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TORONTO AND ITS CIVIC ADMINISTRATION.

Two years ago, with a good deal of perturbation, the people of Toronto made the experiment of electing as their Chief Magistrate a man who, whatever misgivings found lodgment in the public mind on the score of the hobbies he was known to ride, we knew to be a worthy and well-meaning citizen. He had a large, earnest, and enthusiastic following, and though we feared the temporary reign of fanaticism and the unreasoning precipitance of a zealot, we took the risks and tacitly acquiesced in his election to office. If we did not charge Mr. Howland with the crime of youth and a foolhardy ambition, we at least reproached him with the fact that he had had no Aldermanic experience. Despite this, however, we all felt that the time had come to give trial not only to a new man but to new methods. For a while we looked on with foreboding, and with minds half made up that there would be a speedy breakdown and an ultimate failure. Happily, neither of these dismal anticipations was realised; and Mr. Howland, to his credit be it said, now approaches the end of his second term amid a general feeling of satisfaction, quite new to the people, at the work he has accomplished, and with widespread expressions of regret that he declines to continue to fill the office.

The condition of things that brought Mr. Howland on the scene was aptly expressed by his phrase that the strings of municipal administration had hitherto hung loose. Nor was this untrue. If there were not many scandalous breaches of trust and a municipal reign of Beelzebub, there was an easy-going supervision over all the civic departments, with more or less incapacity, criminal ignorance, and dereliction of duty. Nor if we consider how the majority of the Council are returned, is this greatly to be wondered at. Elections to office, we need hardly remind the reader, have largely been under the control of the ward politician and manipulator of votes. This creature, who revels in the entanglement of municipal affairs with party politics, has his reward sometimes in the petty patronage of his returned favourite in the Council, and sometimes in the larger plunder of a city contract. Others whose wont it is to interest themselves in the return of an Alderman, share in the general distribution of favours, whether in the guileless form of ward improvements or in the more questionable and personal gain, through political influence, of a grog-shop license. Hardly can it be said that it has ever been the habit to return our city representatives on the ground exclusively of high personal qualifications or of moral fitness. Political ties, church connections, club or society influences, though in their place we have no special quarrel with these, have all been factors in determining the man to be brought out, or, if already in the field, in settling the question as to whether he was to be opposed or supported. The result, in the main, however, has been to draw a lot of incapables and vicious idlers round the public crib, and to envelop municipal administration with an atmosphere of morals neither clean nor wholesome. How our men of property and intelligence can wrap themselves

in apathy and indifference, when interests so vital to the public weal and to their own personal concerns are thus trifled with, passes comprehension. In the management of commercial enterprises we look for men of clean record and scrupulous integrity: in the management of city corporations and town municipalities it has seemed proper to look for no such virtues. Conscious of the city's maladies, and of the ever-increasing evil of remaining indifferent to them, Mr. Howland stepped boldly into the breach, and although it cannot be said that he has swept the city of all its uncleanness, he has unquestionably inaugurated a new and more wholesome régime. But Mr. Howland, we may fairly claim, has done more than this: he has, we venture to think, aroused the public not only to a sense of its danger, but to a more adequate realisation of its duty. By his force of character and moral influence he has also struck terror to the evil-doer and raised a flutter in the dovescots of impurity. If we are right in this, there is hope for the future, and we trust there need be no misgiving that the step forward shall ever be receded from.

The work of the city's moral renovation, however, has only begun. No one, we feel sure, will be more ready to admit this than Mr. Howland himself. It will become the citizens therefore to continue his good work, for if restraints are removed and watchfulness is relaxed, there is sure to be a return to the old ways, and what has been gained will have been lost. While the public mind has been stirred and the better classes in the community have been aroused from their supineness, now is the time to initiate further reforms, and to put the city's affairs for the future in the way of being honestly and efficiently administered, with if possible, the active interest and co-operation of men of influence, position, and integrity. The necessity is the more urgent when we consider what is now at stake in Toronto, with a realty available for taxation, as well as having claims upon good government, of nearly a hundred millions. The need is still more pressing when the many large appropriations recently made by the Corporation are called to mind, with the uncertainty, unless great care is exercised, of the city's getting value for the expenditure. Of these appropriations, most of which have yet to be expended, the following represent considerably over two millions of the people's money: On Don River improvements, \$300,000; on Parks and Drives, \$250,000; on Harbour protection, \$100,000; for Water Works purposes, \$300,000; for a new Drill Shed and Armoury, \$100,000; and for Court House and City Hall buildings, \$1,200,000. Of these many large sums, unless we are mindful, how much is likely to be spent unprofitably, if not absolutely squandered or misappropriated? To prevent this, and to establish and maintain proper checks upon the public expenditure, as well as to direct and oversee the undertakings for which the expenditures are made, there is pressing need for a few paid executive heads, and for a Council, both legislative and executive, that shall more really represent than is now the case the classes particularly in the community that have most at stake in the government of the city. To a paid executive of some five or six members, who shall be chairmen of as many administrative departments, there can in reason be no objection; nor, if we are to get a competent man to fill the civic chair who will give his entire attention to the city's affairs for the period for which he is elected, should any one demur to raise the annual salary of the Mayor from two to at least five thousand dollars. This matter of paid officers in the government of the city, as reasonable men we must look fair in the face, and our reckoning should be made accordingly. No man out of a lunatic asylum who has any notion of what is now demanded in time and thought of a Mayor of Toronto, or of the heads for the time being of the executive departments, will for a moment imagine that the city's large and ever-growing interests can be honestly and efficiently administered without permanent and liberal remuneration.

This matter settled, let us briefly glance at a few things that remain to be done. First, the Provincial Government must be asked to grant the city a charter, and this beyond question is now a prime necessity. Secondly, we want a reorganisation of the city wards, so as to improve the representation in the Council, and secure as Aldermen men of the proper stamp, in regard both to qualifications and to character. And here let us endorse the suggestion that the aldermen should be elected, say for three years, one only retiring each year, to be annually replaced by a new election, and one filling the paid Chairmanship of his ward or district, or rather the Chairmanship of one of the executive committees. The scheme of