

The Toothpick Trust.

By Peter McArthur.

Wasn't it dreadful the way Rev. Dr. Rainsford talked to the people of Toronto—to good people who have always been thankful that they are not as other people—even as those wicked Yankees? He said, and please notice how emphatically he said it:

"I came here, so help me God, to speak the truth; you are twenty years behind United States in dealing with bribery and corruption."

Pretty strong language that, and from a very responsible man who is known for his love of Canada. And he said something more of a more general character which furnishes excellent food for thought.

"The men who buy votes to get into Parliament will sell their votes when they get there."

That is perfectly logical, isn't it? The men who are without honor in getting what they want will be without honor in using it after they get it. I particularly wish to commend that remark to the consideration of the respectable leading citizens of both parties who act on campaign committees during election time. They know whether money is used or not in getting the votes of irresponsible people in their wards.

That is, they ought to know, but it is quite possible that they do not. In spite of their activities they are often respectable figure-heads who think they are doing everything, while the riding is being bought under their noses by more secret and skilful workers. A straight party candidate, who can always be depended on to vote with his party, may have his riding bought for him without his knowing anything about it.

But the result is the same, and because of his loyalty to his party his vote will be trafficked in just as if he sold it himself. Let us illustrate this by dealing with a hypothetical case of Big Business politics, that is hypothetical only in regard to the names used.

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But before we take up the case of the Toothpick Trust—I have chosen that because I think it is about the only kind of manufacturing left in which there is not a Merger or Trust—let us consider for a moment the question of Special Privileges and Indirect Benefits. I don't know when anything got on my nerves quite so much as that Indirect Benefit slush that I heard talked when I was in the city a few weeks ago. The only way I can get rid of it is to talk it all out, and I hope you will hear with me while I relieve my mind of a little more of it. I will try to do it as amusingly as the facts warrant.

Special Privileges have been granted to favored people since the dawn of history, and the great work of democratic forms of government, such as we enjoy, is to do away with this form of injustice. But the method has changed. Let us take a notable instance with which we are all more or less familiar. When the "Merchant Adventurers" who organized the Hudson's Bay Company went to Charles II. to get their charter there was probably a conversation that in effect ran as follows. Prince Rupert, acting as spokesman, probably addressed the Merry Monarch somewhat in these terms:

"Trusting that your most gracious Majesty will pardon our presumption, we beg to submit for your consideration a plan for greatly increasing the trade of your kingdom. By putting the fur trade in Canada on a business basis we will so stimulate trade that all citizens of your kingdom will be Indirectly Benefited to an unparalleled degree. All we ask is the title to some hundreds of millions of square miles of rocks and forests and snowdrifts, and the right to the exclusive trade with the Indians."

"Umph humph!" said his benign Majesty, meditatively. "It listens good to me, but what will there be in it for Charlie?"

Then Prince Rupert explained the basis on which they proposed to divide the proceeds of the monopoly with the private purse, and the charter was granted. All the king was interested in was the Direct Benefits that would come to him if he granted a monopoly. At the present time the granting of monopolies has passed from the sovereign to the sovereign voter, and the method of securing the necessary charter has changed. Instead of the Direct Benefits the sovereign voter gets the Indirect variety. Now let us pass on to a consideration of the case of the Toothpick Trust.

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When the magnates of the Toothpick industry had organized a Merger, that put an end to destructive competition, they began to look for a larger market for their output. To this end they started an advertising campaign to educate the people to the value of Patent Sanitary Basswood Toothpicks. They told clamorously, in a full page ad, that the care of the teeth was the most important thing in the world. If people did not care for their teeth their molars and bicusps would decay; they would not masticate their food properly; they would develop indigestion, and then they would get so grouchy that they would go back on the political faith of their fathers; join the Grange and do other

absurd things. But if they used Patent Sanitary Basswood Toothpicks they would enjoy good health and, besides, they would be Indirectly Benefited to a marvellous degree. The manufacture of toothpicks would make a great home market for basswood, the manufacturers would employ all the surplus labor of the country at high prices, there would be an unlimited market for farm products to feed the workmen and everybody would prosper. Whoop! Hooray! But though this sounded fine people still continued to pick their teeth with hemlock splinters, and the Grange increased its membership. The magnates had to get a better scheme, but that was easy. A representative of the Trust called on the campaign manager, or Wise Guy, of the political party that was at that time in power—by the grace of the Bankers, Railroad Magnates and Manufacturers. He told him all the above written guff about health and happiness and Indirect Benefits. But the Wise Guy looked at him coldly and observed:

"Go tell that to the Danes! They believed Doctor Cook. But if you want to do business with me, just say how much there is in it for the campaign fund."

Realizing that he had to do with a practical man he hastened to reply:

"If you put through a bill making it compulsory for all hotels, restaurants, eating houses, quick-lunch joints, cafeterias and such, to supply their guests with toothpicks, and also specify a kind of sanitary toothpick that can be supplied only by our firm because we hold the patents, I'll hand over a wad of 'long green' that would choke a cow."

"Done," said the Wise Guy. "You keep up your campaign for the public health, and we will introduce such a bill as you require."

Shortly afterwards the bill was introduced and it was whispered to the back benchers that it must be put through "for the good of the party," and it went through and from that day all hotels, restaurants, etc., were compelled to lay in a stock of Patent Sanitary Toothpicks, and all harmony banquets that were not supplied with these toothpicks were bogus, counterfeit and void. And the Trust prospered as never before, and issued watered stock and "made a killing."

