

The Maddening Crowd

**The Truth About the Strikes: Capital's Ca' Canny:
The Only Remedy**

By JOHN JAGKS

(From the "Labor Leader," August 14, 1919.)

ISN'T it really time that someone told the truth about strikes? Lots of people think it is. But what is the truth?

Here is Sir Robert Hadfield, the great Sheffield steel magnate, telling the readers of the Empire News his idea. It is that direct action is

a deliberate effort to challenge the Government. Strikes are damaging to industry; they restrict output; they make the necessaries of life scarce, and therefore dear; they shake the stability of industry and they handicap employers in competing for big contracts, and therefore rob the workers of work. The strike is usually an admission that negotiation has failed.

Now all that is true, and if nothing remained to be said, I, for one, should not advocate a strike even as the last desperate hope.

But more does remain. The Hadfields don't hint at the case for the have-nots. Sir Robert Hadfield carefully ignores the fact that there is another side to the strike shield. He does not point out to the Empire News that at the present moment there is more damage being done to industry, more suffering, and more scarcity of necessaries due to the Strike of Capitalists than there is due to the strikes of the workers.

If you total up the numbers of men who were on strike last week in the coalfields, on the Liverpool trams, the police forces and all the other industries, the result will be found to be less than one hundred thousand. And at the same time there were a million or more workers out of work owing to the strike of Capital.

For every man who is out of work is so because Capitalism is refusing to perform that duty the performance of which is its sole justification. For every man who for one reason or another refused to work there were at least ten for whom Capitalism refused to "find work."

And if it is the duty of the wage-earner to work, no matter how little he may be inclined to do so, no matter how many grievances he may have, it must be the equal duty of Capital to find him work no matter how Capitalism may distrust its ability to earn a profit or a satisfactory profit.

The master class can't have it both ways. They can't say logically or justly, "The workers must produce more and more," and at the same time reserve to themselves the right not to produce at all unless they can be sure of a profit.

Yet that is exactly what they do say or they act upon the assumption.

They expect the workers to go on working without any guarantee that the more they produce the more they will enjoy. They expect the workers to go on working to enable the Nation to pay off its debts. They expect the workers to perform their function, which, they say, is to work without question; but they deny, in deed if not in word, the right of the nation to insist that they perform their self-professed function of finding work unless their remuneration shall be to their satisfaction.

The consequence is that at a time when we are on the verge of national bankruptcy, and when the lords & s. d. are lamenting over the unproductivity of the workers who are actually at work, the same lords are holding up their capital and declining to allow willing workers to apply themselves to it for the purpose of creating the wealth for lack of which, we are told, the nation will perish.

I am not blaming the Capitalists. I am blaming the Government. Why should a Capitalist risk his money in industry when he can invest it in Victory Loan or Funding Loan at a high rate of sure interest?

And why should the Government not compete with starving industries for capital? It must compete while it continues to maintain an army on the Rhine, an army in Ireland, and two or three armies in Russia. The Government is spending over four millions a day on these enterprises. This means the diversion of capital from production; it means the withholding of the labor of several millions of workers from production; it means the employment of ships on the transport of munitions of war instead of upon the transport of food and raw material.

It, therefore, means such a condition of society that Capital refuses to operate.

So Capitalism is on strike, and will remain on strike until things are more settled. But things will never be more settled until Capitalism consents to perform its sole function of "finding work." This it will not do while it can earn a sure five per cent. by lending to the Government, even though the Government wastes the money on trying to destroy Lenin and Trotsky and keeping Ireland in irons.

How to get Capitalism to perform its function of finding work for the million or more out of work? That is the question upon the successful solution of which the future of the country depends. There is no answer except this: Either Capitalism (the private control and ownership of capital) or the present Government must cease to exist. But as the present Government has no intention of destroying Capitalism by making capital a communal or national possession, both must cease to exist. The present Government—the Government of Lloyd George and Bonar Law—must be wiped out and room made for a Government which will not hesitate to make capital productive, even if it cannot be made profitable.

The needs of the people are more urgent than the need of profit. Capital, under those who at present control it, will not do its duty. It must be taken out of their hands and put in the possession of the democracy, and under the control of those who can use it. The tools to the man who can use them!

