a cloud and that a great drought prevailed when the Opposition made the laws. The present story of ruin the Opposition tell is shocking and the Government is amazed. Never in the history of the land did the Opposition see clearly the needs and their minds are not capable of coping with the problems that confront them. The Government has been doing the work so long and so well that it would be a pity to refuse them longer, especially when becoming aged. Yet they are never weary in well doing. Then there were no Members good enough for a Cabinet in the Opposition. It was utter nonsense to listen to them.

The deadly drug of indecision begins to grip the People. They must be fooled, and thus an advance is made to the Graft Stage. Now it is clearly shown by the Opposition that every Government Member, except some too old and feeble to take advantage, are Grafters. (A Grafter is one who secures a Rakeoff which his accuser would like to secure, but has no opportunity.) In every piece of work done by the Government there has been a Rakeoff for some of the Members. This has a special application to the Cabinet. If it is possible that any are not Grafters it is shown that they will be. They show that when they were boys at school the Government Member cheated in a knife trade. He is not a safe man. On the other hand it is shown that the Opposition lives on fruits of grafts of earlier days. It was terrible when they were in power and if again permitted they would put the country in their pockets and move. In this way it is shown that there are only two or three honest men in the country. It cannot be doubted because it has been proven in the newspapers and on the Stump.

Then Slander and Mud begin to fly in the air and if it is slung thickly and fast enough some Candidates become plastered. This is the stage when the private lives of Candidates are placed on the People's operating table and their characters dissected. The blemishes are held up for the People's benefit. It is shown that most of the Candidates are a positive menace to their communities. They are bad by nature. No good can ever come out of them. Deep goes the scalpel and characters suffer. The People watch and listen and the factory keeps on working.

The next stage in the manufacture of a Member is known as the Roorback Stage. This is usually an imaginary condition into which enthusiasm carried the Candidates. Hallucinatory images of discreditable schemes which their opponents are fostering are exploded in the public arena. It is of course denied, but a story well told, and plausible, always finds some believers. This increases the indecision and the time is becoming ripe for a Stampede of the voters. The People like to be

Stamped. It gives them the assurance that they are the real power controlling the destinies of the country and moving the pawns at their own discretion. The Candidates impress upon the People that they, and they alone, are the arbiters of the country's fate.

As the wheels continue turning they arrive at the stage in the manufacture known as the Libel Stage. This is when the molten shots poured into the ranks of the enemy penetrate the armour at some vulnerable point. The system rankles at the foreign matter introduced and whether or not it is properly injected it is resented. A remedy is ready for influencing the minds of the People. Charges of libel are laid against those who fire the shots and they are brought to the courts to see if they are playing the game fairly, according to the rules of warfare. The lawyers here begin to be busy and there is much noise in the papers. This of course is all for effect—on the People. The libels are only a part of the game and when the Election is passed they are dropped as having served their purpose.

As the day of reckoning draws near the People and the Candidates and the Machinery are all in readiness for Personal Work, which is the last stage from which the Members are shot forth into the cold, hard world. The implements used in this last stage are called in ordinary parlance, Heelers. Their work is a subtle, subterranean process the secrets of which are never divulged. The process improves in the course of advancing civilisation. Both Candidates and Parties declare that Personal Work is not conducive to Purity. No person has ever been found who advocates this process. It is even declared by many that the finished product would be a much better article if the final process were abolished. This may be done some day. Booze is a word which becomes current in this Stage. Neither Candidate knows the meaning of the word but they are led to believe that it has an insidious influence of which neither of them can really approve. All Candidates are imbued with the idea that the intelligence of a civilised People should manifest itself in a ballot marked in accordance with the teachings of their conscience. It is the highest and holiest duty of mankind. Heelers are supposed to have no conscience.

Election Day comes and goes. The factory has completed its work and the product is ready for the inspection of the People. The tumult has ceased; the shouting soon dies away. Defeated Candidates are left over as unfinished work for future consideration. The Members become either of the Government Party or the Opposition. The Opposition is allowed two weeks to tell how it happened. All that is left is to settle the bills. There are no more scoundrels but all are gentlemen and good friends. All are satisfied—even the People. The buzz and hum around the molasses is allowed to cease and the molasses is returned to Cold Storage. The world wags on in the same old way; the sun shines, the crops grow and peace and plenty hover round the homes of the People.

Is all the present process necessary for the manufacture of M. P.s? No, but the People permit it. Will it ever be changed? Yes, when the People get wise. Are not the People the absolute dictators of the country? Sure!

MANUAL vs. TECHNICAL TRAINING

By DAVID COLLIER, DIRECTOR MANUAL TRAINING, CHARLOTTETOWN

DR. GILMOUR in his excellent article in THE CANADIAN COURIER of February 27th gives the impression that manual training is not equal to that which "enables young men to produce a finished article having an assured commercial value." Just why the best teaching in the world should be reserved for "young men" is not clear. It is doubtless better for boys, and girls too for that matter; whilst older men and women need not be excluded altogether. For all of these, the young men included, manual training is good; and finished articles whose finish will be all that is to be desired, may be made exclusively if preferred. The instruction so given can be fully up to date, as the teacher who is in and with the times can see to that, and having a subject not very old in years this ought not to be difficult of accomplishment.

As to value, commercial considerations have no place in manual training; for which we should be truly thankful. Its aims are at least above these, and have placed it where it is to-day—a place it would not have occupied with lower. Still it has a value, and that an unbuyable one—the intimate connection between the maker and the made. It is a poor skill that has no liking for its own produc-

tions. These to the right mind will always stimulate to better things, whilst not disparaging past efforts. Loyalty may be met with in work as well as in more showy ways; not less valuable probably, because quieter.

A common misconception may be mentioned here as it is often met with. Commercialism and trade naturally combine, whilst the public school has nothing to do with either. A trade or technical school is another thing altogether, and here technical instruction has its proper place. The knowledge is imparted in the ordinary school by a person whose profession is or should be, teaching; whilst in the trade school by a skilled person or scientist possibly. Again, the public school is where pupils are looked for and the technical school has its students. In the former are those whose profession it is to teach, in the latter those whose business it is to instruct.

The pupils are taught the various subjects usual in schools, and manual training also if fortunately possible; in the hope that the faculties will be developed by the teaching and skill acquired through the hands. The students will somewhat reverse the process by acquiring all possible knowledge that greater skill may be the result. Besides, school