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Now let us gather a few of the lessons to be learned from this. In the first place you will observe that the loyal members voted blindly for a bill that professed to be in the interests of public health, because it was said that it would be "For the good of the party." They did not sell their votes but the Wise Guy sold them. But perhaps you think your party does not get its necessary funds for printing campaign literature, hiring halls, paying expenses of speakers and similar legitimate—not to mention illegitimate—expenses in this way. Then how does it get the money that is always so plentiful? Did you ever contribute any of it? I have yet to meet a farmer who has contributed to the campaign funds of his party. The money is contributed by the rich men of the party. But why? The answer is easy. They expect favors that will give them special privileges such as were enjoyed by the Toothpick Trust.

But, of course, the sovereign voters got the Indirect Benefits—basswood went up in price, and there was a demand for labor and farm products and all that. I am sorry to disappoint you, but the Trust found that it could get basswood practically for nothing in Cuba, that foreign labor was cheaper than the home-grown article, and then these foreigners lived chiefly on sweet chestnuts from the slopes of Sorrento and garlic from the market gardens of the Campagna—or some similar place. So the Indirect Benefits all went to Cuba and Italy, and other countries instead of Canada. And when the sovereign voter began to grumble about it, he was told to get busy and produce more and help to reduce the cost of living. Say, if anyone talks that Indirect Benefits nonsense to you and you don't feel like doing anything about it, please oh please double up your fist and hit him once for my sake.

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Opportunities in Quebec.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The article on page 218 of February 5th issue of your valuable paper I consider has struck the right note.

I should imagine that very few know that in the Province of Quebec [there are opportunities second to none in the Dominion, nevertheless the fact remains.

Conditions to-day, in many parts of the Province, are similar to those that existed in Aroostook County, Maine, U.S.A., 30 years ago, just at the commencement of the potato-starch industry in that section, when abandoned farms were sold for next to nothing. Some five years ago, when the writer was travelling through Northern Maine, a farm of 200 acres near Presque Isle was pointed out as having just been sold for \$30,000 which had been bought 25 years previously for

\$350, and the owners had made a small fortune during their occupancy, besides putting up splendid new buildings.

Combining potato growing with dairying would be even more profitable here than growing potatoes exclusively, as dairymen and is still done in Aroostook County, and here dairying can be very profitably carried on, as both corn and clover grow to perfection for feeding purposes, alfalfa and sweet clover also give excellent crops. For potatoes we have, within 65 miles of this locality, the best market in the Dominion, viz., Montreal, where 75 per cent. of the potatoes used for domestic purposes are hauled from 600 to 1,000 miles. All kinds of vegetables grow well, even Montreal melons can be successfully raised, and the land, in many cases, can be had for nothing, as invariably the buildings (if any) are worth considerably more than the price asked, and if there are no buildings, the wood on the uncleared portion is fully worth the price paid. For instance, 60 acres sold four years ago for \$40, 30 acres cleared. The wood to-day is worth from \$150 to \$200 as it stands. Last week 60 acres, about 80 cleared, balance in good hardwood, principally hard maple, sold for \$300. There was no building on the first mentioned, but a good barn about 40 by 20, on the latter 15 acres at the bottom of the slope is acknowledged to be the best land in the neighborhood. Quebec has disadvantages, as I don't think they are greater than those in the West, then it has many compensations, and for the farmer with small capital who knows how and has ability to put his knowledge to a practical use, Quebec Province is good ground for exploitation.

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More on Good Seed.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

The majority of farmers do not take the interest they should in the changing of their seed grains, nor in the selection of seed, nor the trouble to secure new and improved varieties. The loss to themselves and the country at large is enormous. There are a large number of farmers whose whole aim and ambition is to get in a big acreage of grain, not paying any attention to securing a high yield per acre through thorough cultivation and the purchase of new seed. If these would sow one-third less and devote their surplus energy towards an increase in the yield per acre, they would be far better satisfied at the end of five years. Good and systematic cultivation must be carried on in connection with new and improved varieties of seed grain. There is no use expending money on the purchasing of new seeds and sowing them on a worn-out piece of land, or a poorly cultivated field, any more than placing a high-bred animal in the hands of a poor feeder who does not understand the art of handling high-class stock. Both would soon be of no use under such treatment. This is to a large extent the cause of the failure of many who try both new seeds and high-bred stock. Each have been improved and brought up to what they are by selection, hybridizing or breeding and feeding, and high cultivation, or feeding and handling. A large class of farmers begrudge the money for expensive seed, forgetting what it cost to bring out such new varieties or strains. A good seed is one that will produce a healthy, typical plant, and to do this must have been produced by just such a plant. Good seeds cannot be sold cheaply, as the grower has to give patient and expensive labor, and probably years of valuable time. The cost of these seeds may be high, but they may be good. Some would like to try the new and expensive seeds, but wait until some enterprising neighbor has more than he needs, for his own use, and then they are ready to try the new sort. They allow the neighbor to get the cream and are content with the skim milk. Many are too slow in this matter. The change of seed and new variety with strong vitality and vigorous growth will increase the yield. We may suppose seven to ten bushels per acre. This increase per acre will pay for the bushel of seed, and 25 per cent. of the investment, to say nothing of the extra value of the product of this bushel. The changing and selection of seed grains is sadly neglected by a very large number. It ought not to be necessary to say anything to the readers of this paper of the benefits to be derived from changing and selection of seeds. Try this spring the effect of changing seed from one kind of soil to another. Selection, if carefully followed up, along with hand picking would give some pleasing and surprising results to anyone who will take the trouble. Whatever you sow let it be clean and free from wild seeds. If a man sows wheat he will reap it twenty-fold. If he sows wild seeds he will reap them one hundred or a thousand-fold.

The following plan has been practiced on our farm, of about 500 acres, for years, and while not perfect, it is proving very satisfactory. We select the best fields of grain for seed, and during the winter or early spring clean the seed

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