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What's the Matter, What Is the Cure?

(Continued from 6th page.)

sider that men sent to govern us must necessarily be superior to our own men. Those sent before responsible government was granted to it were a mixed lot, and if the old system were restored we would be up to the high standard of our present Governor or late investigator.

We have here amongst us as good men as any who are sent to us, but "a prophet is without honour in his own country," and we are so much in the habit of considering and admiring selected men who are sent to us that we fail to justly consider the good men and true in our midst. Unless real information of the spirit of our people takes place the best work of Governors would soon create a revolutionary spirit here. He would be hated for the good he did. The cure must come from within. "Physician cure thyself." "There is no other fundamental motive in our economic life," says Professor Leacock, "than that each stands for himself to work out his own salvation or damnation." That is as true of a country as of a man.

UPLIFT BY EDUCATION—It is often said that uplift in public life can only be expected to take place when people are better educated, meaning "better educated in the public schools." My experience does not lead me to expect the desired improvement to come from that source alone chiefly or quickly. School teaching does not fit pupils for life, but only helps them to be fitted; their real education must take place out of school. Many people not trained in school are yet highly intelligent, and many become well educated in the true sense in the school of every day life. We have to look elsewhere than to the public schools for such improvement in public affairs.

Ex-Prime Minister Baldwin recently said that when a boy, his two most helpful friends were a shepherd who could neither read nor write but was more intelligent than many who could, and a workman, who had risen by hard work and that from both he had learned instructively and unconsciously that a man is a gentleman by what comes from within. Amongst the best men I have known in this Colony I number some who, like Baldwin's friends, could neither read nor write, yet were intelligent and good. It's a mistake to measure men's intelligence or morality by their ability to read and write. "A little learning is a dangerous thing." Our people were, perhaps, better citizens when they read less. Many of them have been bedevilled by what they have read in recent years.

To get far into real permanent clean up of politics, education in its fundamental principles, including the moral obligation of each individual citizen, must be hammered into the people; they must come to the entire business in a clean way. Present ten-

dencies could easily be checked if our inarticulate so-called good citizens — home-loving, country-loving, law-abiding, church-going people—who do not vote, or who, if they do, vote for the setup that the machine provides for them, could get it into their heads that protected vice, bootlegging, dope selling, banditry and too high taxes can exist only with their tacit consent. It they would take as much interest in their taxes as they do in the price of fish; feel as concerned over throwing incompetents out of public office as they do over throwing out bad fish; fight as hard to protect their income against foolish expenditures as they do against foolish private ones, there would be "something doing" along the rivers, estuaries, bays, branches and coves of the Colony.

The instructions needed by our people can be given now by the right people in the right way. The Clergy should give it! The teachers should give it! The merchants should give it! Especially the women agitators for the right to vote should give it. It should be given by voice and pen, in the pulpit and the press, on the public platform, and by circular letter. Carefully written non-partisan literature should be widely circulated in the Colony for the instruction of the people in public matters.

The general enlightenment of the working people regarding world conditions is a task that should be immediately undertaken. To leave the great majority of them in their present state of ignorance, to become the hapless victims of economic forces they but dimly apprehend, is sheer criminal folly, the final consequences of which I trust we shall never be called upon to witness.

I am confident that the women of this Colony are as capable as the men of voting wisely, but not more so, and we males must admit that the incapacity in that respect is very general amongst our sex. I venture to suggest to the public spirited women who are struggling for female franchise that they would confer a tremendous boon upon the Colony if they would throw themselves wholeheartedly and enthusiastically into a non-partisan campaign designed to create in all the people, irrespective of sex, a keener sense of the duty of voting intelligently and honestly for the good of the Colony, and greater qualifications to do so.

"The principles enunciated by Christ," says the Rev. Mr. Bishop "must be applied to human conditions not so much as a personal matter, but as a means of influencing human life." "We must turn to Christ for the solution of the world's problems," says Father Barman. "A rediscovery of Jesus Christ," says Bishop Brent, "is the one solution of the manifold trouble and tragedy of human life." "Men whose needs are sympathetically cared for by a church that has the mind of Christ have little desire to listen to Red oratory or upset the

existing social order," says Canon Vernon. Paraphrasing all this and stating it in a layman's words it seems to amount to this: that if men are good, the government will be good, and that to care existing evils a new reformation should be preached. Is the Church doing its whole duty in our midst in this respect, I would respectfully ask. Where is now the reforming zeal in social matters it exhibited not so long ago? Does it thunder now as of old against graft, theft and other forms of dishonesty? Has the spirit of worldliness entered into it and the doctrine of expediency smothered its activities. It may be that to reform the people, we shall have to begin by reforming the Clergy. Canon Earp gave voice to a clarion call last Sunday night. If his example is strongly followed, reform will not be long delayed.

