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CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH

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WEALTH FROM CORRUPTION

It is very difficult to prove bribery and corruption under the civil law. Contracts can be broken if they have been brought about by corruption. Yet, it is so difficult to prove this corruption that government contracts that these contracts are seldom broken.

America was a continent inhabited by the Indians. Even recently great stretches of the West of Canada were unoccupied. If ever there was a region where the people might become possessed of great property for the benefit of the nation, it was Canada. Yet vast timber limits have been granted to private corporations. Large stretches of grazing land have been given to a handful of men. Great franchises for the construction of railways are given and the government guarantees the repayment of monies invested by private citizens. The government takes the risk while a small group of foreign capitalists reap the benefit.

All this alienation of the public domain looks suspicious. This suspicion deepens when members of Parliament, after a few years of serving the people, become enormously wealthy. Year by year Canada grows poorer and her rich men become more wealthy from acquiring the wealth and natural resources that once belonged to the people of Canada.

Before a charge of corruption can be maintained in the civil courts, it must be proved that certain individuals gave a bribe to certain other individuals to make them betray the interests of their country and violate their trust. Before corruption can be proved, there must be witnesses who beheld the corrupt transaction. When corruption has taken place the parties to it make sure that there are no witnesses about. Thus, it is impossible to prove the corruption and the parties who want to make a dishonest million at Ottawa can do so with impunity.

The people are disgusted with the conditions at Ottawa. They see no remedy because they remember the days of Conservative rule and do not trust the Opposition. The people still hold to the idea of private property and the validity of contracts between the nation and private individuals. They want Canada to pay her debts and to fulfill her agreements. Consequently, there is a deep despair in the hearts of many patriotic non-socialist citizens. They know that corruption reigns and that they cannot prove it and they think they must pay off all the corrupt debts and fulfil all the corrupt bargains that have been made in the past by corrupt members in the name of Canada.

Later on these citizens will find the hopelessness of trying to fulfil corrupt bargains and they will rebel. They will take the attitude that the C. P. R. was conceived in sin and born in iniquity. They will not be able to prove it legally, but the moral certainty of this fact will strike them so forcibly that they will expropriate the C. P. R., and take it without paying anything for it. The same will happen with the G. T. P. The same may happen to our protected mills. The people of Canada will come to the conclusion that cotton mills and sugar mills that have been paying their proprietors twenty and thirty per cent through protection for years, will have been sufficiently paid for by the people of Canada. They may take these mills without paying the present proprietors anything for them. Even now the muttering of the coming storm can be heard. The serious honest-minded Canadians, who may scorn the name of socialist, are sick at heart at the corruption and selfishness in national life and are ready for a drastic pruning of dividends.

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP

It is a peculiar fact that in Anglo-Saxon countries the government is supposed to own only those things which do not yield a profit. If a railroad will pay, Canada immediately gives the franchise to a group of dividend-hungry men and guarantees their bonds. If a railroad will not pay then Canada builds it. The fertile West has been handed over to the G. T. P. In the barren rocky East Canada builds the line. Canada built the I. C. R., and runs it

because it does not pay. At the time of building it was a question whether the C. P. R. would pay or not. There was a chance of its being profitable so Canada practically furnished the money to build it and gave it to its friends. Now that the I. C. R., shows signs of paying dividends in the near future, the Montreal Gazette and papers of a like ilk think that Canada should hand it over to some private company.

Canada builds the canals because they are not a paying proposition. She gives away her timber limits because they will pay. Great Britain in 1907 had a debt of £774,164,704. Her assets were £43,000,000. The German empire with an equal debt possesses assets in forests, mines, railways etc., equal to twice the amount of the Imperial debt.

It would be a welcome change did our Canadian Legislators run those things which will pay and hand over to the capitalists and profit-hungry charter seekers those things which are run at a loss.

GRAFT

It is frequently declared that socialism is not possible because there would be so much graft under government management that the whole of the commerce would be disorganized. We do not see the force of this argument. What we do see is that under socialism graft would disappear.

