

Individualism and Socialism.

The perpetual problem in every democracy is that of reconciling individual liberty and state sovereignty. How far shall the individual be free to express his opinions? Is an unmuzzled press an unadulterated blessing? How far shall the individual be free to amass wealth? Is the multi-millionaire a blessing or a curse to the community? How far may one engage in a calling that brings grief and ruin to his fellows. Should the state have the right to prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors? May one neglect to educate his children? May he, when suffering from contagious disease, mingle with his fellows? Or, turning from the individual to the class, it might be asked if the state should have power to grant or take away privileges from any particular set of men. Has the state a right to grant bonuses to manufacturers, or to assist them by the imposition of duties? Has a railway king any right to representation before the committees of parliament if the day laborer from his position is unable to have a representative? There are scores of questions of this nature that might be asked, and in all cases the answer cannot be readily given, for there is something to be said on both sides in nearly every case.

THE EVILS OF INDIVIDUALISM.

The evil of unrestrained individualism it is not difficult to demonstrate. In the moral field as in the field of industry no man can be allowed free rein. Our legislature is already weighted with prohibitions that experience has found it necessary to insert. No liquor for minors, no cigarettes for children. No open disorderly houses. No selling of obscene literature (but, unfortunately, the too-free sale of much that is more poisonous than the obscene). No stealing, no profanity in public, no assault, no libel. And so the list might be continued. It is to the credit of our nation that in the moral realm it has placed a just limitation on the freedom of citizens. In the field of industry it has not yet asserted itself, but must do so just as soon as it perceives that individual aggression may imperil the morality and permanent welfare of the whole people.

ALL UNFAIRNESS IMMORAL.

During the past few months there has been an agitation looking towards remedial and protective legislation in one or two matters that vitally concern the West—and, for that matter, vitally concern the great mass of citizens throughout the Dominion. The question of a lower tariff is, at bottom, a question of morals, so is the question of the ownership and operation of the Hudson's Bay Railway. When, as a result of legislation, the people of Western Canada pay millions annually into the pockets of a few manufacturers, and when, as a result of further legislation, a few railway magnates receive in cash, lands and bonds, close to a billion dollars, the knowledge of these facts gives rise to indignation and wrath, and, worse still, leads directly to a feeling of disloyalty, for how can men be expected to love a land which belongs to the privileged few? The worst feature of the growth of plutocracy in Canada is not that a few dishonest men have control of the wealth (it is said that one per cent. of the people own over fifty per cent. of the wealth), but it is in this fact that there is no patriotic feeling, and cannot be, among men who have been deprived of their wealth and power.

THE GROWTH OF INDIVIDUALISM.

Notwithstanding the fact that from century to century our government is nominally becoming more democratic, it is without doubt true that never before was there a time when we could claim such an aristocracy of wealth as can be found today. Nor has the wealth always been honestly obtained. It has come into a few hands because unscrupulous individualism has been allowed to run riot.

THE REMEDY FOR THE EVIL.

What, then, is the ordinary citizen to do? Shall he resort to violent measures? Shall he manufacture bombs and bludgeons and take the law into his own hands? Most certainly not, for there is open to us a way of peace if we are but courageous enough and patriotic enough to follow it. Our bullet is our ballot. Any free people can have any-

thing they wish in this world, if they but wish it with a full heart. And tomorrow, if we desire it truly, we can end the reign of offensive individuality.

THE DANGER OF STATE DOMINATION.

Now to turn to the other side of the picture. It is possible for the state in its legislation to act the tyrant and to restrict unduly the right of the private citizen, or to impose upon him duties he has no right to bear. In Canada there are few cases, perhaps, in which individual liberty has been limited without cause. Although provincial freedom has more than once been unjustly assailed. The great sin of the parliaments of our land consists in this—that the many are sacrificed to the few. The liberty of earning a fair day's wage for a fair day's service is not always accorded the

working man, because of the privileges that have been granted to those who direct the giant concerns of the land.

However, in the smaller organisms within the state, such as unions, clubs and parties, it is a common experience for the individual to be completely submerged. To escape the domination of their employers men form a union. Then they frequently find themselves under a bondage much more irksome than the first. While a non-union man, one could work as long as he liked, he could work as hard as he pleased, he could go when he wished; but now he must ease up in his time and his faithfulness, and when the whip snaps he must desert the best employer in the land. But such is life. We are all continually escaping from one form of tyranny to find ourselves under another form. Notwithstanding the immense monetary gains that have come to men in all walks of life from forming into unions, it is possible that union men have less freedom today than any other class. And what is true of unions is true of political parties. The man who really wants a political plum can get it only through a party organism, but usually when he gains the plum he loses his own soul—his right to honest thought, free speech, and independent action.

