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AN ABUSE OF OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM.

In an article in last week's issue we pointed out that however desirable it might be to abolish separate schools, it could not fairly be expected that Catholics would consent to entrust the education of their children to the public schools so long as religious exercises and Bible-reading continue to be enforced. This is the strongest but not the only obstacle in the way of a general school system including those of all denominations and no denomination. Another is the systematic inculcation of the snobbery, belly-crawling and Yankeephobia that goes by the name of loyalty and patriotism. This feature is of comparatively recent introduction, the weak-minded and pusillanimous Minister of Education having been bullied into tolerating it by the loyalist fire eaters of the Col. Denison and James L. Hughes stamp. The Mowat Government either have not sense enough to understand that *Empire* flag-raisings and the commemoration of the insignificant border skirmishes of 1812 are turning our schools into hot-beds of Toryism, or if they do see it are too much afraid of being called annexationists and traitors to object. As a consequence the principles of blatant Jingoism and caste worship are being instilled into our children, and every opportunity is taken to glorify British monarchy and aristocracy.

The Catholics of Ontario, being for the most part of Irish birth or descent, entertain a very natural and justifiable hatred of the British Government and the principles of Imperialism—a feeling that is shared by every genuine labor reformer of whatever origin or creed. They do not want their children taught to venerate tyrants and oppressors and exult in every piratical enterprise carried on under the Union Jack to furnish fresh marks for British commercial exploiters and fat berths for scions of the aristocracy. They do not want to see the memory of the wretched border feuds of a couple of generations ago perpetuated, or their children brought up with feelings of unreasoning hatred towards a people among whom it is possible that their lot may be cast in the future. Inshort, the majority of Irish Catholics, together with a large proportion of those of other origins and creeds, are strongly opposed to the entire spirit of the so-called patriotic demonstrations conducted by Mr. Ira Hughes and men of his stamp, of which we had a specimen in the city on Dominion Day, which some thousands of the best were induced to listen to the magniloquent rot and rhodomontade of the vainglorious Inspector and Dr. Tim Potts. Supporters of the public schools are obliged, we suppose, to submit to this sort of infliction so long as the Ontario Government is too cowardly to put a stop to it, but the Catholics may reasonably congratulate themselves that their children are not being brought up under such reactionary influences.

In addition to getting rid of Bible-reading, prayers and religious instruction we shall have to dispense with such school inspectors as James L. Hughes and to banish the spirit of colonial flunkeyism, militarism and devotion to Old World social and political ideals before we can fairly or reasonably ask our Roman Catholic fellow-citizens to abandon their separate schools.

AN ARGUMENT FOR NATIONALISM.

The cause of Nationalism is being very rapidly advanced by the action of great monopolies in absorbing, or crushing out their weaker rivals. It is not the force of argument that will, in the end, induce the leading nations to place all industry and production under State management, but the sheer necessities of the case, which will compel them to do so, as the only relief from the tyranny of the corporations. It is, therefore, highly gratifying to learn that the Standard Oil Company of the United States, the greatest industrial monopoly in the world, after having absorbed everything in sight in the country of its birth, has extended its operations to Europe. It has organized the German American Petroleum Company by buying out and amalgamating the houses already in the business, and now has almost entire control of the German market, in addition to having a strong foothold in other European countries. It has a competitor in the German-Russian Naptha Importing Company, which still controls the supply of oil from the Russian wells, but the absorption of this concern is merely a question of time. This accomplished, the Standard Oil people will have the German and other European consumers in their power, and can charge what they please for the supply of this important necessary.

This case illustrates not merely the utter failure of the much vaunted remedy of competition but the futility of the attempt to prevent combination among capitalists by legislation such as that embodied in Mr. Clarke Wallace's act. The combines can always keep within the letter of the law. Germany has strict laws against combinations to control productions and put up prices, but they have been evaded by organizing the monopoly as a regular mercantile corporation, just as has been done by several of the trusts in the United States. If several companies choose to give up their distinct existence as individual bodies and re-organize under the law as one huge corporation the laws against trusts do not apply. There is, apparently, no remedy so long as the "right" of capitalism to manage its business in its own way are recognized.

We hope that the new monopoly will take advantage of their position, and squeeze the consumers hard. We should like nothing better than to see this mammoth combine followed by a dozen others, tightening the grasp of capitalism upon the peoples' means of subsistence until the public came to its senses and learned that the only way to deal with capitalism is to exterminate it, and to insist upon the people controlling production for use and not for profit. To all appearances we shall not have very long to wait. The Germans are a practical people, and not saturated, like the Anglo Saxons, with capitalistic political economy, and we mistake their temper if they quietly allow a gang of foreign financial pirates to drain the nation's wealth in the name of the sacred rights of property.

