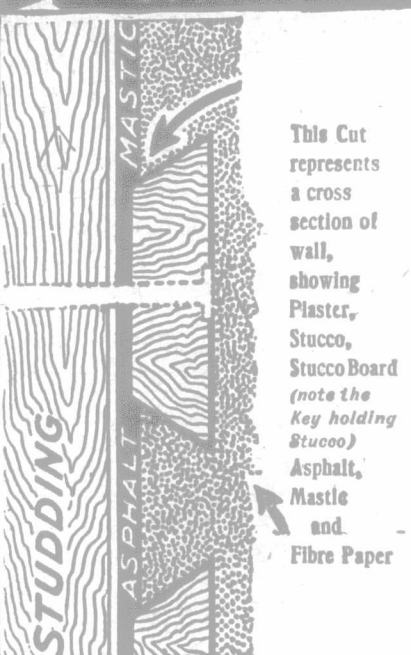


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people, it would have been well worth while. Freedom is always bought at a terrible price. Let this be kept in mind by those who sneer at the liberty for which our fathers died.

There is, nevertheless, much foggy thinking on the pivotal point as to what real democracy, controlled by the people and expressing its life, is. For the moment we are confused by the sudden kaleidoscopic changes in our political life occasioned by the war. In the United Kingdom we discover that the Opposition has practically disappeared; that ministerial responsibility is no longer a unit; and that the several members of the Cabinet may speak each for himself; that Committees have largely displaced Cabinet government; that effective criticism of the administration is dead. In the Dominion itself a Union Government has been set up in which bitter partisans waging warfare against one another in the past, have united to achieve definite ends. Personal rule has been substituted, in large measure, for parliamentary rule; and great decisions are made on matters of fundamental portent without resource to the people—measure that undoubtedly, in the past, would have required general elections to decide. Those of us who are jealous of the right of the people to rule themselves become impatient, and at times, apprehensive, as to the final result of it all. We ask ourselves whether at home, and in the Mother Country, the Constitution has been thrown into the melting-pot, and whether the parliamentary system has proved itself bankrupt. Only for a moment, however, for then we remember that the country is at war; and that, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the people once more will make their will effective in the days of peace to come. It is realized, all the more, how great is the necessity and how urgent the need to enlighten ourselves on basic issues which will require legislation in the near future. We realize, too, what supine folly it would be to divorce ourselves and our interest from matters that so vitally affect our social and economic life.

Partyism has been, in the past, used and fearfully abused. It is little cause for wonder that the non-partisan movement has made such headway across the border, especially in the agricultural States. Those who have given serious consideration to that movement realize that the emphasis has been placed not so much upon destructive, as upon constructive propaganda. Let it not be thought, however, that the non-partisan programme carries within itself the end of party government. The direct contrary is true—it means merely that the farmers, and those with similar interests, have combined for class-conscious purposes. It is a sheer impossibility to carry on a democratic government apart from parties and party organization, and the sooner our farmers realize that fact to the full the better it will be for them and the cause they have most at heart. Nor is it expedient, notwithstanding the criticism levied against it, to dispense with Cabinet and ministerial responsibility. Responsibility to the elected representatives of this nation is essential to adequately carry on the business of the people. Whether the party in power merits praise or blame, it is important to know where to place it.

In the United Kingdom and the United States are found powerful groups who insist that party government has seen its day. Already in the Mother Country certain powerful journals assert that the government of the nation has been taken out of the control of Parliament and handed over to committees of business men. The "dollar-a-week" man in the United States, and his millionaire brother in Great Britain, have come into prominence since the outbreak of the war. We are asked to marvel at their business accomplishments and the efficiency which they have injected into Parliament, and the work of Congress, alike; and to confess the bankruptcy of former parliamentary and party institutions. We refuse, however, to be dazzled by what they have done. The aeroplane fiasco in the United States indicates that even big business men may err, and that inefficiency and shoddy work are not the characteristics of representative government alone. In truth, we are certain that a bureaucracy of business men would be far more impotent to carry forward the necessary social and economic programme of the nation than statesmen have ever been. Canada will never consent to an emasculated Parliament; the people, whatever their deficiencies and inefficiencies, must rule.

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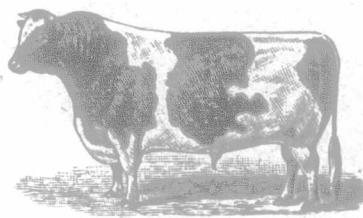
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