REFORMATION FROM WITHIN—Whether the low standard of public life is due to politicians or people! whether the former, who should be raising up the people to higher standards, have corrupted them, or have been corrupted; it is plain that reformation can only come from the people themselves, and that is within their reach. If the public will demand reform, it will come right speedily. If the public will support no other, capable men will offer for the honor of representing them. When the people demand ability, experience, good character, energy, education of the right sort in candidates, and show that they will vote for no other; when the people put aside prejudice, sectarianism, localism, and all mere class interests, indicating their determination to vote only for candidates who give evidence of capability and desire to serve the whole country, it will be an honour to be elected to the Assembly, and a great duty to serve the country. It is not so today. Too often the qualified are rejected, and the incompetent elected, for reasons wholly discreditable to the intelligence of the electorate.

By what right do the people expect better government and better legislation than they have, from the men whom they have elected to represent them? It is all too true that in a majority of cases the elected have been known to the electors in advance to be wholly unfit for the work they were chosen to do. For every work the electors wish done for them, except the greatest work of all (the making of good laws and the conduct of good government), the men chosen are selected for the promise of fitness given by their experience and capability; but representatives, so-called, are chosen very frequently for reasons wholly discreditable to the intelligence of the electors.

WHAT SHALL WE DO—I am not fond of theorizing, nor do I make much use of mere generalities. I like, as the Yankees say, to "get down to brass tacks", and, therefore, I wish to prescribe for the treatment of the patient now under observation—this community of Newfoundland, and to say at once that if I could, I would resort to a surgical operation, and use the knife to cut to the bone. Doing things without deliberation has been greatly injurious in recent times to this Colony, but not doing things about which there has been much talking has been a prevalent vice as well. Search the debates in the Legislature, and the utterances of the press during the last forty years, compare with them the statute books of these years, and realize how lavish talk has been and how scanty the performance. The time is ripe for doing things!

EXPENDITURE MUST BE REDUCED—The ease with which this Colony has been able to borrow money has been in recent years one element in her undoing. Her debt would be less, her Customs tariff lower, and the burden of living lighter for her people if the \$12,000,000 borrowed and wasted in the past four years had not been loaned to her. Ability to borrow money for current expenses is a trap for the unwary.

Of late there has been a justifiable demand by the public for a reduction of the Customs tariff, as essential to the continuance of the fishery, but how can the tariff be lowered prudently without a preceding reduction of public expenditure, if expenditure exceeds revenue, and there is a deficit to be met by borrowing. And if there has been any general demand for reduced expenditure, it has not been loud enough to impress our government, and at best it has been pointless. Reduce, economize! The public will say "Amen" to the proposition, but where and how shall the reduction be made? Who answers that question?

REDUCE MINISTERS—It should begin at the top. The Premier, as such, is paid \$4,000 per year, \$4,000 as Minister of Justice, and \$1,000 as Member of the Assembly, his travelling expenses are heavy, and paying others to do his work here in his absence is an additional heavy cost. Six other Ministers are each receiving a salary of four thousand dollars (\$4,000) per year, and one thousand dollars (\$1,000) as Members. Re-organize the departments. There should be four only, instead of seven—Justice, Finance, Interior and Colonial Secretary. "Fisheries" should be combined with Finance. "Agriculture, as a department of the Interior, and "Posts and Telegraphs" with the Colonial Secretary. A decrease in expenditure, and increase in effectiveness would re-

sult. There would be fewer "pawns" in the Legislature. It would be difficult to procure even four really qualified Ministers, the greater number is impossible. As to the Executive Council (the Government, as it is called) reduce its membership, now nine, and call able men to it than it has been composed of in recent years. You cannot recall the names of Kent, Little, Hoyles, Carter, Whiteway, Shea, Winter and others who once had place in our governments without realizing the decline in personnel which has taken place. The affairs of the days when they governed were small, comparatively, but the men were large, and to occupy a seat at the Council Board was a great distinction. It is almost literally true that nowadays members of Executive Councils are third rate in ability inexperienced and without general fitness for the great places they occupy. Affairs of state ought to be confided to our ablest men, and to these alone.

