

since Mr. Borden assumed office that has not been subject to the debauching influence of nearly every form of electoral corruption. Yet not a finger has been lifted to stop the carnival or punish the guilty by the man who declared one of the original planks of his Halifax platform to be "Elections untainted by the corrupting influences of bribery and fraud."

There have been as serious sins of omission. Redistribution has now been withheld for two years. Along similar lines of treachery to public morality has been the manipulation of by-election dates. When in opposition Mr. Borden urged an amendment to the Election Act providing for the compulsory filling of all vacancies in representation within at least three months. The record of Chateauguay, East Middlesex, South Bruce and South Lanark is the measure of this further apostasy. In South Lanark the by-election has been delayed for no less than nine months purely because of party exigencies and party squabbling.

Patronage Evils Increase.

"The appointment of public officials upon consideration of capacity and personal character and not on party service alone" was another of the planks of Mr. Borden's Halifax platform. The Government had not been in office twenty-four hours before the pledge was broken. There has been almost no attempt at fulfilment. "To the Victors belong the Spoils" was substituted for "Civil Service Reform". In every constituency in Canada the fact is recognized that partisan service is the only sure road to appointment or preferment in the civil service. The record of dismissals of Liberal office holders is so voluminous that the administration has not yet been able to present to Parliament a complete list. Hundreds of men, old in the service and of unexceptional reputation, have been summarily dismissed at the bidding of local patronage committees. The mad scramble for the spoils became so scandalous within a few months after the Government was formed that even a staunch Conservative like Sir Edmund Osler publicly expressed his disgust. Appointments on merit! The cynical disregard of the pledge is proven by scores of instances. In Nova Scotia a convicted forger, serving a jail sentence, was given office under the Marine Department, and to right matters he was released from jail by the Justice Department. An immigration inspector was appointed by Mr. Rogers in Manitoba and after his appointment it was discovered that he could neither read nor write. A lands agent in the Peace River district who supplanted a reputable Liberal Government employe had to be recently dismissed for dishonesty and graft. These are but samples. The practice is so wide-spread and the work of the local patronage committees is so generally recognized that amplification is unnecessary.

Two years ago even his bitterest party opponents would hardly have charged that Mr. Borden did not mean a word of his declaration for "honest appropriation of the public money in the public interest" and for "the conservation of the public domain for the benefit of the whole people". In the two years the list of administrative scandals already disclosed has completely belied the fond hope of decent and honest administration.

Dishonest Public Transactions.

The public domain for the people! Witness the Prince Albert Homestead deal. A "homestead" within the city limits of Prince Albert worth at least \$100,000 deliberately alienated for \$10 to a political friend of Hon. Robert Rogers. And at the crack of the party whip the transaction was actually endorsed by the Conservative majority in the House of Commons. A similar instance occurred recently at Gimli, Manitoba. Dominion lands worth at least \$15,000 were privately sold to a party friend for \$700. The publicity given to this deal and the public resentment aroused have however, frightened the spoilers. The final transfer of the lands is being now held up in the Manitoba courts.

Honest appropriations! Mr. Borden said in opposition that at least ten millions of the Liberal Government's annual expenditure was wasteful or dishonest. He has added nearly one hundred millions to that expenditure and has increased the cost of the ordinary administration of the Government by 63 per cent. There is the "prima facie evidence of waste and dishonesty". There are numerous concrete instances. The Postmaster-General provides a conspicuous example. Without calling for public tenders, he gave to a specially formed company of political friends a contract for 350,000 mail bag locks at one dollar apiece—more than twice as many as have been used in the whole history of the Post Office Department. It has not been proven that the locks now in use really are inadequate or defective. It has been shown that if they were defective they could have been made secure by the simple expedient of inserting a small metal disc costing five cents apiece. That transaction Mr. Borden has defended by continuing his trust in Mr. Pelletier.

The site for the new military barracks at Dorval was bought by the Government last year for \$180,000. The owner, Major Rodden of Montreal, had bought it within the year for \$84,996 and a considerable portion of the property he had purchased but sixteen days before it was transferred to the Government. The profit was nearly \$100,000. Is that Mr. Borden's idea of "honest appropriation of the public money in the public interest"?

Hon. J. D. Reid, Minister of Customs, prior to January 31st, 1912, had been heavily interested in the Starch Works at Prescott as director and stockholder. The Company had ceased operations. On the above date the minister formally severed his interest in the Company. Shortly afterwards the Government acquired the plant for \$47,500 to be "used as an extension of the Marine Yards at Prescott!" Was that appropriation in the interest of the public or was it in the interest of Hon. J. D. Reid?

When Mr. Borden talked scandal and graft in his opposition days, he dealt usually in generalities. There were no real pegs on which to hang his charges. The charges of graft in the construction of the National Transcontinental Railway were not substantiated despite years of patient and thorough investigation by the opposition during the Laurier regime. Since then there have been two more years of costly scandal-hunting. And not a scandal to tarnish the reputation of Sir Wilfrid Laurier or of any of his colleagues has been unearthed.