CANADIAN TITLES.

Lord Stanley is hard upon making his term of office memorable. He is adopting a policy which may cause him to be the last of the Mohicans, or tenants of the Governor-General's berth. Within two months he has advised the conferring of peerages upon citizens of Canada. This looks like a systematic movement to establish an order of aristocracy in this "rough, raw, and democratic" country. Lord Stanley would do wisely to study the history of France towards the end of the last century, and to reflect upon the trend of public opinion in England to day in regard to the peerage. The thing is doomed, to begin planting an aristocratic class in Canada to day is to attempt the grafting on our social tree of a sprig from that of Europe, when it is rotten at the core, and threatened with the axe of destruction. We should be inhuman to add a feather's weight to the burden of Lady Macdonald's sorrow. But we speak in her interest, yea, we speak for her honor, when we say, that it is no compliment, but the reverse for her to be, what is called, raised to the peerage. To imagine her honored by being stuck amongst the crowd of conceited, and, as a class, most frivolous and useless women who married lords, is to suppose her actuated by a petty vanity and love of display which have not hitherto manifested themselves in her actions. How miserably low the humanity of Lord Stanley must have fallen when he supposes a grief-stricken widow can be consoled by so childish a bauble as a peerage! O! it is pitiful how poor human nature can be obscured and degraded by the artificial life of those who think that a man or a woman can be elevated above his fellow-creatures by a mere title.

But the mere personal aspect of this deplorable peerage business is of much less importance than its probable influence on public life. The examples of Lord Mounstephen and Lady Macdonald being given titles will put all the other Knights and their wives into a fever of jealousy. Already we hear of more than one having placed his claims before the Crown for a similar bogus honor. The Court of Ottawa will be shockingly lopsided with only two native titles of the first class. Why should not the whole Senate be turned holus bolus into a House of Lords? One thing would happen that is sorely needed, my Lords of the Senate would have to drop their salaries for listening to the chaplain say prayers, and spending a few minutes in passing resolutions day after day to adjourn. We urge Lord Stanley to proceed vigorously with his scheme for leavening this land with an aristocratic element, for the sooner it develops the quicker will the farce and the outrage be ended.

If the Governor-General and his advisers desire the stability of British connection they must stop this nonsense promptly, or the democracy of Canada will spoil their scheme by demanding union with the Republic to the south. Lord Stanley is trying his best to make his office end with his return to England. If our Governor-General cannot be happy without titled people about him, he should stay at home where his cup could run over with such delight.

But after all, the creation of official titles is a small matter in comparison to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few under the competitive system. The real rulers of this, as of every other country, are the people who control the capital; and monarchs, lords, statesmen and legislators are merely the puppets who go through the show of governing, while the real power is centred in the money-bags. The rage for titles is merely a symptom of the social demoralization resulting from inequality of distribution. To object to the creation of knights and peers, while complacently tolerating the iniquity of great fortunes founded upon the robbery of the masses, is to strain out a gnat while swallowing a camel. The antiquated aristocrat, the rent and usury-fattened human hog, is just as powerful for mischief, just as blighting a curse and parasite upon honest industry as his fellow Lord, modernized with stars and garters and wearing a handle to his name.

THE ASHBRIDGE'S BAY JOB.

The defeat of the attempt to hand over the work for the reclamation of Ashbridge's Bay to the clique of speculators, represented by Bowes & Redway, has fortunately not with a crushing defeat in the Council, owing to the impudent audacity of the promoters in asking what practically amounted to an option of three months in which to peddle the contract among capitalists. But though temporarily defeated the promoters of the job are still sanguine of accomplishing their object and will use every exertion to commit the Council to this rascally scheme for enriching a few East End property owners and pretended "capitalists," who make up in insolent assurance what they lack in means, at the expense of the taxpayers. We look to the honest members of the Council to protect the taxpayers from the intrigues of the ringsters, whatever form they may assume.

The reclamation of the marsh is not a work of immediate urgency. When it can be profitably undertaken it ought to be done as a city enterprise under the direction of the engineer instead of mortgaging our future to enrich any set of monopolists and sharpers. As for Aldermen Leslie, Hewitt and the rest of the East End representatives who have used their position in the Council to advance their personal interests, it is to be hoped that next January the electors will retire them permanently from the public service. Their case is another illustration of the hopelessness of civic reform so long as aldermen are expected to give their services gratuitously. The tendency of the system is to create such men. Until the public are willing to act honestly by their representatives and pay them fairly for their work we must expect that a large proportion of them will try to pay themselves by promoting such jobs as the Ashbridge Bay scheme.

