

MEDICINE MAN RULE.

Mr. H. A. Kennedy, of Ottawa, has written a series of open letters to the Right Honorable W. L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada. Mr. Kennedy has an intimate knowledge of the workings of the Civil Service and the machinery of Government and his letters will be published in these columns simultaneously with their despatch to the Prime Minister. We reproduce the first of the series below:

Dear Prime Minister,—The mysterious disappearance of a high-born Canadian infant, in the year 1916, gave rise to many guesses and suspicions. As the country's attention was distracted by the war, however, the incident was soon forgotten, a nine-days' wonder. The time has evidently come to publish the facts, and I take this means of doing so.

Do you ask how the fate of an eight-year-old infant concerns a two-year-old Prime Minister?

You will soon see.

For the unhappy event of 1916, when you were wandering irresponsibly out in the cold, you may plead an alibi. For the failure to undo what then was done, you have no such excuse.

We are now paying \$19,000 a year.

Are you worth it?

The question must often occur to your modest mind.

Anyone who shows you how to make yourself worth it, then, will have earned your gratitude. Whether he gets what he earns or not is another question, and matters nothing.

A Strangling Incubus.

The story is that of a revolt against the strangling incubus of "Medicine Man Government," the hopelessly obsolete and costly burden of political management under which the whole Dominion staggers.

It matters not one straw to the country whether the story affects the fortunes of your party, or any other party. No,—not one red cent, not one row of pins, not one hill of beans, not one solitary atom. The situation is too grave. We are suffering too painfully from the effect of muddle, meddle and mess on the fortunes of the Dominion, to care one whiff of wind for the possible effect of public enlightenment on the fortunes of a party.

As things happened, it was a Conservative Minister who led the revolt—and a Conservative Ministry that suppressed it. On the other side, it is a Liberal or "Reform" Ministry which for two years and a half has had the power to reform the evil and has not lifted one little finger to reform it.

The revolt is going to break out again, with no world war as an easy excuse for suppressing it this time. You can head it off, if you have the will, and if you are something more than a figure-head on a ship which everyone but the captain is allowed to steer. . . . But the opportunity may not be yours for long.

The country is being bled white. You have shown yourself at last awake to the need of action of some kind. That is what encourages me to tell you about the really effective action recommended to a former Government by a highly responsible authority.

What is the action you propose? To stick a bit of plaster on a scratch. The story I am telling is that of a serious attempt, though speedily suppressed, to get at the root of the disease and stop the bleeding at its source. The doctors then called in, though ignominiously dismissed as soon as they dared to give honest advice, made practical recommendations which, if you muster up the courage to adopt them, may even now go far to save the country.

The vanished infant, born in the Privy Council Chamber where you may preside, was christened "The Economic and Development Commission." That was a deadly dull name to give the poor thing, and helps to explain why its disappearance excited no more interest than it did. But its brief life was interesting enough in all conscience, and the manner of its tragic death was unique in the history of the Dominion.

Cabinet Secrets.

"Sunk, leaving no trace." That is one account of the Commission's fate. It is probably true that even in the secret archives of the Privy Council you can find "no trace" of the sinking. I am quite prepared to hear a solemn official declaration that the Commission "made no report." But right here on my desk is the document laid before the Government by the Chairman of the Commission, containing all the grave charges and drastic recommendations which, he declared, the Commission intended to make.

The Commission could not go on and carry out that intention, for the very simple reason that the Commissioners were never again allowed to meet.

I have to violate a Cabinet secret, to explain this. What pains and penalties attach to so heinous a crime, I cannot remember. Solitary confinement on bread and water in your Parliamentary Tower, perhaps. I am willing to chance it,—anything, in fact, short of confinement to the Press Gallery of the National Gas Factory itself, listening to interminable useless talk and calculating by mental arithmetic what it costs the country per word, per bushel, or per thousand cubic feet.

No one but myself has the slightest responsibility for what I state. The Chairman of the Commission in particular, Sir James Lougheed,—I have to name him as leader of the revolt, so I had better add that I have neither asked nor received from him any of the information now made public.

The fateful Cabinet meeting which strangled the Commission was not a sensational or violent one. Not a head was broken, nor even a chair. However indignant the honorable gentlemen were at the audacity of the Commission's threatened action, they simply and quietly turned their thumbs down and sentenced their rebellious child to instant death. It is futile to say that no death sentence was formally passed, or even that no resolution was adopted. The decision was made—clear, definite, prompt and emphatic. And the Commission died the death.

The decision of the Cabinet need not surprise us. The demand of the Commission's chairman was nothing less than a bold frontal attack on the system of "Government by Medicine-Man"; and the Medicine Men were the Cabinet Ministers themselves.

Spell-Binders, Red and White.

It is an ancient institution, a hoary imposture, this paralytic system. Our earliest immigrant ancestors brought the rudiments of it from Europe, but they found it in full force among the Indians when



"Spell-Binder Good For This."



"Spell-Binder No Good For This."

they got here, and succeeding generations have developed it till it holds every branch of administration in its fatal grasp.

The Medicine-Man was the spell-binder. He governed by noise. By his cries and gesticulations he awed and hypnotized the tribesmen into a belief that he alone could bring prosperity,—in him alone was concentrated the wisdom and capacity of the tribe.

The Medicine-Man still rules Canada.

The spell-binder has not changed his nature with his hat. He has not acquired, with the silk "topper" which replaces the feather head-dress, any particular capacity for managing a complicated piece of national business. Yet that is the job he is allowed to hold, at \$10,000 a year,—or \$15,000 if promoted Chief of the Band,—in addition to the \$4,000 we give him for merely sitting in the Senate or House of Commons a few hours a day for a few months in the year.

Appoint a bull to manage a china shop, and you know what is likely to happen. Appoint a talk-artist, a vote-catcher, a wire-puller, a cat-jumper, a one-sided partisan, to manage a business department, and commonsense tells us what to expect.

Whether we expect it or not, we get it.

That is the egregious system which keeps our country in hobbles today; and that is the system which was utterly condemned in the most damning document ever presented to a Canadian Government by one of its own members.

The story must now be told, as it actually occurred.

Yours sincerely,
HOWARD ANGUS KENNEDY.