

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Organization

One reason why cities are more attractive places to live in than the country is that social intercourse, communication, buying and selling are better organized. The problem of the country, socially and economically, is to get organization. Each community must learn to take itself in hand. Hampden County, Massachusetts, was doing a business of \$4,000,000 a year. Each farmer was attending to his own buying and selling. Naturally there was little time left for the study of farm methods. In 1913 a County Improvement League was organized. A manager, a general secretary, and two experts—one in agriculture and one in horticulture—were appointed. Co-operative exchanges were organized to buy fertilizers, lime, barrels and all other necessities. The experts made over 650 visits the first year. The result was most gratifying—so gratifying that further organization was insisted upon. The social, economic, moral and educational interests are all now considered. The fight is not merely for better farming, but for better homes, better men and better women. In other words, community life is being fully organized. This very thing is possible in every rural municipality. In Western Canada the municipal council is the only public body that has any jurisdiction. Its influence is very narrow—as it does not concern itself with economic, social and educational problems. It has been suggested by some that all the activities of the municipality could be directed by a central executive body, which might act through committees and under the guidance of expert advisers. There is much to be said in favor of this. If it is a good thing to have councils to oversee bridge building, road making and the like, surely it would be equally profitable to have councils responsible for education, moral and social improvement, trade and commerce. We have taken from the past a system of organization which was no doubt in its day well suited to the problems which it had to face, but which is wholly inadequate to our own times and our own peculiar conditions.

The Only Way Out

The following words from the pen of ex-President Eliot of Harvard are well worth consideration, both by employers and members of the trades unions:

"Is it not perfectly plain that in our country the trades unionists are not really happy as a matter of fact? To my thinking they never will be so long as they get no satisfaction in their daily work. It is the grudging spirit in which they work which prevents them from getting any content out of their work for a livelihood.

"All well read, thinking people believe that the progress of civilization depends on universal, steady, productive labor; the unions seem to believe that the less one works the better.

"Although profit-sharing is not applicable in all industries, I see in sound methods of profit-sharing one mode of escape from the deplorable effects of trades union teachings; for just profit-sharing will present to employers and employed alike precisely the

same motive for faithful, generous co-operative industry and for successful productiveness. No profit-sharing method will work which does not turn out to be in the long run profitable alike to employers and employed, to owner and wage-earner, to capital and labor."

The more one considers it, the more apparent does it become that the only way to prevent strikes, lock-outs and all similar evils, is to replace antagonism by co-operation through a wise system of profit-sharing.

Government by Experts

Much is being said these days in the party press about representative government and about direct government by the people through the initiative and referendum. There is a principle of good government that is necessary under either system. It is the principle of guidance by expert authority. Under the system of representative government it is a common thing to see at the head of a department a man who has no practical fitness for his calling. This is true both in federal and provincial affairs. Usually the Solicitor-General or the Attorney-General is a lawyer, but he may be a very ignorant one. In the other departments there is practically no special knowledge of his duties demanded from the minister in charge. The Minister of Militia may have carried a rifle and may have been head of a country regiment—"gall" does the rest. The Minister of the Interior may have lived in the interior, and that may be his only qualification. The Minister of Finance may know nothing beyond the rudiments of banking. And so it is in local affairs. The Minister of Education may have nothing but a few half-digested opinions on the education of a people. Anybody can easily be an authority on education. So, too, the Minister of Agriculture may know nothing of his subject other than the few facts he has gleaned in taking care of a quarter section. Let any person take our ministers, provincial and federal, and let him judge them by their knowledge of the work pertaining to their departments. The one word that will come to his mind is incapacity. It is true of all governments under the representative system. Nor would this be so bad if those in authority trusted to experts in their own field. Unfortunately politicians as a class are not burdened with modesty. Their ambition is to lead, and lead they will even if they are hopelessly in error.

Under the system of referendum, things might be equally bad, although not likely, for there would be much general discussion before a policy was adopted. Where a minister is in charge of a department there is no such discussion. He simply says what is to be, and his followers throw up their hats and cry: "Bravo, Genius! Heaven-born inspiration."

What would seem reasonable would be this, that a Minister of Militia should decide upon a policy only after the most careful consultation with those who know; that a Minister of Finance should be in close touch with those who have made a life study

of economic problems; that a Minister of Education should consult rather than dictate to those who have given their lives to education; that a Minister of Agriculture should have his theories approved by the state authorities on agriculture before advancing them as the basis of legislation. There are in Canada and in the various provinces recognized experts in every department of service. No legislation should be advanced that had not first of all been fully and openly discussed and pronounced upon by these experts. It is very comforting to a man in authority to feel that he is making history. He may be making a botch of things and his egotism may prevent him from seeing the truth. Government by the wisest is none too good. Under any system we should demand it.

Decoration Day

It is very evident that the spirit of militarism is not weakening in our midst, if the great display witnessed in Winnipeg on Sunday, May 10th—Decoration Day—is any criterion. An occasion like this calls forth the best in our citizens and what should never be allowed to fade from memory. Winnipeg's example is worth emulating. We delight to honor those who died in defence of the flag, and we bow in grateful acknowledgment to those veterans still with us, who bring their wreaths annually to the graves of their departed comrades. To all those who, in war or peace, have sacrificed life, we cheerfully and openly acknowledge our indebtedness. To those who are preparing by drill and otherwise to defend their homes and Empire, should occasion require, we also owe our gratitude. We hear comments occasionally that our system is accompanied with too many frills, such as military dress display, and that the young men of our land could be seen to better advantage and in their simple manliness without such embellishments as the head-gear now in usage. That, however, is a matter of taste, and as long as human nature is constituted as it is, there will be many for whom dress display will have its attractions and fascination. One thing to be commended in our citizen soldier is that with all training and flourishing he is still left a certain initiative, which will not fail him in the hour of danger.

The Harvest

What is well begun is half done. The grain is in the ground, and by the time this reaches our readers the fields will be green with waving blades of growing grain. Upon two things will the harvest depend—the faithful work of men and the bounty of an over-ruling Providence. It is true in agriculture especially that faith and work must be conjoined. If any man should be reverent and dignified it should be the tiller of the soil, for he is continually aware of his dependence upon God and equally aware of the fact that he is a co-worker with Him. Agriculture, rightly pursued, develops the best in man's nature. May the work of the year mean much not only in material things, but in development of character for all engaged in agriculture.