PROTECT THE TELEPHONE EMPLOYEES.

The Bell Telephone Company have refused to accept the clause in the agreement, fixing the pay and hours of their employees. Ald. Bell has therefore given notice of motion to the effect, that the offer of the Toronto Telephone Company be accepted. So far there is at present no stipulation in the proposed terms between the Toronto Telephone Company regulating the hours and wages of the employees, as the question had not been raised when the negotiations with that Company were in progress. We presume that Ald. Bell, giving this notice of motion, means that the Toronto Telephone Company shall get the privilege, subject to the same conditions as to their treatment of their employees, as those proposed in the case of the Bell Company. The Council surely would not stultify themselves so far after refusing the franchise to one company because it would not accept these conditions, as to give their rivals the privilege without inserting the same stipulation in the agreement. If the offer of the Toronto Company is accepted without any stipulation protecting the rights of the employees, it will be one of the most rascally jobs on record.

In declining to accept the clause, the President of the Bell Telephone Company, assured the Council that "no just cause of complaint exists on the part of its employees, either with respect to wages or hours of work." We have yet to learn of an employer who will admit that his employees have just cause of complaint in any respect, no matter what flagrant abuses may exist. The most scoundrelly sweater in existence, if asked as to whether his wage-slaves were satisfied, would say exactly the same thing. But even were President Sise's words true—as they probably are not—the present contentment of the employees of a monopoly, now on its good behavior, would be no guarantee [illegible] honest industry as his fellow Lord [illegible] recognized after the company had secured its franchise for a term of years. [illegible] allowed any company [illegible] entitled to do so, will take advantage of the increasing competition in the money market, and reduce pay and lengthen hours as soon as it can do so safely.

Monopolies in their dealings either with the public, or with their wage slaves, invariably show themselves overreaching, greedy and tyrannical. The labor bodies of this city have the right to demand, that in any agreement entered into between the public and any corporation, the rights of the working people concerned shall be safeguarded at every point. And if, in spite of all the publicity given to this matter, this is neglected in any arrangement that may be come to with either of the telephone companies, they will hold the delinquents responsible.

The Macdonald Memorial meeting held on Thursday evening of last week was a flat failure. There was a mere handful of people in attendance, who appointed a very lengthy and imposing list of those who were not there as members of the Committee. The late Sir John is no hero of ours, and we do not see that the country owes him any memorial. All the same the lack of interest on the part of those who professed to idolize him, and who owe everything they are to him, is a striking instance of human ingratitude. There was no particular reason why the people should have been at that meeting and they showed their sense by staying away. But where were the tax-enriched tariff monopolists, the North Western Syndicate land-grabbers, the boodling contractors, the little ten-cent politicians who have been feeding fat in office owing to Sir John's favors? What a scurvy set of ingrates are the crew whom he has enriched with the peoples' money!

Public opinion in the United States is crystallizing very rapidly in favor of the confiscation by the government, of a considerable proportion of the enormous fortunes, now so numerous in that country, either by means of a graduated tax on incomes or a heavy duty on inheritances. Prof. Richard T. Ely has a forcible article in the *North American Review* advocating a tax on inheritances, increasing as the relationship of the heir to the testator becomes more distant and as the property becomes larger. He notes the fact that in Switzerland inheritances are taxed in some instances as high as 20 per cent. Prof. Joseph Rodes Buchanan, in a paper in the *Arena*, advocates still more drastic measures in the case of deceased millionaires and would have the state take over the great bulk of their estates. The notion that dead men have a right to control the disposal of what they leave is a superstition that can't be too soon got rid of.

We publish elsewhere the letter from the joint committee of the labor and social reform organizations read by Mr. Samuel M. Jones to the Street Railway Committee of the City Council, concerning which there has been so much talk. Our readers can see for themselves how shamefully its tenor has been misrepresented by the subsidized press in styling it "frivolous," etc. This was of course only to be expected. The *Mail* and other papers in their clumsy attempts to ridicule it, are only doing the work for which they are paid by the syndicates. But it is rather discouraging to find labor men in the absence of any better source of information, ready to accept the criticism of the subsidized slanderers at its face value—instead of suspending their judgment till they could read the document itself.

The defeat of the striking Quebec lasters, who were beaten by the importation of machines which will do their work, is an instructive lesson as to the need of a more thorough-going remedy for labor's grievances than can be found in strikes. Owing to the organization of capital and the continual displace-