

We Need Your Help

And so, in the fullest sense, it needs your help. It needs not only your vote on election day, but your heart and your intellect every day. It needs your ideas. The Convention held in August, 1919, represented an advance in democracy, but we should strive to go even further than that. The whole body of Liberals throughout Canada should regard itself as always present at a great convention, always consulting and exchanging ideas. There should be as many local clubs and associations as possible, and each of these should be a centre of free, vigorous discussion of public affairs. Organization is of course important, and there are some whose talents lie in that direction rather than in speaking. But let each help according to his faculties and his inclinations.

From the central organization we shall do our best to disseminate full and accurate information and to give encouragement to Liberals. But let it be understood that what comes from this source is not intended to set bounds to discussion, but to stimulate discussion. Try to imagine that we are all present at a great convention. We claim only the right to be heard, and we want you to be heard. We do not know from what city, village or township in Canada, from what man or woman may emanate some idea that will enrich Liberalism and promote the welfare of Canada and its people.

Democracy and Free Discussion

Where democracy has failed, or failed in part, it has been for lack of this general interest in public affairs. The people cannot rule unless the people think. There may be the form and semblance of free institutions, and yet the government may be autocratic, if the people allow their thinking to be done by a few. There should be no such thing as a governing class in Canada. Ministers and Members of Parliament have of course special opportunities for acquiring knowledge of public affairs, but there is no mystery about the business. It is one of the duties of public men to impart their knowledge to others, to indicate the sources of information, and to place before the electors the material for forming an independent judgment.

The history and traditions of Liberalism are well worthy of study. Tradition may do good and it may do harm. It does harm if it keeps alive hatred and prejudice, or if it binds the soul and checks progress. It does good if it furnishes inspiration for the maintenance of essential principles and for continued progress.