

Who Will Discover Them?
A TRECHANT LETTER ON PRESENT CONDITIONS.

Editor Evening Telegram—
Dear Sir—Sir Robert Bond in his reply to the public request for advice on the grave situation before us makes use of some splendid language and advises us to find honest men, and that the means to get such into politics is the ballot. This even from Sir Robert is hopeless, helpless advice. The urgent need for honest men in politics I emphatically agree with and hope that some one could in unmistakable language point out to us how to apply the ballot to bring results known by the term remedial. What

we have done in this country by that privilege is make history blacker as we go, and I now bring into print a personal subconscious suggestion of at least ten years growth that in getting results to materialise by the ballot, we are as helplessly helpless as a blind foot battling dry fog.
THE HONEST MAN.
I would say right here: Not even in distant and private mental conception am I qualified to converse, much less criticise the highly gifted Sir Robert, but I know little of the ways of the present age of intrigue and far less of the vacillating tendencies of human nature if I failed to convince myself that the true interpretation of a man's political qualifications are not to be found outside of actual participation therein. The great quest-

ion is then: how can we know if a prospective candidate is honest or not. Shall we judge by the promises? Can we judge a man because he is honest in his own business? No, we cannot judge by either, especially by promises. We have had promises without number, simple promises, promises without swearing, and promises backed by it. In fact politicians to-day think they must (literally) swear to promises to become conspicuous. If he swears too loudly and frequently he becomes suspicious. If he promises and swears too lightly he is half-hearted and of no use. And we have tried them all.—The government of merchants and found out (or thought so), that they used their positions to grind us down to where we grew splenetic and called them graballs, and ourselves underdogs. The government

of mixed interests in business, also Coalition and National, were tried and made matters worse. To remedy matters by ballot we went further and elected another mixture of fishermen, farmers and diplomats. Now we stand with our feet in the financial glue-pot, and denounce first the fisherman on the grounds of illiteracy and the inborn tendency to emulate the proverbial beggar on horseback. The farmer on his lack of knowledge of the needs of our staple industry. The fool for over-presumption, and the diplomat, because we now know to a certainty that a diplomat is nothing more or less than one skilled in the art of telling a lie with small chances of being caught on it. Could Sir Robert have told us previous to election who were honest men and who were not? Most certainly not. Seeing that politicians must be tried, before we can judge them, and that four years must pass before we try someone else, we are helplessly helpless; what can we do but wait for our turn, make our fortunes as we go and finally when we all get too rich to work leave Newfoundland to the next crowd.

THE REFERENDUM.

There was a time when the knowledge that in four short years the country could be ruined by misplaced confidence gave us some concern. That thought in Coaker's brain evolved the idea of a referendum. Where is the idea now?—splendid in the morning mist and one that might inspire hope at first sight, but, as the sun of experience rises, the mist disappears and we settle back upon the fact made indelible by circumstances and statutory law that if we have again made a mistake, we must yet endure it for another few years.

REVENGE BY BALLOT.

Now if we have found out (and we certainly have) that a repetition of privileges that sink us deeper in the mire, of what earthly use is it? Honest now! Would we have not been better off if we had discontinued its use many years ago? My idea is, we have given up the hope of ever helping ourselves by the use of the franchise. Whether we believe it or not we now use the ballot for revenge, and politicians wide awake to the times and with full knowledge that they cannot get honest, put themselves free from integrity (how euphonic) and escape from public service fighting a rear-guard battle but with souls soothed by the fact that while they could have held public confidence by honesty, honesty is short-legged on the road to fortune and that they have acquired it by the quicker routes, viz., dishonesty and perverted morality.

WHAT IS WANTED.

With past records to peruse it is only on the brink of despair that the lay mind can turn to thoughts of what is wanted. The thinking powers of the humblest citizen and the weapons of religion, even the promptings of the better nature of politicians have failed to guide them clear of misappropriation and heedless squandering. All our thinking and clamouring have been in vain. We try everything in turn and get from bad to worse. Men of all walks of life with high ideals and economic propensities in their own business have gone into politics and developed themselves into punters. They have become so callous in the gathering of ill-gotten gains that misery and want appeal not to them and one cannot help feeling that the thought of higher ideals is to-day but a mockery and delusion and to talk of what is wanted seems but a sheer waste of time.

THE PEOPLE RULE.

If I wanted to do so the knowledge of my own incompetence sternly forbids me to do more than touch lightly on any remark of Sir Robert's, but I cannot help noticing the tone of finality accompanying his remark that the people rule. That no doubt must be the true interpretation of free politics from such a democrat as he. But what use is there in clinging to democratic truisms when practical democracy ceases to exist? If the people really rule, the people with the power of election in their hands should have used it at least six months ago instead

of accepting, seemingly, a blind fatalism, which has brought us to-day to irretrievable ruin. By blind fatalism, or apathy (choose which you prefer) we have gone, if not from democracy to autocracy, then surely from democracy to oligarchy and the people's voice becomes less and less distant, but this is not without its causes. I have noticed long and regretfully that St. John's alone lays firm claim to the legal use of Vox Populi; but it always fails in getting the support from the outports that its invariably decent procedure demands. This is not due to indifference but because of the feeling that a collective public opinion cannot reach the city until the occasion for each specific demonstration has passed. This should have been remedied years ago. I am positively convinced that it is now too late. The puny effort at reducing taxation will not help us one jot. Now just watch.—

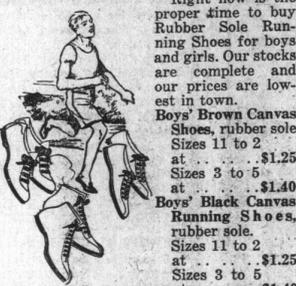
SUGGESTIONS.
Following the unwritten law of concluding critical remarks by offering some remedial suggestions, would have been in order a short while ago, but to-day, adopting a familiar attitude, let me advise you in the most cordial manner: give up your editorial visualizing of desirable attainments and rest your anxious brain. You have, I believe, very conscientiously attacked and fought the besetting evils and menaces to our common cause for the past two years. Eighteen months ago if you remember, you were attacked and charged with a vituperative policy simply

because you spoke truth gleaned from plain facts easily read on the horizon of the (then) future. Now that your accusers, all and sundry have been brought to see it from a position where there is no remedy applicable, except the election, from power of those responsible, rest I say, and if you can enjoy a pipe-dream, let it be the emphatic visualization of a recent play, viz: "The Public be Dammed."
Sincerely Yours,
ISRAEL T. SAMSON.
Flat Island, B.E., June 7, 1922.

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