To the keen observer graft is mostly found where private interests come into contact with government officials. Graft arises when a private company or person, wants to sell something to the government at a profit, or to obtain some profitable government contract. When the government wants to buy land the seller will demand a big price and is willing to give part of his unjust profits to the government officials who will negotiate the deal and bring the purchase to a successful conclusion. If the government is about to alienate its forests there will be eager purchasers who will want to get the timber cheap and will pay the government officials a goodly sum if they will alienate the property of the people of Canada at a nominal price. When the government wants to get material the contractors will tender high and the government officials will get their rake-off if the deal goes through. Thus the graft is seen to find its chief lurking place where the interests of the people and of the private individuals come into conflict. When the government has bought a piece of land and the contractor has put up a building upon it to be used for public purposes the graft is finished. The graft can only get in again when the building is sold. If the government should declare that the franchises cannot become private property, that the forests and lands of the people are inalienable, then there can be no graft in the buying and selling of these things. If the government performed its own contracts there could be no graft through private individuals tendering at high prices.

In the United States the railroads get fat contracts for carrying the U. S. mail. In Canada the railroads get contracts for mail carrying. The government pays and the railroad receives and there is a chance here for officials to get a rake-off; but when Canada owns the railroad there can be no graft. The people own the I. C. R. The I. C. R., carries the mails. If the railway receives too much for the work the people of Canada get the profit. If the railway gets too little, the people save in having cheap carriage of mail.

Under socialism when all the industries are owned by the people and democratically operated and managed by the workers, the only chance for graft would be in grafting on the salaries of the workers. This kind of grafting would raise such a cry that the most covetous politician would hastily fly to cover. Socialism will cure grafting. It is the only thing that can do it.

Many people do not like socialism. Of course they do not. They like to live off the work of others and persuade themselves that they are a superior brand of mortal because they do not have to work.

DIVIDING UP

Every socialist becomes fatigued with having to refute the slander that socialism means dividing up the wealth of the world. If there is one thing that socialism does not stand for it is dividing up. Socialism will prevent the dividing up of the wealth in so far as that wealth is represented in the means of production.

It cannot be said that the post office aims at dividing up the wealth of the nation. The post office system has been organized to give the people cheap and efficient mail service. The titles of the post offices and the mail bags and mail carts are vested in the king in trust for the people of Canada. The post offices are not the possession of individuals, nor of companies. One individual does not own a million dollar's worth of stock in the post office. The post office is owned by all the people of Canada.

Every citizen of Canada has the right of entry into a post office for the purchase of stamps and the mailing of letters. A postmaster cannot refuse to transmit a duly posted letter in the same way that a bank manager can refuse to accept a deposit and transmit an accepted draft. A postmaster cannot refuse to register a letter in the same way that a landlord can refuse to let a vacant house.

Socialism aims at preventing the accumulation of the title deeds to mills, factories and homes in the hands of a few persons. Citizens must live in homes and landlords can refuse to accept tenants. Workingmen must work in mills and under our present system the decision of a few men can close a chain of mills, lock out ten thousand men and deprive them of their means of life. Socialism says that such power is too great for a few irresponsible men to exercise. The titles of the factories, mills and the homes should be vested in all the people.

In a cold climate like Canada men must have homes in which to live. These homes should be furnished to the citizens at cost. No man should be given the right to collect large sums of money in rent simply because he has been cute enough to capture the title deeds of certain houses. The same applies to mills and factories. Men must work in mills and no set of men should be allowed to draw large revenues from mills in dividends. The workers should be given every opportunity of working at the highest price and in the most healthy surroundings. Socialism does not advocate the transference of dividend bearing script from the present owners of factories to the workers in the factories. Socialism aims at preventing both capitalist and worker from becoming the possessors of factories and mills. The title to these should be vested in King Edward in trust for the people of Canada. The workers would no more own the mills than postmasters now own the post offices. This is as far from dividing up as socialism is from anarchy.

The Tories were frightened at the Liberal policies of the past. Yet no cataclysm has happened to the human race under Liberalism. The Southern slave owners were certain that the abolitionists would overturn society. Yet the United States of America still exists. Socialism will not destroy the happiness of the human race but make it more complete.

British and French capital is coming to Canada and Canada is standing in astonished hopefulness. Wait a few years. Canada will become as sick of capitalistic development as England and France have become.

The farmer who works with his hands will be tremendously benefited by socialism. The landlord who owns many farms and lives off the rent derived from the labor of others will have to get to work and do something useful.

Machinery is becoming so productive that, under a proper system of management, all men can have plenty of the necessities of life and at the same time plenty of leisure.