The members of the Assembly receive \$1,000 per session. No session should last longer than six weeks, and no member should be paid more than \$500 per session. In the old days, members did not receive pay, but "indemnity"; not remuneration for work, but for incidental expenses. As to the Legislative Council, weed out its unfit members, and appoint good men and true in their places, abolish the pay of its members altogether, and expect them to serve their country for the honour and the glory of the service. It should be composed, in truth, of elder statesmen, not party hacks or pensioners, and their will should be given liberty to function. There is work to be done by the able and experienced and the Colony is the poorer while they are silenced.

Members of the Assembly in the Government itself, or in its pay, are in a majority, and simply register the prior decision of the Government, and hence are worse than useless; they are a "smoke screen" which hides the naked truth. When members were chosen to a position of real honour and independence, they considered service a duty for the public good—they were elected to help make wise laws. An Assembly whose majority is in Government pay is not the independent body the fathers of representative and responsible government in this Colony agitated for and established. Its essence was weakened when "Carter's Purse" was relaxed, and deterioration has rapidly progressed. That Act strictly limited to a small proportion the numbers of the members of the Assembly who could be in the Government, or in its pay, and it helped to preserve the independence of members. Restore it to full force and make it unlawful for members of the Assembly, other than a limited number of Ministers, to receive pay or emoluments from the public, directly or indirectly.

THE CIVIL SERVICE—Reform the inside and outside public service. Some public office-holders are underpaid and overworked; some would honor any country, and their country is dishonored by underpaying them. A great saving in expense, and a great increase in quality and quantity of work, could be brought about by reform. Every branch of the public service is today cluttered up by the unnecessary and the unfit, and the public service is being incapacitated by performed or grossly neglected. The loss of public money by overexpenditure and under collection, by reason of the incapacity of public servants, is enormous. Recent revelations have shown that the system of overtime bonuses and special allowances have disorganized the inside service. Officials of all grades have received increased pay in direct breach of the statute law. The allowance of overtime payments has been an inducement to neglect work in regular hours, in going to create a basis for demanding bonuses. It should be made a crime to receive or to pay official salaries not previously voted by the Legislature. If early hours were insisted on and steady work, there would be little need of overtime. If the staff of any office cannot perform its ordinary tasks in working hours, the staff should be increased. All, of

course, should be adequately paid. But overtime should be an offense, ordinarily, and payment by bonus a crime. Magistrates, Customs Officers, Postmasters, Telegraph Operators are so numerous in some outposts that they jostle each other in going to and from their offices. In a majority of cases, one man could do the work of four, and do it much better than it is done at present, for half the cost. The Government Telegraph service, for instance, if united with the railway and postal services, could be much more efficiently conducted than at present, for less than half the present enormous loss upon it. Take the Coastal Steam Service for another illustration. It should be wholly under the railway management, and its cost should not be more than one-third as much as now.

PATRONAGE—Have you ever considered the waste in the upkeep of public institutions by the patronage system rampant here. Take, for illustration the purchase of supplies for hospitals, asylums, sanatoriums, gaols, lighthouses, and all public departments, without tender, and without competition. To contemplate the waste is amazing. Your attention has, however, been drawn to it by recent evidence. Under a proper system of purchase, the cost of unknown quantities would be reduced one-half. The other half is really "graft," call it what else you like, or it is paid for party support. The greatest harm it does is not the mere loss it represents, but the rottenness it creates amongst the patronized. It is the cause of much of the "pussy-footing" on public questions which is so marked as characteristic amongst these citizens from whom we naturally expect more independent thinking and speaking. It is amazing how this evil influence has permeated society, and how much it has done to create the loss of public morals we all deplore. One can more readily forgive the ordinary vot-

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Mr. R. R. Wood, B.A., Headmaster Bishop Feild College

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THE JUDGES' DECISION WILL BE FINAL.

or for his lack of independence than the man of substance whose influence is bought by public patronage.

REFORM GENERALLY.—The economic reforms indicated in the make-up of legislature and government, and in the civil service with the destruction of the patronage system, would lead to reduced expenditure in directions to which I need not

now call your particular attention. Reductions could not be all made at once, but would have to be worked out, and could be worked out by a determined government, and by no other. I concur in the opinion expressed to me within a few days, by one familiar with the subject, that a reduction of \$2,000,000 in annual expenditure is possible, if courage, ten-

acity, unwavering determination be shown by a government animated by no other motive than the good of the Colony. If the people want reduced taxation, there is no road to it except through reduced expenditure, and this they can bring about by putting able and determined men in power, and in no other way. Reform (Continued on 8th page.)

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