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LABOR MEMBER FOR HAMILTON DENOUNCES THE PATRONAGE SYSTEM.

Fortunately the public is beginning to recognize what such an institution stands for and what it must inevitably lead to. Allan Studholme mentioned it in his recent address in the Labor Temple, and at the late Social Service Congress held in the Convocation Hall of Toronto University, Rev. Dr. Tucker dealt with it in a manner that opened the eyes of many in attendance, who had previously been ignorant or the machinations of the secret brigade.

Dr. Tucker stated that it was a menace to public service and public efficiency, and he advocated that its methods be given the widest publicity, there should be open competition for civil service and the teaching driven home that public inefficiency could no more be winked at than private dishonesty.

At the present time, even in Toronto the Good, it is the ward executive of the party in power that have the dispensing of the jobs, whether they be of a civic, provincial or federal character. The members of the Ontario Legislature and the Federal Government are forced to bow to the will of the ward bosses or the machine, whether it be Grit or Tory.

Unless a man belongs to the dominant party he has not the ghost of a show to secure a job, no matter how flawless his qualifications may be. As a rule, it is men who could not be elected to the humblest position in the gift of the electorate who have the final say in the disposition of public offices.

Each ward machine sees to it that it gets its proper share of the spoils to go around. When the Grit party is in power no Tory need apply; when the Tory party is in power no Grit need apply. The man who wants a job has got to get out and earn it by working for the political machine, and the M. L. A. or M. P. has to stand for the game and must acquiesce in the verdict rendered by the ward machines.

The result is that jobs are peddled out for political services, and the returned soldier has begun to find out that his best chance of a job just now is to get in touch with the Tory machine.

A man's fitness for the position does not count; oftentimes the least efficient applicant is the man selected, because he is able to pull the political string with the best effect.

If a man dies who has occupied a public position, the wires are pulled before he is buried by aspirants, who desire to fill his official boots; it is not enough for the individual to be just an ordinary Grit or Tory, as the case may be; he has got to work for the job, and work for it sometimes for years before he finally lands it, for most of them do not.

The pull for jobs is always on, the wires are being always worked; there are rings within rings, and cliques within cliques, even in the same ward machinery and it is always a scramble to see who is going to get a chance to eat

R. A. RIGG, M.P.P.

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at the public pie counter.

Every ward heeler and the fellows who do the shady work of the party, that it is necessary to keep dark, are always alert to get what they think is coming to them; there is never any let-up in the scramble for jobs.

Sometimes the M. L. A. or M. P. will show signs of independence; his good judgment or better nature rebels at the methods used, but in the end he buckles under for it may mean when the next nomination of a party candidate takes place that he may be shunted off his job if he gets to be too scrupulous.

That is the state of affairs that practically exists to-day in almost every city and constituency in the country; it is by no means that the patronage committees control hundreds of workers—workers who always hope their turn will come next, or in the very near future, anyway.

It is a machine that fosters all kinds of political dishonesty, as the records of congested elections will show, and in many instances the result of an election is absolutely decided by the work of the hangers-on.

Such an institution deserves to be given its quietus, as Dr. Tucker states, its methods should be given the greatest publicity, its working should be fearlessly exposed, it is a menace to the purity of public life, the development of public service and good citizenship; it should have no place in decent Canadian politics, and it must go.

The battle is now on. People are beginning to learn, and the day is not far distant when an outraged public sentiment will demand that the institution shall be rooted out, branch and trunk alike, and membership or participation in the operations of such an organization shall be made a criminal offence to be punished by the full rigors of the law.

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