SELF-CONFLICT

There are many persons with every advantage open to them in the line of wealth and education who do nothing worth while. It may be that this negative result arises because the individual has been too sheltered and the brain tissues have not developed through lack of necessity for effort on the part of the individual. This negative result may also result because the individual is the battle-ground of conflicting ideas none of which gain the mastery.

There must be, for success, a unity in a man's ideas in the same way that a nation to be strong must not be torn by internal dissensions. One man may be ambitious and his ambition will unify his nature. He will bend all efforts toward self aggrandizement and will become famous and wealthy. Another man may become overpowered by the might of the Christian philosophy and will become a great power in the religious world. Another man may seek truth with all his heart and with all his energy and may lead the thought of a mighty nation. Such was Confucius.

But a man may become the sport of conflicting ideas and conflicting tendencies. He may have a little bit of ambition and a little bit of religion and a little bit of the desire for truth. His religion will hold him back from his ambition; his ambition will nullify his religion, and his desire for truth will hurt both his ambition and his religion. He will be in self conflict and will be the possession of a non-unified brain. The result will be that he will go through life swayed religiously with religious men, burning with ambition in the presence of the ambitious, and sitting in confusion in the presence of the learned. When he comes to die he will lament a wasted life, the result of the never settled self conflict, and the lack of an unified idea.

NATION CONFLICT

Just as the individual must be unified for success, so must be the nation. There must be the central idea governing the government of the nation. When the government is in the hands of an oligarchy and that oligarchy is divided against itself, the whole nation is in peril. When the oligarchy, or master class, is unified and the governed are content, the nation will be strong.

The master class, however, may be unified and the governed discontented. The master class may hold to one philosophy of government and the governed may hold to another. In that case, the nation will be in conflict with itself, and will be torn by contending classes.

The ruling class will declare that they are the upholders of government and order. They will declare that the people who oppose their rule are the fomenters of trouble, disorder and anarchy. The master class will hold the unthinking with them. The beginning of a new form of government is always attended with more or less disturbance and dislocation of previous conditions. And unthinking persons will consider that temporary upheaval will result in permanent chaos.

The rebellious governed, knowing their wrongs and the oppressions of the ruling class, knowing also the basis of their new philosophy, will hold that the master class are reactionary and the preventers of human progress.

Thus, the lines will be drawn and the nation will be divided against itself. Both factions will be guided by their ideas and will oppose each other because they are under the influence of diametrically opposed mental concepts. If both sides are equally powerful the nation will go to destruction and both sides will consider the other to blame for the national decay.

The lines were recently drawn in Turkey and the upholders of the newer ideas have won through bloodshed and temporary disorder. France is in turmoil where the upholders of a newer form of government are fighting reactionary republicanism. Clemenceau puts the blame upon the socialists for the present dissensions. Yet he himself, is as much to blame when he resists the new order of things. In Germany the forces of reaction are maintaining ordered government according

to old ideas by the power of military force. The world over the nations conflict is becoming apparent. In the approaching crisis a man in conflict with himself will be tossed hither and yon by the opposing forces.

SOCIALISM AND MORAL REFORM

Coincident with the spread of socialism is the spread of the moral reform idea. The Layman's Missionary Movement has struck its roots deep into the Anglican church. The Methodist district meeting at Kingston has adopted a resolution calling upon its members to dissociate themselves from any institution that sells liquor. Purity leagues and Salvation Army harangues are prevalent. Capitalist papers announce that there is a great moral awakening.

The times are out of joint. There are crying injustices and great cruelties. There are the over rich and the hunger marchers. The cruelties and immoralities of the present age are unnameable. The conditions bear hardest on those who work and those who work are showing signs of great unrest.

The socialists come forward with their policy of fighting for the complete emancipation of the working classes. They declare that the master class must be abolished. Their ideas are taking firm root in the minds of those who toil. The upper classes feel the coming of their abolition and are sore afraid.

