

It might be admitted that there are too many who place their own selfish aggrandizement over the consideration of the public good. But if this pagan indictment is true, then Canada is slipping rapidly into an oblivious perdition, if she has not already arrived at that uncoveted and over-populated goal.

But, frankly, we are not quite convinced that this is the case. In fact, there are many indications to warrant other conclusions. It is, alas, too true that the politics of the world are given over to the mere matter of selfish aggrandizement by people whose commercial interests are their politics, and whose politics are their commercial interests. Such people are the ever-present (human) examples of the apotheosis of the acquisitive instinct—a species of insanity when made the main business of life and the fundamental motive of human endeavor. This instinct never can be the basis of rational politics, nor can it furnish material for an adequate foundation of a lasting state. Men in both parties recognize this, and act on this: that a conglomeration of acquisitive instincts without a principle which has crystalized into a sentiment—a national sentiment, if you please, and a national sentiment on which men vote—cannot furnish the materials out of which great states are made.

The situation which makes possible such a statement as we have quoted places the index upon the weak place in the armour of democracy; this fact, that our politics are based so largely upon interests and not principles. Yet with all this, people have been known to die for a national sentiment without hope of pecuniary reward.

Is it possible that they will no longer vote for it?

Towards this point is written a paragraph in Canadian *Collier's* on "More Faults Like These Needed":

The former Minister of Labor, Mr. Mackenzie King, announces his intention of remaining in politics for some years to come. He also announces that there are several large problems of the Empire and of Canada which he intends to study. Mackenzie King's critics hold two things against him—his youth and his way of looking at public questions from a professor's point of view. Youth, alas, he will soon overcome, but the student habit we hope he will never survive. As he was a college lecturer before he was a Cabinet Minister, the chances are that the love of learning will persist. It is as strange as it is becoming to hear a young Canadian solemnly devote his life to the public service and state at the same time that he is going to train himself for it by study. Most of our politicians cut the studying out. They will cross the bridge when they come to it, so they say. They hope they have enough common-sense to pull them through. They are practical men, and what they want is to get down to brass tacks and leave the theorizing to the doctrinaires and visionaries. All of which means that they are content to be lazy and ignorant and let somebody else do their thinking. Doctrinaire! Visionary! These are names to be proud of. A doctrinaire is usually a man who is concerned for abstract right as against concrete wrong. A visionary is a man who has imagination. The Government which wholly disregards abstract right is salt without meat; the Government which has no imagination is meat without salt. Mackenzie King is young; he is a doctrinaire; he is a visionary; he is an altruist. With all these faults we can love him still. Politics is worth just as much studying now as when Aristotle wrote a book about it.