

I have described the Chairman as "speaking for the Commission." The report, or memorandum, or whatever you like to call it, was drawn up by Sir Jas. Lougheed himself and another Commissioner; but they were evidently assured that they voiced the opinions of the Commission as a whole; all the wording of the document shows that. I have heard of one member who did not wholly agree. It is possible, however, that he was not opposed to the drastic recommendations made, but only to the announcement that if these were not agreed to in advance by the Government the Commission would go on permanent strike.

There was some fear that objection might be raised in certain quarters to "the policy of appointing Commissions" as "an invasion of the right of Ministerial responsibility to Parliament."

To meet this, in a postscript or supplement to the report a slightly modified alternative plan was suggested, under which "legislative authority might be given for the appointment of a Commissioner or Commissioners, for a period of say ten years, irrespective of the Civil Service Act, to be attached to such Department or Departments as might be "designated." But as the original proposal required the constitution of each Commission to be defined by Act of Parliament, the anticipated objection would have had little foundation. The postscript added that "the machinery of the Department to which they are attached should be so adapted and adjusted as not only to facilitate but to be specially applicable in the carrying out of their duties." It was further suggested that the Commissioners should together constitute an advisory committee, under the Presidency of a Minister named by the Prime Minister.

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Last scene but one. Infanticide.

What hope Sir James Lougheed cherished that his colleagues would seize this opportunity to carry out a great and beneficent national reform, I cannot say. Not much, I imagine. At any rate, to avoid the risk of its formal rejection by a Government of which he was a member, he did not formally "present the Commission's report."

Nevertheless, at that fateful meeting of the Cabinet his colleagues were made aware that this was what the Commission's report would be. "They all with one consent began to make excuse." There was one big excuse ready to hand. The way was enough to occupy them, without a great scheme of reform and reorganization,—though it was this very war that made the need of reform and reorganization most apparent and most urgent. And, as the sequel shows, nothing more has been heard of the reform since the war ended.

Not one of the Ministers concerned would offer to make the sacrifice which their colleague at the head of the Commission solemnly declared to be imperative if the country was to exchange stagnation for progress. "Nothing doing!" The infant report, first child of the great Commission and grand-child of the Government, was strangled by its own grandmother before it could be born.

Last scene of all. Suicide.

The Chairman of the Economic and Development Commission, seeing the hopeful fruit of all its labor fall still-born, fulfilled his threat, and allowed the Commission to drop silently into the grave which its parent had dug for its burial.

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But the day of resurrection may be nearer than we think. You and your fellow Ministers are able, if you dare, to give the country a reform which every day more urgently demands.

I do not blink the obstacles in your way. Many of the political eminences who sit around you in that room, and possibly most of them, think their personal interest and ambition can best be served by clinging to the obsolete system; some of them may sincerely imagine that the system is best for the country as well as for themselves. Those who fear the change hope the public can be reckoned on to stay asleep under the chloroform of custom. We have endured this thing from the blind force of habit, having never known freedom from its oppressive weight. But when Ministers are disposed to flatter themselves that the public is a stupid mule, they should remember the mule is apt to shoot out a sudden and a wicked hoof.

If, without waiting for the coming kick, you give us a system of management on speaking terms with commonsense, no true Conservative surely will grudge you the credit of a step which is equally required to conserve and to liberalize our institutions. We want no dictatorship here; but if you allow us no alternative except creeping paralysis and progressive anaemia, there is no saying in what form of explosion the over-strained patience of the country may suddenly break out.

Obstruction, by opposing construction, always provokes destruction. If the reasonable demands for reform are resisted, they will certainly grow till they are irresistible and perhaps also unreasonable, so that we shall have to sacrifice not only what is indefensible and obsolete but much that is really of value in our political system.

Yours sincerely,

HOWARD ANGUS KENNEDY,

MEDICINE MAN RULE.

A Progressive Government but not a Government of Progressives is the ideal suggested by Mr. Kennedy in the letter published below—the last of a series telling the story of a suppressed revolt to appear in this paper. Beyond all question, he thinks, is the urgent need to develop the natural resources of the country and cultivate the uncultivated land. Other constructive suggestions are made too which are equally sound and equally practicable. There can be no doubt that the country has been relying very largely upon the sale of raw materials and as the writer points out such a system is bound to operate against Canadian industry and Canadian workmen.

The letters which we have already published form a serious indictment against the present system and the present Government. Fittingly, the last letter of the series is constructive. Mr. Kennedy is good at demolition work, but he is better still at building up.

His last letter is as follows:—

Dear Prime Minister: You were not responsible for the tragic disappearance of the Commission which I have described; but you and your colleagues are responsible for what has been done and left undone in the past two years under the Medicine-Man system of government which the Commission found guilty of our worst national troubles.

I call your attention to a sample of the working of this egregious system since you became Chief Medicine-Man.

If in some spasm of self-mistrust, some sudden insurgence of common sense, you had asked any competent and unbiassed judge for his opinion as to the country's greatest need and the best way of meeting it, he would have had to say something like this:—

"Beyond all question, your most urgent need is to unearth your hidden wealth, to develop your enormous undeveloped resources, of which your uncultivated or half-cultivated land is the greatest part. Your first business, then, is plainly to get population, people able and willing to do that work.

"You have to devise new plans of settlement, of land-holding or land arrangement, of agricultural production and agricultural commerce,—yes, and agricultural manufacture, so that you will no longer depend almost wholly on the sale of raw material. Every possible avenue must be explored, every resource of human ingenuity taxed to the utmost, brushing aside all obstructive traditions and conventions, to get and keep a large and permanent because successful and contented body of people doing this vital work. Not until you have thoroughly tested every plan with one glimmer of hope in it, will you be entitled to say that the thing cannot be done.

"Any business organization, with such an object as this, would take the steps I have described as a matter of course.

"You Ministers, unfortunately, are anything but a business organization. You are party chieftains.

"If the system of management carried on by you and your colleagues, as by other Cabinets before you, gives no hope of the required transformation from loss to profit, so much the worse for the system.

"A system of government by party chieftains, if it can be justified at all, is only justifiable in proportion as they confine their activities within narrow limits. Ability in speech-making and private strategy, which enable them to win a party fight, may help them also in governing, in the old narrow sense of the word. What you call government now, however, has gone far beyond that. It involves great business enterprises, which demand abilities of a totally different kind.

"No one in his senses to-day, if called on to devise a system of management for national business undertakings, would dream of allowing management by partisan chiefs elected for all sorts of reasons totally apart from their fitness or unfitness for such a task.