

when the extraordinary accumulation of masses of capital in the hands of individuals is only equalled by the extent of the opinion that individuals or groups of men who become excessively wealthy are criminals against society, it is worth while to turn aside for a moment and to quote what the wisest man who ever lived said of the possessor of great fortune: "Where much is, there are many to consume it; and what hath the owner but the sight of it with his eyes," and to quote further the comment on these words of Solomon by the second wisest man of whom there is any historical record, "The personal fruition in any man cannot reach to feel great riches; there is a custody of them; or a power of dole or donative of them; or a fame of them; but no solid use to the owner." To translate these words of Bacon into more modern language the "solid use" of riches is in their reproductive investment whose benefit accrues to the whole community in the increase of its numbers and the extent to which the members of it are enabled to minister to the comfort and well-being of each other.

The rich man, the capitalist, is merely the trustee for the community of its necessary accumulations of capital and his instinct for gain, the means by which Nature has provided for this accumulation. Now, journals representing the interests of invested capital view with jealousy anything which will check the accumulation of capital by transferring a greater proportion of the wealth produced to those who insist on consuming immediately everything on which they can lay their hands; just as they view with horror those frauds upon capital by means of which previous accumulations are dissipated and destroyed. But after all it is the community interest in the increasing sum of capital invested, which they have in view, and it is being brought home not merely to the *Mining and Scientific Press*, of San Francisco, but to everyone who stops to think, that labour disputes as carried out on the North American continent are imperilling not merely the selfish interests of the capitalist, but the ever-increasing accumulation of capital upon which the future of society depends. The economic waste occasioned by strikes is reaching appalling proportions, and as both capital and labour are becoming more perfectly organised and federated, the tendency appears to be for even smaller original causes of dispute to bring about even more widely spread industrial anarchy. Capital is destroyed, labour is impoverished, and the well-being of everyone lessened. Such being the case, it is not perhaps surprising, but it certainly is interesting and significant, that the press representing industry should be turning its eyes towards a method of settling labour disputes by force of law, without resorting to the barbarous expedient of a strike or lockout.

This legislation in New Zealand, now more frequently commented on than condemned, was passed in the face of the most violent opposition. It was brought about by the frank admission that the condition of industry in that country had reached a stage than which

nothing could possibly be worse, not even its total destruction and the relapse of the inhabitants to a mere hand to mouth existence on the soil. Now it certainly has been successful in obviating strikes, and it may be that it would be advisable to apply something of the kind to British Columbia. But before being adopted it should be understood, and its workings investigated. How has it affected the average condition of the people of New Zealand? How has it affected the internal accumulation of capital in the country itself? How has it affected the inflow of capital from abroad and the reasonable anticipation of adequate returns? In general terms, are the people of New Zealand progressing equally with those of the United States and Canada, in material comfort, social well-being, intellectual development, and aesthetic culture—all those things to acquire and enjoy which men labour at all? If they are, and if, at the same time, they have removed the dark cloud which is ever menacing the industry all over North America, then the sooner we learn the lesson they have learned the better.

The condition of affairs in British Columbia, while not so bad as in many portions of the United States, is sufficiently acute to warrant the investigation of a means of relief which has been tried and is claimed to be a success. It seems to us that a careful inquiry into the industrial conditions of New Zealand, made by a competent commissioner on the spot, would be of great value to British Columbia and might form the basis for a practical attempt to solve the labour problem in a rational way.

It would indeed be remarkable if a country which, a few years ago, was openly accused of having been driven into all sorts of erratic courses by the desperation consequent upon its own extravagance and waste, should, within so short a time, be recognised as having merely adopted rational principles of industrial regulation, between the adaptation of which, to their own circumstances, and revolutionary anarchy, every civilised country would eventually be obliged to choose.

The official liquidation of the British America Corporation and of the Standard Exploration Company, has resulted in disclosures which illustrate the corruption of English finance in more startling outlines than even

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the Hansard Union, through which Mr. Bottomley acquired a lasting and evil reputation, the Liberator scandal, or the bankruptcy of Mr. Ernest Terah Hooley. It would be impossible within reasonable limits to fully describe the series of operations by which the mining industry of British Columbia has been involved in a horrible and disgusting saturnalia of swindling and corruption. But this we do say, that it would be far better that our mines should never be developed at all than that they should be made the glittering bait by which the accumulated