

The Nation's Need

Unity—Character—Efficiency

All this seriousness that meets us on every side has a meaning. It signifies that as a people we have advanced from childhood to manhood. We have begun to take life soberly. We are no longer a mere colony. We are a nation.

During the formative stage, we were willing to go on in a thoughtless vigorous way, each man attending to his own concerns and regardless of the character of the total life of the community. Now, that we are facing serious issues and compelled to compare ourselves with other peoples, trained according to different standards, we are forced to take note of our shortcomings. And these are, perhaps, as marked as our excellences. It is true that the fittest will survive, and if this war has done nothing else, it has made it clear to even the dullest that we are not in everything as fit as we should be. We have never taken time to crystallize our ideals, nor care to unify our people; we have not been earnest enough in our endeavors to create a passion for righteousness, while we have failed miserably in developing efficiency in government, in industry, rural and urban. We are strong in our youth and our ambition, but our energies are misdirected, and often misspent. The time has come for intelligent reorganization.

A Disturbing Element

Have you ever been in one of the rural communities that is settled by the foreign-born? Or have you visited the non-English sections of such cities as Winnipeg and Vancouver? Have you taken pains to note the substance and spirit of the conversation? Have you found out what is being said about Canadians and their ways? Have you ascertained what form of government and what mode of life would be most pleasing to the people? If you have, you will have realized how thoroughly un-Canadian the sentiment is. More than this you will have discovered that in some districts there is a strong anti-Canadian, or rather an anti-British feeling. There are scores of little nations within the nation. **This is our first national menace.**

Its Origin

We all understand how these things came to be. There was a well-intentioned, but miserably faulty immigration policy, which hived people in great constituencies, where they could reproduce at will the conditions in their native land; and there was a welcome far too generous to those who came to the cities. No restrictions were made to protect and preserve the forms and spirit of our own civilization. And so conditions have become serious and in some cases, positively alarming.

Unification

Now, there are two ways in which unification may be attempted—the way of coercion and the way of persuasion. Let it be granted that, as a temporary expedient, the former method may be necessary in extreme cases. Internment and expulsion have a place. It is clear enough, however, that if permanent results are to be attained, it is upon education rather than upon compulsion that we must depend. The only union which can endure is that which is founded in voluntary good-will and genuine loyalty.

Business Honesty

When education is mentioned, the very first thought that enters the mind is the training of the public school. And yet if we think logically we must know that in this matter there are great educative forces at work outside of the school that are to be reckoned with. Some time ago a Slav settler came into a little village store. He bought a pound of tea and paid for it; twenty-five cents worth of sugar and paid for it; a box of matches and paid for it;

and so on for a dozen articles. A stranger asked him why he did not get a bill for the whole and pay all at once. "No," he replied. "Me lose that way. Me not able to count." In other words this Slav settler had learned by experience to distrust the Canadian merchant. All the education of the school will not breed good-will and loyalty if Canadians in their business dealings with these people are unfair and dishonest. So, the first question to ask is not "What can we do with these people to Canadianize them?" but "How must we comport ourselves that they will be glad to call themselves Canadians?"

A Common Language

There is nothing which binds people more closely than a common language. This has been proven repeatedly during the present war. Therefore whatever else is done in the schools of the land, the children must be taught to speak and read English. This is not only fair to the children; it is a national necessity. We cannot urge too strongly that there can be no national feeling without a national language, and the sooner we make up our minds that all our young people shall learn English, the better. This will mean better provision for teachers than is now made. It may mean double grants to schools in outlying districts in order to bribe English-speaking teachers to go there. It may mean, and must mean, a close inspection of work in all private schools. No child must be permitted to grow up without a speaking and reading acquaintance with English. There will be little trouble in cities if children but attend the public schools. They are only too anxious and willing to learn English, and if some parents insist upon sending children to school where they learn no English, a way must be found to enforce wise action. But there is a real problem in the non-English rural districts, and no labor, no cost, should be spared in finding a solution.

Malign and Helpful Influences

Of course, other means of promoting unity must not be neglected. It is unfortunate that apart from the school teachers, the only people to associate actively with the foreign-born to educate them, have been the politicians, and their course of training has been most damaging in every way. The praiseworthy efforts of such organizations as The People's Forum, in Winnipeg, must be heartily commended.

Moral Character

People united in aim and sentiment and possessed of the greatest natural heritage that has ever been bequeathed to man, may accomplish anything if they are only right in heart and deed, and efficient in all that pertains to social, political and industrial life.

We may as well get it into our minds that without righteousness there is no such thing as true prosperity. It is true to-day as in the days of David that blessing comes only to him who "hath clean hands and a pure heart; who lifteth not up his soul unto vanity, nor sweareth deceitfully."

Clean hands! Think of it, you men, who have condoned political rotteness and public theft! Pure hearts! Think of it, you men, who have forgotten the vows made at the marriage altar and who laugh at old-fashioned purity! Vanity! Think of it, you men, who have squandered needlessly in all forms of luxury! Deceit! Think of it, wild speculators, boomsters, purveyors of worthless wares! Is it any wonder if things have not gone well with us? Look around and consider!

Sad Politics

Here, in one of the Western Provinces, is a government gone down in disgrace and dishonor. Why? Because it was not content to follow the simple straight path. How long is it going to take for men and nations to learn that the only sure way to success is the honest way? Those men are the veriest simpletons who say that the game of politics must be a dirty game. Any party, in this or any other country, can hold office as long as it pleases, if it will only do the right thing. Failure always comes when some miserable crook attempts to bolster up the fortunes of his party, by bribing the electorate. Every last man of this class, from Robert Walpole down to our modern Roberts and Georges, is not only a curse to national life, but the ruin of his party. The only thing in this world that pays, in politics or out of it, is good, old-fashioned honesty. Let us be devoutly thankful for such appreciation of it as is being manifested in many ways.

Efficiency

Go into a large factory in Canada. Find out where the experts were trained for their work. Note how many have come from outside. Is it not as plain as day, that if we are to attain to the highest we must in every field of endeavor develop power for leadership right among our own young people? In agriculture there are too many just scratching the ground, impoverishing the soil through repeated cropping or laying up a heritage of weeds; in manual arts there are too many common bunglers; in law-making, too many opportunists.

Training for Agriculture

Following Ontario, we have in Western Canada, poured millions into Agricultural Colleges. Yet but comparatively few of the people are receiving instruction. We should have scores of Agricultural High Schools close to the people, in which the rudiments could be mastered. It is better to raise the efficiency of all the people one degree, than to raise the efficiency of one-tenth of one per cent of the people one hundred degrees. The address of Hon. Walter Scott, in the Saskatchewan Legislature in which he outlined contemplated improvements in rural education, is well worthy of consideration. Agriculture must become a science, and it can become so only through education. The only time at which agricultural education can be given is after pupils are old enough to take serious part in agriculture. Agricultural departments in rural High Schools or Consolidated Schools will help to solve the problem.

Training for Industry

In towns, the technical High Schools, paralleled by Trade Schools, under the control of special trades are equally necessary. In Boston, printers, and, if we mistake not, shoemakers, have their own special schools at which apprentices receive the best possible instruction. Canada is leagues behind European countries in this matter. Why should our Canadian people build up business concerns for the children of outsiders to control and manage? They must train their own children.

Training for Government

So, too, is it in matters social and political. We have been trusting our government to men who have never made any study of the problems of statesmanship. Many of them are the veriest shams. We are beginning to see what our folly has cost us, and it is to be hoped we are now about ready to put each branch of public service under control of a trained expert.