Hence they revive their old remedies, the preaching of religion and the advocacy of morality and justice,—not true justice but capitalist justice. The slaves are on the verge of revolt and are numerous and powerful. The masters fear and come to the slaves preaching that they shall be treated better. The slaves are discovering that they are living in hovels. They have always lived in hovels but did not realize the injustice. Now they awake, and the masters devise schemes for model tenement dwellings. The slaves are restive under their burdens. Hence the Laymen's Movement to teach them to be good. The slaves are shocked and rebel against the immoralities of the master class to whose lusts the working girls fall victims. The slaves are wrath, hence the master class trot out the idea of purity leagues. As the slaves are about to rebel against the iniquity, the masters pledge themselves to become moral.

As a dog returneth to his vomit so a master class to its iniquities. The slaves will continue to suffer and the master class will preach morality for itself in times of fear but will not practice it. The common people must depend upon themselves and must capture the means of life away from the master class. Until that time comes the masters will continue to abuse their positions of trust for their own selfish or immoral ends.

At times some particular evil will have to go, such as the saloon. The saloon is going simply because it stands in the way of dividends. The saloon interferes with the productive power of the wage slave. Hence it has to go. The master class still drink their expensive wines in their clubs. The passing of the saloon is a good thing but it cannot be hailed as a triumph for moral reform. The master class will tolerate all evil among their own members but their slaves must keep themselves in fit condition to do the harsh bidding of their masters.

The Canadian sugar-kings and cotton lords have not got what they have by their own ability. The Canadian people taxed themselves through the protective system. These men became wealthy by legalized robbery.

Six thousand miners are striking in the Kanawha coal field in West Virginia. The mine operators had ordered the long ton to replace the short ton as the standard of measure for coal mined.

There is a good time coming for the laboring man and laboring women. That good time will depend upon their own actions. To get it they must organize and conquer the political power.

CAPITALISTS UNNECESSARY

Capitalists are becoming unnecessary. Capitalism is its own grave digger. In times past in the beginning of the capitalist system of production a man would work with his own hands using his own tools. He would be nothing but an artisan. As custom came his way he would employ other men and work with them. He would now become a sort of foreman and his increased income might be put down to his directing ability. Later on, he would buy machinery and appoint a foreman to do the work and keep an eye on the laborers. He would manage the business, but do no manual work himself. Later on, as business increased, and the business became better organized, he would employ a manager while he himself would retire. At this stage he becomes useless to the business and his revenues are now derived from the ownership of the mill alone. His income may be still considered as a sort of old age pension, as a reward for good work done and his due. When he dies, however, and his heir inherits, the new owner becomes a dead weight on industry. He has never done a day's work in the mill. All he does is to draw a large revenue and to spend it on himself.

Other mills have been built up in the same manner and other heirs have inherited the title deeds to them. These mills become consolidated; expenses are cut down, and the revenues going to the owners are correspondingly greater. Thus is created a rich idle class who live because they own the machinery of production at which men must labor. They do nothing useful. Their mills are run by salaried agents and the whole commerce of the country goes on without their aid.

As industry becomes more and more settled and as better lines of commerce develop, more and more men are thrown out of employment and into the class of the idle poor. The actual workers must work harder in order to hold their jobs because the idle are clamoring for work at the gates of the factories.

As the rich live on dividends and dividends depend on trade, the products of the mills must be sold for the rich to get their income. The poor cannot buy for lack of money and so the rich are constantly threatened with reduced incomes. The whole system becomes outworn and a new system must take its place.

The rich own the means of production which they must often cause to cease working because the poor are too poor to buy. The poor need many things which they themselves could produce did they but have a right to work in the factories. Under the present system were the poor allowed to work in the factories to make goods for themselves, the rich would not be able to get their dividends as the market would be cut from under them. Thus the factory owners would keep their factories closed or limit the output while the poor go hungry and ragged and shelterless.

The only remedy is for the government to take over all the means of production and run them in the interests of all the people and without regard to dividends.

The gas companies of New York overcharged their customers and have had to hand back a lot of money to the plain people. So far over seven million dollars have been returned. This but shows how profitable it is to get hold of a franchise by graft and work the people for all they are worth. In New York the companies have had to return a part of their graft. In other cities all the enormous profits are pocketed by the franchise holders and spent on automobiles, yachts and European trips.

The small farmer who owns his farm and works it enjoys a heavenly existence compared with the laborer who has to beg to be allowed to work and must pay rent to get a home. But the little farmer's lot is becoming harder and harder. The same class which robs the laborer is robbing the farmer more and more each year. The small farmer may not like socialism but he will have to come to it for his own protection.