

MEDICINE MAN RULE.

The Story Of a Suppressed Revolt.

We publish below the second letter of a series written to the Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King by H. A. Kennedy. The letters are being published in this paper simultaneously with their despatch to the Prime Minister:

Dear Prime Minister,—If I compare you to a mountain, believe me, I mean no personal offence; but when you laboriously produce, after two years of gestation, your great scheme of Civil Service economy, you irresistibly remind us of the mountain which gave birth to a ridiculous mouse. This offspring of yours, however, turns out to be only a flea. A languid and pathetic flea, at that. Can it even jump? If it beats Mark Twain's loaded frog by an inch, we shall be agreeably surprised.

It was a great evil that the Commission appointed by the Borden Cabinet found blocking the country's progress. That evil, the control and management of the country's business departments by politicians, is no less grave to-day. It cries to heaven for abolition.

The evil you have chosen to attack is a comparatively small one.

The Civil Service assuredly needs reform; but the fundamental reform it needs is emancipation from the unnatural and paralyzing control of political management.

To smoke the drones out of the official hive is good. Go ahead and do it, if you can. Go further while you are about it. Cut out a lot of the useless red-tape and routine that keeps men apparently "busy" when they are only scratching paper and wasting the national resources of pulpwood. Go further still. Stop over-lapping, and not merely between different departments and branches of the same Department,—negotiate with the nine other Governments of this mightily over-governed country to stop over-lapping between your officials and theirs, and between the Provinces themselves.

No one will welcome this true Civil Service reform more than the extremely able and hard-working civil servants on whose reputation an undeserved slur is cast by their indifferent and superfluous colleagues.

But the dollars and cents you will save by it, what will they amount to? Put it at \$2,000,000, or even suppose you double that figure, by carrying out the whole programme. The actual relief this will give your fellow-countrymen in a year will be about fifty cents a head, or four cents per month.

The action you propose is merely negative, and the gain is piffling. Give us action that is positive, constructive, re-constructive, and the gain will be tremendous.

Knock off that \$4,000,000 from our expenditure, and we shall still be staggering under the burden of the remaining hundreds of millions, because it is chiefly unremunerative. Make our expenditure pay, or that large part of it which can be made to, and we shall carry it smiling; it will be no longer a burden, but a benefit.

Give Us What We Pay For.

You remember Mr. Micawber? You must often think of him, for your life is spent in a constant hope that "something will turn up," as his was. You will remember also his invaluable discovery that an expenditure of \$5 with an income of \$4.90 is misery, while the same expenditure with an income of \$5.10 is happiness.

In a business with a gross income of, say, \$200,000 a year, a yearly expenditure of \$250,000 means death. With an income of \$300,000, the same expenditure is quite consistent with healthy and prosperous life.

If you give us the service we need, a capable, zealous and businesslike as well as economical service which adds to the country's wealth, by increasing its population and developing its resources, for example,—we shall be taking in with one hand far more than we are paying out with the other.

"We must pay only for the service we get." That is the gist of your proposal to squeeze out superfluous officials. It is good as far as it goes, but it leaves us cold.

"We must get the service we pay for." Say that, give us that, and we shall bless you.

The most we can possibly gain by reducing the cost of our national staff to the value of the work now done by that staff, is a mere nothing compared to the enormous profit obtainable by raising the value of the work done to the point of meeting the country's urgent needs. It is not within a thousand miles of that point yet.

Your sudden outburst of zeal against the superfluous official may not be a mere dust cloud raised to shield the grosser abuse of political management in business, but it looks like one. It may not be a red herring drawn across the trail of bigger game, but it smells like one.

The investigators appointed by the Federal Government during the war refused to be diverted by any red herring. They got on the trail and stuck to it. They traced the disease of national stagnation to its source. It was because they discovered this source in the management of our business departments by political ministers that they were quietly snuffed out of existence, leaving no trace.

Their Chairman's exposure of the cause of our national stagnation was a brave and patriotic act. Had he been brave enough to call his Commissioners together and appeal from the Government to the people, defying suppression and exposing their discovery to the judgment of their fellow-citizens, the history of our country in the last few years might have been very different.

Once the people clearly understand the working and effect of "Medicine-Man Government," as mercilessly exposed by the responsible leader of that investigation,—then politicians of every shade, with their finger on the public pulse, may soon be found vying with each other to introduce the great changes in our system of government declared to be necessary by the head of a highly conservative Government Commission.

Those drastic changes, and some of the disquieting facts which proved their necessity, must now be made known.

Yours sincerely,

HOWARD ANGUS KENNEDY.

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The following letter forms the third of a series written by H. A. Kennedy to the Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King. The letters are being published in this paper coincident with their despatch to the Prime Minister:

Dear Prime Minister,—The investigating Commission which came to a sudden and mysterious end in 1916 was appointed to find a remedy for grave national defects which were keeping down production and checking prosperity. Those defects are exactly what we are suffering from to-day, though it is eight years since that Commission's Chairman pointed the way to their remedy.

It was on the 28th of June, 1915, that your predecessor, Sir Robert Borden, called his Cabinet together and demanded the appointment of such a Commission.

Chiefly, and briefly, the defects to which he called attention included the lack of rural population; the drift from country to town; the inadequate profits of agriculture; the need of improved methods of production, of co-operation among producers, and of converting our raw material by manufacture before export.

Though obviously immigration was just then out of the question, Sir Robert saw that we should be prepared with "a vigorous and effective policy" to be put in force when the war ended, to attract immigration "of a type which would aid in insuring a large and permanent agricultural population."

The Prime Minister proposed, and the Cabinet agreed, that "careful and exhaustive inquiry" into these and kindred matters should be made by a Commission. Owing to Sir Robert's journey to England, the next step was delayed; but finally on October 19 the Cabinet appointed one of their own number, Senator Lougheed, to be Chairman of the Commission, and gave him eight colleagues—J. W. Flavelle, Toronto; W. Farrell, Vancouver; J. B. Rolland, Montreal; E. N. Hopkins, formerly of Moose Jaw; Senator W. B. Ross, Middleton, N.S.; Dr. J. G. Rutherford, Calgary; W. Smith, M.P., Columbus, Ont.; and J. G. Watters, Ottawa. Mr. Flavelle's place was afterwards taken by W. M. Dobell, of Quebec.

As at least eight of the nine were Conservatives, it was plain that such a Commission would make no recommendations of an unconstitutional or revolutionary nature.

The inquiry began hopefully. By means of a small but practical and experienced staff, a great quantity of valuable information was collected and classified.

Two only, of the hundreds of significant facts unearthed by the Commission, may be mentioned here.