

THROUGH A MONOCLE

WANTED--BETTER CANDIDATES.

NOW that the elections are over, and you can talk about a candidate without being accused of trying to make party capital, I would like to enquire how it is that some men get nominated for Parliament. I am sure that it must have puzzled people in every part of the country, during this campaign which has just closed, to think how certain of the candidates in their immediate districts ever got into the field. They were not the sort of men you would naturally expect to be chosen to represent an intelligent constituency in the great Council of the Nation. They were hardly "public men" at all. Of course, I am not speaking of the majority of our candidates. I think that the average was fairly high this last time. I am, in fact, thinking no more of the recent election than of others of which I have been a more or less concerned spectator. It always seems to me that some men run who are conspicuously unfitted for a Parliamentary career or even for an election fight. And I must say that the people usually endorse my opinion by leaving them at home.

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BUT how do they get nominated? Who brings them out? Even if they so fatally misjudge their own abilities as to come out without any prompting, how do they ever manage to secure the endorsement of one of the great parties? It seems to me that there ought to be a censor of Parliamentary candidates. We should have some sort of standard to which a man must measure up before he run at all. There is always a risk that the worst man may get elected by some such accident as a general desire to beat his opponent. More votes are cast than you think against a candidate—and not for one. That is, you, let us say, do not want to see "A" elected. "B"—his opponent—you know nothing of whatever. But you cannot vote effectively against "A" without voting for "B"; so "B" gets your vote. Now it is obvious that if "A" is sufficiently unpopular, "B" will go to Parliament, even if he is so stupid that somebody must take him by the hand and put him on the Ottawa train.

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WE might as well be frank about it and say that a member of Parliament should have certain qualities beyond the ability to eat and sleep and draw his pay. If we advertise for an office boy, we expect that the candidates will be able to

"office boy" for us to a fair extent. If we wanted a bookkeeper, and a man applied who could not shown poor judgment in picking out a probable job. Now what are the duties of a member of Parliament? Ought he not to be able to do more than vote when the party "whip" says so? Assuredly. He is our spokesman in the body which taxes us and spends the proceeds—which makes the laws and appoints (by proxy) the judges to enforce them—which does a lot of things about which we have an opinion. Obviously, our representative should be a man who can stand up for us, can see that we get our share of what is going, and can make sure that our opinion is at least heard, and moderately respected. In two words, he should be a man of influence with his fellows—a man who can state a case clearly and cogently—a man who has a genius for getting his way.

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IT pays a constituency to send a superlatively good "member" to Ottawa. We all recognize that. A Minister is a strong candidate because a Minister has influence. A man of Ministerial rank on the Opposition side is also a strong candidate for the same reason. Now if it pays a constituency to send a conspicuously good representative to Ottawa, it must surely hurt it to send a conspicuously poor representative down there. Parties should think of this when they name their men. It is hard for electors to think of it, after the battle is once joined; for the issues are apt to submerge the personal qualities of the men. But a party which allows its name to be attached to a poor candidate, deserves punishment when the independent voters get an opportunity to administer the same. All of which comes to the conclusion that parties should be more careful about their standard bearers than they are to-day. It is not enough to find a man who is willing to run and spend a little money. It is a species of treachery to the constituency to lend such a man the party label if he is not personally fit to sit in Parliament and take his share in the great business of governing the nation.

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LOCAL party organizations should always try to nominate a possible Minister. There are plenty of them in every constituency. I say this seriously; for "plenty"—you perceive—is no more than two. But the possible Ministers are usually very busy. They are not pressing themselves upon the "workers." They have to be sought. Still most

party organizations want to win; and there is no doubt in my mind that the party which should systematically set itself to get out the very best in every constituency, would win, nine times out of ten. Good men do more than dignify a platform—they help make it. A party which went in for "brains" would present the "brainiest" policy to the people. Our politics is a good deal a game of trying to "beat each other" to the best policies; and this is a sport in which the brightest and best-manned party is bound to succeed.

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HOWEVER, what I started out to do was to try to find out how certain exceedingly unfit candidates got into the field. Somebody must have slept at the switch. A man cannot get nominated by a party in this country without securing the consent of a lot of responsible people; and I would tremendously hate to carry the responsibilities in this respect which some politicians have been shouldering for the last few weeks. This country is not suffering so much from corrupt public men as from stupid would-be public men. We have more honesty to choose between on election day than ability. We are always saying of our party leaders that, when they want a Ministry, they must go outside of Parliament for it. Now that is not always a disgrace to our party leaders. But it is a disgrace to some one. Are you quite sure YOU are not one of the ones?

THE MONOCLE MAN.

The British Strike.

A CANADIAN COURIER correspondent writes from Liverpool as follows:

"The strike here is over at last for a time. A more vicious attempt at the liberty of the people has never been known. The strike in Liverpool was led by Tom Mann, who tried to cripple the city.

"The railway strike does not come under the same category at all. We have the scum of the earth in Liverpool, some 20,000 to 30,000 of the lowest class creatures on the face of the earth—men and women without any conscience, who have sunk to the lowest depth of depravity, and who would not be lifted if they could. They inhabit a sort of under world of their own. They simply live to wage war on one another. It only required a fire brand to get amongst them, and they would follow to the middle of Hell. Anything that excites and influences the passions appeals to them. The cry to wage war on society was their bugle call. Half bricks, broken bottles, bricks tied in handkerchiefs, and crow-bars, formed their ammunition. Respectable citizens went about in peril of their lives. Cars were stopped, windows broken, and stores looted. Beer ran down the gutters, and men and women drank the filthy mixture as it ran."

TWO KINDS OF COLLAPSE--FROM NATURAL LAW AND FROM CARELESS DESIGN



50,000 tons of snow sliding down a mountain at Stewart, B.C., July 7th, 1911. A daily phenomenon during March and April.

FROM the point where the spectators stand in the left-hand picture to the black line marking the mountain top is estimated at 1 3-4 miles. For two months every year the inhabitants of the remote mining town of Stewart, B.C., far up in Comox-Atlin, near the boundary of Yukon, witness a daily spectacle of sublimity unequalled by Niagara. Fifty thousand tons of snow sliding from the glacial peaks of our northernmost mountains into the purlieus of a quiet little town. No wonder the townsmen knock off work to contemplate the great catastrophes of nature. The emotions roused in the spectators shown in the right-hand picture are of a different sort. Some careless contractor or incompetent architect in the headlong hurry of construction puts up a large building intended to house scores of people. The floors collapse before even the walls are quite finished. And the onlookers are able to tell exactly why the catastrophe happened. It is something of a miracle that calamities of this kind are so few in a land that builds a town almost in a night. In the haste to house new populations many buildings are inhabited almost before the roof is on. These are at least some advantages in living in towns where buildings do not fall before they are finished. The West so far has been peculiarly fortunate to escape building calamities. But if experience with the average Eastern builder is any criterion, there must be a large number of shoddy constructions on the prairie.



An apartment house in Calgary became a mass of debris on August 26. Fortunately this phenomenon is of rare occurrence even in a land of headlong haste in building.