

Bolshevism in Canada

Law must be enforced—The cause of Bolshevism

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

It is announced that the Dominion Police force is to be strengthened in order to cope with any who preach the doctrine or attempt the practice of reform by violence.

That there are advocates of "direct action" in our cities and industrial centres no one can doubt. Some of them are emissaries of the I.W.W. who have floated over the border from the western United States. Some of them are eastern Europeans, mostly of Semitic origin, who believe that they find in Canada essentially the same economic tyranny as they left behind in Russia, and for which they prescribe the same remedy as is now being tried in Russia and Germany. These "foreign" agitators are to be the more dreaded because their propaganda is carried on in other languages than English, and are addressed to people who live amongst us but whom we really know very little about.

The action of the Government in preparing to put down by arrest and imprisonment these attempts at violence is wise and timely. It is not oppression but insurance of liberty. The presumption of free discussion and free legislation is that the law, once made, shall be obeyed. It shall be changed only by free discussion and free legislation. If it appears to anyone that legislation is not free it is still open to him to conduct a campaign for the freeing of legislation. Given free speech, the right of public meeting, and universal suffrage there is no excuse for rebellion. The justification for war is that intolerable conditions exist which cannot be altered by peaceable means.

In the sentencing of Roger N. Baldwin to penitentiary for one year, Judge Mayer of the U.S. District Court in New York put the case clearly. The offender is a prominent social worker, the author of a standard book on Juvenile Courts, and a man of undoubted probity and high moral purpose. He refused to be conscripted because he denied the right of a government to compel a citizen to obey a law which he believed was wrong. Judge Mayer said, in part:

"The republic must cease to exist if disobedience to any law enacted by the orderly processes laid down by the constitution is in the slightest degree permitted. That is, from any point of view, fundamental. That is the sense, not only from the ideal standpoint, but from a practical standpoint. We shall not be able, I think, to maintain what we regard as a government of a free people, if some individual, whether from good or bad motives, were able successfully to violate a statute, duly and constitutionally and properly passed, because his own view of the same might differ from that entertained by the law-makers who have enacted the law, and the executive who has given his approval."

No better expression of democracy has been given than that in Kipling's line:

"Leave to live by no man's leave, underneath the law."

That being true, and admitted, the subject is by no means exhausted. There is grave danger of unintelligent and provocative action on the part of the Dominion police in dealing with those who advocate a radical transformation of the existing social order. The classes possessing power have always been too suspicious of the intentions of the classes who covet a share of the power and wealth which they lack. The Tory attitude is to regard every critic of privilege as an agitator and every proposal for reform as sedition. There is nothing men covet like power; nothing they relinquish so reluctantly. In the whole history of the world there is hardly an instance of any group of men who voluntarily abdicated their authority over their fellows. Human nature is not changed from the sixteenth century to the twentieth. So long as there are rich and poor; those who live in luxury and those whose work is sore and whose living conditions are uncomfortable; those who can get for themselves the conveniences and delights which the present era provides so profusely and those who behold these things and cannot attain them; so long will those who have fear and condemn those who have not, and be tempted to repel with violence any attack on their citadel of privilege.

Bolshevism is a counsel of desperation. It is born of destitution, and suckled by panic. It grew into strength in Russia as the population sank into a state of want. When bread failed, the starving millions

struck blindly and fiercely at those who held the reins of power, whether political or economic. We have seen, in some of our Canadian mining camps and industrial cities, movements of the Bolshevik order, where the workers have fanatically revolted against their employers. These disorderly labour troubles have taken place where living conditions were hard. It was not lack of bread with them, but it was lack of some other vital requirement of comfortable existence. It was isolation, overcrowding, a feeling of helplessness, a resentment against arrogance, or something of the sort.

The father of Bolshevism is misery, but its mother is a sense of unfairness and inequality of suffering. If all were alike in misery all would endure with approximately equal fortitude, or unite against the common foe. The inhabitants of an invested fortress have often shown an unity of effort and spirit which no extreme of privation could divide. But woe betide the citizen who has hoarded corn and lives at ease while his neighbors perish! There were many priests in the days of Bishop Hatto who endeared themselves to their flocks by their participation in the common famine; but the priest who filled his granaries while the people faint from hunger found himself the object of their fury and detestation.

To head off Bolshevism is better than to be forced to destroy it by police action. In order to head it off it is necessary to accomplish these two things: to prevent destitution, and to prevent unfair distribution of wealth. The programme for demobilization and reconstruction which has been announced contains some far-sighted and statesmanlike provisions. It certainly represents an honest and intelligent attempt to foresee and provide against the difficulties incident to a period of readjustment. It is quite as necessary to adopt a programme of finance which will be fair all round. Unless the average man feels that all his fellow-citizens are brothers in his misfortune he will be resentful. If he believes that his misfortune has been another's gain he will be bitter and angry.

