

The Toronto World

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THE WORLD

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THE BIG FISH ESCAPE

Commenting on the alarming increase of crime in the City of New York, The New York American mentions that it considers the chief contributing causes. The American does not accept District Attorney Jerome's theory that the police and the detectives are to blame.

"But there are thefts committed in New York every day, and these high-class thieves hold themselves to be among the elect. They are in no danger. They know how to steal, but the customs of society tolerate the thefts. There is no public opinion against the thieves, and the lawyers say there is no statute to cover their offences. Two years ago a lot of men got together, bought some old junk, scrap iron, cranes and worn-out shipyards. The whole of the purchase was worth a few million dollars. The stuff was capitalised for \$30,000,000, and by means of the counterfeited stock the public was robbed. Over \$40,000,000 was stolen. No one has been indicted for this. The most magnificent crime that was ever written down in the book of grand larceny."

It is not contended that the law against common criminals should be less rigid because the public is robbed by floatations like the shipyards bubble. There is, however, this much for the American's argument, that public opinion, stunned with outrages like the shipyards trust, is unconsciously weakened in its general moral estimate of offences against the law.

It is a question if the same breaking down of the moral fibre of public opinion is not in progress in Canada. Look at the revelations in Canada within the last few years. The corruption of the electorate has been reduced to a scientific basis. The number of men who will take one dollar for five dollars, or ten dollars for their votes, is increasing at an alarming rate.

Some extent at least this growth of the corrupt vote of the country and the extraordinary apathy of the voters in the municipal elections are due to the prevalence of corruption in higher circles. The subsidy hunter, the railway exploiter, and the franchise holding corporation make certain contributions to the campaign fund and get what they ask. Members of parliament organize joint stock companies which grow rich on government patronage. A government supporter rebuffs against legislation that is aimed at the public interest, and he calmly transmits to an office of emolument under the crown. Viewing these conditions, is it any wonder that the electorate is taking a lower view of the sanctity of the ballot, and that the public is viewing with indifferent concern the transactions between the election agent and the voter?

NOT A HEALTHY SPECTACLE

There was an error in a paragraph dealing with Hon. J. M. Gibson's relations to franchise-holding corporations published in yesterday's World. The paragraph should have read as follows: J. M. Gibson, the attorney-general of this province, is to-day recognized by all the electric and traction companies as their friend and chief protector, on all the contracts for the leasing of power privileges in this province (Niagara included) should not be in the business himself. He happens to get his power privileges from Ottawa. The minister of justice at Ottawa handing out power privileges to the attorney-general (who is in the attorney-general of Ontario (who is in the power business himself), handing out power leases to other power companies, is not a healthy spectacle.

A WEAK DEFENCE

In their desperate efforts to avoid this accumulative effects of the growing evidence in favor of municipal ownership, monopolist defenders present arguments of the most curious and inconclusive character. Municipal bodies

are treated as if they were separate entities unchangeable and ineradicably bad.

If under present conditions men in public positions prove amenable to the unscrupulous blandishments of predatory corporations the question is triumphantly asked: Are you going to entrust city and town councils to be composed with the administration of important public services? This is an altogether lonely specimen of fatuous reasoning.

Supposing it to be valid, what an intolerable situation would be created. Because the bribe and corrupter have succeeded in their policy their dominion is forever to remain unchallenged. Because some representatives have succumbed to temptation, therefore no good and honest men are to be found within the municipalities of Canada.

This would be reversing the sound principle of public policy with a vengeance. It would be the endorsement of corruption, the apotheosis of fraud. Hitherto the tempter has been regarded as more blameworthy than the tempted, and both as flagrant offenders of the general welfare of the citizen.

But the modern defenders of monopolies are quite prepared in their case to adopt the Jesuitical maxim, that the end justifies the means. The corporations who are everywhere refusing to acknowledge the just claims of the people need only adopt the cynical rule of Walpole and pay some men their price to pursue unfettered their hunt for ill-gotten gains.

It is a poor policy, but it is all they have to offer, and it is foredoomed to failure. Canada has a task to perform itself to be flouted in this contemptuous style. They will resent the imputation that they cannot be trusted to elect honest and capable representatives and still more that these representatives are simply what the electorate make them.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the unreformed corporations of Britain were corrupt enough in all conscience, because they were largely irresponsible. Nothing changed them but the resolution of the citizens to have strong and pure administrators. Canada can get them if she will. It is because of the general awakening over the value of municipal ownership that our monopoly holders are struggling so violently and recklessly to maintain and strengthen their hold on our public services. That they are doing so marks the beginning of the end.

