

IX.

I believe in the justice which protects and perpetuates the liberty of the subject as a sacred thing within the domain of law-and-order in the State and its various sub-divisions.

The term "liberty of the subject" is ever a golden phrase on the lips of the loyal Canadian. Even the most callous of our illogical disturbers of civic equanimity are for ever seeking a justification for their license of harangue, from the heed given to the upholding of the liberty of the subject as a first principle of democratic rule. We are all instinctively inclined to regard justice in all its phases as a sacred thing, in our own State or out of it. And the wonder keeps growing why the exercise of our rights around the ballot-box is so often treated with disrespect, as if a guardianship of the liberty of the subject and the maintaining of justice in civic affairs had nothing in common. Indeed, so flagrant have become certain offences against law-and-order and decency of debate, that a Canadian writer has thought to locate quite a gulf between the unchallenged etiquette of everyday life and that of a partyite contest in many of our constituencies. For instance, a candidate elected for two seats, seems at times to feel no compunction in looking around for a partyite of his own class to have him returned by acclamation for the constituency he himself cannot represent, as if there was no such a thing as "the justice that protects and perpetuates the liberty of the subject". As the writer referred to says: "Much as is the case in active warfare on the battlefield, so is it in the case of too many of our political contests; the ethical guidances we are instinctively prone to depend upon for sanctions in our ordinary everyday decencies of conduct are unhesitatingly given a back seat in too many of our electioneering and parliamentary rivalries." Indeed, these decencies are sometimes forced to stand aghast at the contempt indulged in at the expense of "the liberty of the subject" and the justice that is supposed to be its protection.

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Is there no remedy? Are the indecencies of certain phases of our Canadian public life, from its fringes to its inner tyrannies, to continue to be winked at, especially the embittering phases of an election season? Certain of our municipalities have been exploiting a remedy in the manner of selecting candidates and by the substituting of the oversight of a Commission for party rule. The Commonwealth itself has ventured to favour the experiment for the time being of a union or non-party government. And the experiment has awakened