THE CALF WALK.

One day, through the primeval wood,
A calf walked home, as good calves should;
But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail as all calves do.

Since then two hundred years have fled,
And, I infer the calf is dead,
But still he left behind his trail
And thereby hangs my moral tale.

The trail was taken up next day
By a lonely dog that passed that way;
And then a wise bell-wether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,
And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bell-wethers always do.

And from that day o'er hill and glade
Through those old woods a path was made;
And many men wound in and out,
And dodged and turned, and bent about
And uttered words of righteous wrath
Because 'twas such a crooked path.

But still they followed—do not laugh—
The first migrations of that calf,
And through the winding woodland stalked
Because he wobbled when he walked.

This first path became a lane,
That bent, and turned, and turned again;
This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse with his load
Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And travelled some three miles in one,
And thus a century and a half
They trod in the footsteps of that calf.

The years passed on in swift fleet,
The road became a village street;
And this before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare;
And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis,
And men two centuries and a half
Trod in the footsteps of that calf.

Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed the zig-zag calf about;
And o'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent
A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead,
They followed still his crooked way
And lost one hundred years a day;
For such a reverence it lent
To well established precedent.

A moral lesson this might teach,
Were I ordained and called to preach;
For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf paths of the mind,
And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.

They follow in the beaten track
And out and in, and forth and back
And still their devious course pursue,
To keep the path that others do.
But how the wise old wood gods laugh
Who saw the first primeval calf!
Ah! many things this tale might teach,
But I am not ordained to preach.

—Sam W. Foss.

THE RECONCILIATION OF OPPOSING FORCES.

So it happens that in every human organization there is bound to be a conflict of opposing interests, and the only solution is through the method of give and take. As a human being a man has a right to freedom, but he must accord equal freedom to others. The golden rule is the all-sufficient guide in social and industrial life. As a member of an organized body, be it union, church, or state, a man must sacrifice something in return for the benefits he receives. Here, again, he can put the same golden rule into practice. The strongest State is that which can permit to each member the greatest freedom—religious, social, industrial—but which, at the same time, demands that each member in his activities shall have regard to the comfort and welfare of his fellows. It is just possible that on this continent individualism has pushed itself forward too prominently—that it has been selfish in the extreme. It is also possible that in the smaller defensive groups the individual has been unduly suppressed—all of which is another way of saying that ideal conditions do not yet prevail.

THE FARMERS' DELEGATION.

In light of the above, what shall be said of the farmers' delegation to Ottawa? This, in the first place, that it was not there to seek favors for a particular class, but to seek redress of wrongs. In asking relief from certain burdens it spoke for all classes and conditions. If these men had gone down in an individualistic capacity, simply as representing a special class which was endeavoring to win an advantage over other classes, they would have received scant courtesy; but as they truly represented prevailing sentiment on the chief matters submitted, their presentment must be considered seriously.

Nor is it difficult to forecast at this stage just what redress they will obtain. On the question of chilled meat they will be promised consideration; the question of terminal elevators will be decided in their favor, and the government will go even further than requested. As to reciprocity, there will be a relief in the matter of duty on agricultural implements and a few other articles—just enough for campaign purposes. But when it comes to the matter of the Hudson's Bay Railway, the present railway interests will prevail. Government construction and control may be decided upon, but it may be depended upon that when it comes to the actual operation of the road, the present companies will be in evidence, and the new rates will be the very thing that will keep up the rates on existing lines. There are two reasons for saying this. In the first place, the existing roads cannot afford to have an independent road in operation. They can afford to pay not one or ten millions to have matters come their way, but tens of millions. The new road must be theirs at any cost. In the second case, elections cannot be run without money, and there are no contributors to election funds equal to railway magnates. So it may be taken for granted that the chief petition with regard to the H.B.R. will not be heeded unless the people put up even a more stubborn resistance than has yet been offered.

What are people to do? Just keep on agitating, of course. Every man should besiege members of the House with letters. They cannot use bullets, but they can use billets until such time as they are permitted to use the ballots.

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