The London Trade Mission

Important duties

In view of the importance of the step taken by the Federal Government in appointing a War Trade Mission to be established in London, we publish the Order-in-Council giving effect to the measure, which reads as follows:—

"The Committee of the Privy Council have had before them a report, dated 4th November, 1918, from the Right Honourable the Prime Minister, submitting that during a considerable period after the war it is probable that the purchase and distribution of the larger portion of our exportable agricultural products and of many manufactured articles will be carried out through governmental agencies established by the United Kingdom and by other allied nations. Many inter-allied boards and commissions have been set up during the past four years for such purposes, and through them an extensive control and supervision are being exercised by agreement over important financial affairs, the distribution of shipping, freight rates, and prices of many important commodities, and generally the distribution of the industrial, agricultural, and mineral production of the world. It is not improbable that many of these commissions will be continued for like purposes in the years immediately following the conclusion of peace.

"In view of the unusual position thus created, the Prime Minister is of opinion that a special Economic Commission should be established in London through which the Government and its departments might be kept more directly in touch with the activities and deliberations above indicated, and may be effectively represented therein from time to time.

"The Prime Minister is also of opinion that such a commission might render important service generally in the purpose of securing for the agricultural and other productions of Canada their appropriate share in the markets of the world during the period of reconstruction.

It is impossible to regard the future with composure in the light of the division of wealth in Canada. Many Canadians of native stock have scarcely realized the changed Canada in which they live. They think of it as it was in the days of their fathers, with a population mostly rural and the doors of opportunity open to all, with few poor and few rich. In point of fact Canada has been drawn into the current of world forces which operated during the last century. It has become a country of swollen cities, of the concentration of wealth, of the concentration of the moneyed power, of undue political influence of the moneyed classes, and of an increased poignancy of all life as the prevailing ambition of its people has changed from the desire to make a living into the desire to make a fortune.

The criticism which is already frequently heard of this state of things is bound to be sharpened after the return of the soldiers, in case of any hitch or commotion in passing from the war condition to the peace condition. If the men who fought at Festubert and Vimy, at Courcellette and Mons, should be unable to find work and income, what will the reaction of the public mind be upon those who are now pocketing enormous profits? I am aware that the cry of "profiteer" has been used foolishly, and has even been the screen behind which avaricious rogues have hidden their own gains. Nevertheless it is a word full of social dynamite, and may start disastrous explosions before many months are past. It will be held to be no excuse that the relatives of these millionaires went to the front; valor is always personal. Nor will huge investments in national loans absolve them before the public. What will stand out as the glaring fact will be the contrast between one section of Canadian manhood which went to battle, risking everything and losing much, and another section which stayed securely at home and used the opportunity to become rich.

It is vital, as a measure of insurance against public disturbance and the extension of red revolutionary ideas, that the excess profits of the war period be taken to pay for the war. The common sense of the country will approve of all the costs of reorganization onto a peace basis being allowed to business plants. But it will not stand, in case of unemployment and poverty stirring men's minds to complaint, for such a disparity of lot. It will not endure that men shall be starved who played the hero, and that men who took no risk shall wax fat and flourish.

"The Prime Minister, therefore, recommends that Your Excellency in Council, under the authority of the War Measures Act, 1914, may be pleased to institute a Canadian Trade Mission in London (hereinafter referred to as the Canadian Mission), under the direction of an officer to be appointed and known as the Chairman of the Canadian Mission in London (hereinafter referred to as the Chairman); and that the functions, powers, and duties of the Chairman and of the Canadian Mission be defined as follows:—

"1. The Canadian Mission shall consist of the Chairman and such other members in such capacities as may be appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Chairman.

"2. The Chairman shall be empowered to represent the Government and its various departments and other administrative branches in negotiations and affairs of the special economic character hereinbefore indicated which it may be necessary to conduct:—

"(a) with the Government of the United Kingdom or its departments or other administrative branches; or

"(b) with the allied missions operating in London or elsewhere in Europe; or

"(c) with various inter-allied boards, commissions, or committees now or hereafter set up to deal with economic questions;

"(d) with any other government, commissions, or board as the Chairman may deem desirable or expedient.

ACT WITH ALLIED BOARDS.

"3. The Chairman or other members of the Canadian Mission shall be empowered to act at the proceeding of such inter-allied boards, commissions, or committees, in such capacity as may from time to

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