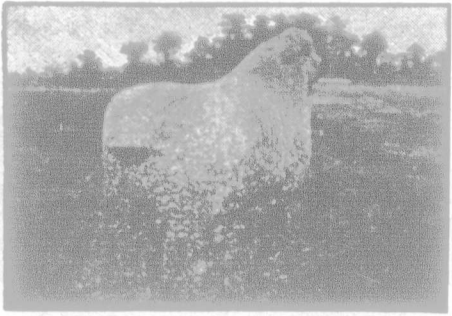


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BY E. K. MARSHALL, M.A.

After the accumulated experience of several hundred years in public life and the resulting traditions of office, Britain has established a code of ethics which, lived up to, as it commonly is, lifts the British statesman above all suspicion of using his official position, influence and power to increase his private fortune or the fortune of his friends. We all remember the controversy that centered around Lord Reading a number of years ago, and it showed at once how easy it is for one not trained to official life to misunderstand, underestimate or neglect the official standards which trained public servants accept as matters of fact, and how very responsive was British sentiment on this score.

It may be that there is as much common morality and obedience to the ten commandments found among our Canadian officials as is to be found in the Old Land, but there are certain rules of conduct which go with official position not always clearly evident to the newly fledged legislator, who assumes the responsibility of carrying out the program desired by the electorate. In time, I suppose, we shall attain to this high standard of official integrity and efficiency and thus avoid the scandals and blunders which have too frequently occurred in Canadian public affairs.

The past few years have witnessed a rather remarkable awakening of public opinion in Canada as to public and political morality. This power has been slowly growing and accumulating and is now given utterance in various ways but always with one common note. Through the press, from the platform, at the sacred desk and in our legislatures the Canadian people are calling a halt to official rascality and carelessness and are demanding that public men consider their positions seriously as public trusts and are insisting that these duties be discharged with the welfare of the country only in view.

The revelations of the past six years, say, of conditions existing in our midst from the east to the west, fill our hearts with sorrow and dismay, and the recurrence of abuses in the commercial and industrial world almost overwhelms us; but there is something in it all for which those really interested in the good of our land are devoutly thankful and this is the unmistakable solidarity of public sentiment, standing for righteousness in high places, demanding the summary dismissal of public servants found guilty of either abuse of trust or gross carelessness in administration, and the discarding of the old political encampments around which had collected so many of the cormorants and jackals of political life.

Just now it would appear that the press and people generally are in advance of our political leaders. Whilst we have some officials who are exceptions to this generalization, too sweeping perhaps, there is nevertheless a sad paucity in leaders of trusted worth and experience. This is true of both federal parties. Many of them still cling to the old regime and refuse to read the signs of the times. This attitude, if continued, can have but one result—public opinion will become so set and determined that their political death and oblivion is sure and certain. In many of our provincial legislatures and local organizations, there is, however, developing groups of young leaders from which excellent federal cabinet material could be obtained. These men have been "discovered" amidst the political and industrial turmoils that have been taking place east and west during the past few years. Whenever the people have had an opportunity to declare their desires they have expressed themselves with a distinctness which none but the crassest party healers can misunderstand.

The Dominion parliament will be dissolved one of these days and an appeal made to the country. No doubt this will be one of the most important and hardest-fought elections Canada has seen for a long time. There are so many uncertain and conflicting elements which may enter into this contest for a time everything will be "in the air," so to speak, and the issues will purposely be confused. Is public opinion ready for real house-cleaning? There is not the slightest doubt that for a long time official position has been used at Ottawa, not for the people's, but for personal and corporation interests; the welfare of the ordinary home has been a secondary matter every time. The process of solidifying public opinion may



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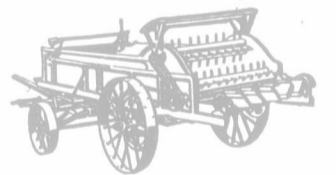
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