

It is the business of Canada, and is of interest to all Canadians. A Parliamentary party exists to advocate the application of certain principles and certain lines of policy to the discharge of the public business. It appeals for the franchise of the people; and in return, the people have the right to demand the exclusive attention of the party to advancing the principles for whose support the franchise was solicited and bestowed.

The federal opposition stands to-day for the justification of the "principles" and the policy of the Foster group, and practically for nothing more. Were they the "principles" on which the opposition members were returned to Parliament, and for the advancement of which the public franchise was solicited?

A political party may be sufficiently defined as consisting of those in the state who are united in the advancement of certain political views. It is not essential that there be no differences of opinion on matters of minor importance, nor that the purpose aimed at be supported by all for the same reasons, but it is essential that upon the main problems of public concern there be concurrence of opinion and unity of action. Without this there can be no party, and no reason for the existence of a party. It follows from this that the welfare of a party is a matter of concern, not only to the leaders, but to the rank and file who have chosen the leaders for the better advancement of the common end, and upon whom the leaders in turn rely for the power to accomplish that end. When, therefore, the private conduct of a leader in a party is such as to compromise his public position, and thus paralyze the cause for which the party exists, it is surely poor consolation for the rank and file to be informed that in these "private" transactions of their leaders, the public has no concern.

There is a broader interest still. In democratic countries progress in government is made only by the conflict of parties supporting opposing views. The public, therefore, has an interest in every party and a right to expect some measure of public service from every party. Whatever cripples a party or paralyzes its ability is a matter of legitimate public concern, and a matter from which public attention is not to be diverted by the petulant declaration of a party leader that his doings are nobody's business but his own.

Mr. Foster and his friends have discredited the Conservative party and destroyed its public usefulness more effectively than any opponents to that party ever could have done. The sophistry of these gentlemen aside, the plain fact remains that the people of Canada have lost faith in their "private character," and hence in the disinterestedness of their "public position." The performances of these gentlemen have wrecked their party and paralyzed its functions as a factor in the political life of the country. To the party which has to bear the humiliation, and the country which has been robbed of the public services it had the right to expect the only consolation offered by Mr. Foster is, that his method of juggling with other people's money is purely his own affair.

Raw and sore that his dealings with the Union Trust Funds have been made public, Mr. Foster sought vengeance on the Royal Commission by whom the investigation had been conducted, and in the House and out of it has wailed that the Commission exceeded the purposes of its creation in tracing the funds of the Foresters out into all the devious but converging channels into which Mr. Foster and his friends directed them.

On the face of it, the plaint is without corroborative evidence. The Commission investigated the Canada Life Assurance Company's business quite as exhaustively as that of the Independent Order of Foresters. They bestowed censure on Senator Cox as readily when occasion required as upon Mr. Foster. If Mr. Foster received a larger share than Senator Cox, it was simply because he deserved more.