The Capitalists are not using capital. They are abusing it by lending it for enterprises in which the democracy does not believe. That capital was produced by the workers. It is necessary to their existence. It is necessary to the solvency of the country. It is necessary to prevent us from degeneration into anarchy, chaos and bloody revolution.

The Government must break the strike of Capitalists. It can do so only by taking over capital—the machinery of production and exchange—and using it for the purpose of creating a better State in Great Britain—and leaving Russia to Lenin.

This, of course, the present Government will never do, since it is a Government of men more concerned for the maintenance of the privileges of property than for the propagation of the happiness of the people.

But how can this Government be wiped out? It will not obey the mandate of the by-elections, and get out. It recognizes that when it does go, a Government will take its place that will attempt to use the capital of the country for the good of the people of the country. That will inevitably entail the transference of capital to public ownership, and the end of luxurious idleness on the one hand, and starvation on the other hand.

So the Government will cling to office as long as it can, and then it will attempt to get back to power for another lease of life on some scare stunt.

I think the "sensational" stories of Red gold that are now going round are being told for the purpose of making the muddily-minded believe that we are living on a volcano, and that only the strong hand of a Lloyd George can save us from destruction.

As a matter of fact, it is the strong and grasping hand of the Lloyd George clique that is making des-

WHAT OF THE WEST?

Remember those boys in Stony Mountain. Word comes through that they are taking it easy. Bail has definitely been refused. An appeal has been sent out from Winnipeg for demonstrations in their behalf. But whatever is done do not forget the Defence Fund. No effort should be spared to put the stiffest of fights up at the Assizes. This on general principles as well as for the sake of those on trial.

Take up collections at your union meetings, picnics and at the workshop.

Send all money and make all cheques payable to A. S. Wells, B. C. Federationist, Labor Temple, Vancouver, B. C.

Collection agency for Alberta: A. Broatch, 1203 Eighth avenue east, Calgary, Alta.

Central Collection Agency: J. Law, Secretary, Defence Fund, Room 12, Labor Temple, Winnipeg.

Contributions will be acknowledged through Labor and Socialist Press.

Lawyers for the defence in Vancouver, Bird, Macdonald & Earle.

Because of discrimination against contributors, whose names have been published as sending in moneys for the defence fund, acknowledgment in future will be made by mail.

TOO FILTHY

We were asked to publish some extracts from a book on the inside history of Canadian Politics, but we refused. This is a family journal.

URGES TRADE WITH SOVIET RUSSIA

Oscar T. Crosby, President of the Inter-Allied Council on War Purchases and Finance at Paris and Assistant Secretary of the United States Treasury during the war, is quoted in an interview in the New York "World," August 3, as follows:

"What we need concerning Russia is the truth only. Sending two or a dozen men to investigate Russia is a grotesque proceeding. Thousands should go—that is, all who want to go..... Russia will work out her own destiny, and we should permit private business to be resumed. Others will trade with Russia; and we will have to, or lose our fair share."

MILWAUKEE, Wis., Sept. 3.—Cudahy Brothers Company, packers, today pleaded guilty in District Court to twenty-three violations of the cold storage law and was fined the maximum amount of each charge, totalling \$2300.

truction of the present state of society not only certain but desirable.

Yes, the putting out of the Scotland Yard alleged "discoveries" as to "Red Gold"—by the way, I've not seen any, and don't I deserve some?—and the simultaneous "determination" to tackle profiteering (which can't be defined) are probably the preliminaries to an appeal to the country in the hope that once again the people can be bamboozled into believing that you can make paradisaal purses out of guinea-pigs' ears.

But nothing is to be hoped from a General Election unless the party which goes into power means to make capital "find work," for Capitalism will continue its partial strike until it can see a certain six per cent. or more as a result of its activity.

And don't forget that when Capitalism downs tools, the Government gives it employment at five per cent. interest. When Labor downs tools the Government gives it—what?

It is not the spasmodic strikes of Labor that are causing the unrest. They are mere symptoms of the social disease due to the fact that Capitalism by going on strike has induced a fever. The bacillus of the present unrest is not Bolshevism but Bossselfishness.