A NATION OF SKATERS

The article in The London Times, announcing the appointment of Earl Grey as Governor-General of Canada, contains this truly remarkable passage: "It may be added without indiscretion that no small part of Lord Grey's popularity is due to his wife, Lady Grey's sister, who early won the hearts of the Canadians by her beauty and her admiration for the beauty of her skating. Whether the new Governor-General is a skater or not we cannot say; but it is easy to understand that a nation of skaters, like the Canadians, thinks all the better of its chiefs for possessing the art of skating."

We cheerfully acquit our eminent contemporary of indiscretion, and its compliment to Lady Minto is well deserved. But the notion that Canadians are eager to discover whether their rulers can skate and are exempted when they discover that they can do the Dutch roll or the figure eight is new to us. Perhaps the dark secret of Lord Dundonald's dismissal is that he could not skate so as to meet the approval of Mr. Fisher. There is a fine old precedent for such action.

When good King Arthur ruled this land, He was a goodly king, And three sons out of four he turned out of the door, Because they could not sing. "It may be added without indiscretion" that some of our political chiefs have a sincere admiration for clean skaters.

EDUCATION FOR EFFICIENCY

President Eliot of Harvard has written for The Brooklyn Eagle an article on education for efficiency, by which he means effective power for work and service during a healthy and active life. The child should be trained in a large variety of mental processes and established in useful mental habits, the acquisition of information being incidental. Continued education will add to the child's knowledge, and will gradually increase stores of information. President Eliot thinks children should study the elements of a considerable number of subjects, such as language, mathematics, history, natural science, sanitation and economics, not so much to acquire information as to sample several kinds of knowledge, initiate appropriate processes and habits, and make a proper choice of lines for future work.

He dwells first on the training of the body senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste, and points out how important this training is to surgeons as well as to mechanics. In regard to the training of the body, he makes the remarkable statement that the only cases of hopeless ruin he has known are those in which the body has been ruined by drink or other vice, or by neglect. So long as the body is sound there is hope.

On the subject of training for attention he says that prolonged attention should not be expected from children, but there should be quick and concentrated attention for brief periods. If one subject does not fix the attention another should be tried; if books or oral instruction will not attain the end, mechanical work should be used.

The difference between adults in mental efficiency is chiefly a difference in this very power of concentration. The man who has this power will grasp quickly the subjects presented to him, gratify people who have business with him by giving them prompt and effective attention, seize eagerly upon the contents of books or papers which relate to his affairs in hand, and despatch his daily work, whatever its nature—mechanical, commercial, scholarly or divine. He will do in one minute the work which an inferior man will need five minutes or five hours. He will effect in every day of his life a great economy of time.

He will do no dawdling or vague dreaming in the action of his mind. His thoughts will not be a rope of sand, but a chain of welded links. The great thinkers and doers, philosophers and inventors, soldiers and rulers

are alike in possessing in the highest degree this power of concentrated attention; and in comparison with men and women this is the most valuable of all mental faculties.

In this connection he points out the danger of the habit of reading newspapers, magazines, etc., rather than books. It is simply a mental distraction. Coaching manuals in school have a similar bad effect. "The efficient man is the man who thinks for himself and is capable of thinking hard and long."

Other matters referred to in the paper are the training of the taste for beauty, the love of truth, and the cultivation of enthusiasm or devotion to an ideal. It may be said that this is a rather large order for the ordinary teacher, who, who well-trained and faithful, may not be an Elliot. But there can be no doubt of the truth and value of what he says about the power of attention. Dawdling and listlessness are the most fatal defects of education, and the surest to lead to failure in after life.

IS THE HERALD IN EARNEST?

The Hamilton Herald the other day proposed as a desirable solution of the street railway difficulty that the city take back the franchise and operate the road as a municipal concern. Here are its words: "As the company is losing money and the operation of the street railway, and is weary of the present arrangement, it is proposed that the city take back the franchise and operate the road as a municipal concern. The company would then be a public utility, and would be freed from the financial and other obligations of a private corporation. The city would then be free to operate the street railway as a public work for the benefit of the citizens. It seems to us that the citizens should welcome such a solution of the problem. If its losses are so serious, the company would then be a public utility, and would be freed from the financial and other obligations of a private corporation. 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