

## Western Clarion

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## EDITORIAL

### THE POOR INVESTOR.

SOME folk with a taste for statistics and a point of view of their own to advance, are able to turn figures upside down and arrange them so to their liking, that we sometimes think there must be a charm in arithmetic which our school days failed utterly to bring home to us.

As for instance "The Buzzer,"—presumably the "Official Organ" of the B. C. Electric Ry. Co., Limited.

It regularly presents in each issue a formidable array of figures which would demonstrate to you, if you didn't know better, that the matter of owning a street railway and electric lighting system is a thankless and unprofitable task, undertaken first in order to meet the needs of the people, and then to pocket an always negligible profit, but this last only if such should happen to be left over after expenses are met and the system kept in good running order.

"The Buzzer" is printed in green ink, and that's appropriate anyway. We don't mean appropriate to its casual readers either, for in spite of the quite commendable advantages that accrue from an average school education, the apprentice on his way "home" from the slave pen, knows well enough that "The Buzzer" is intended to show him how well public utilities are managed these days, even if he considers himself deserving of all the credit that would belong to a squirrel for managing to squeeze his way in.

But we set out to admire the arithmetic under the caption "Missing—\$95.50." We are told that Mrs. Blank, of Liverpool, bought \$100 worth of ordinary B. C. E. Ry. stock in 1908. Mrs. Blank, of course, saved a little money "by her work." But for that \$100 worth of stock she paid \$145 because it was then at a premium. Since then she has received an average annual return of 3.6 per cent, on an investment of \$145. So there you are.

In the first place you are expected to learn that the street railway company's owners are all moulded after the fashion of Mrs. Blank (who saved her \$100 by her work), and you are supposed to feel sorry for them because they cannot realize more material substance than 3.6 per cent, upon the labor of those who run and operate their street railway for them.

Let's look at Mrs. Blank's case again. The paragraph says her stock was bought at a par value of \$100, and that she paid \$145 for it, as it was regarded as a gilt-edged security in those days (1908). Today, because public utility securities are not good investments or "for some reason," her stock is worth only \$49.50—and so we have the caption—"Missing—\$95.50."

You are supposed to infer that the B. C. E. R. Co. received \$145 for that stock, and that it has paid its return percentage upon that basis. Here are the columns:

1908 .....	\$8.00	1914 .....	\$8.00
1909 .....	8.00	1915 .....	Nil
1910 .....	8.00	1916 .....	Nil
1911 .....	8.00	1917 .....	Nil
1912 .....	8.00	1918 .....	Nil
1913 .....	8.00	1919 .....	3.00 dividend 3.00 bonus

"The Buzzer" says she consequently received an average annual return of 3.6 per cent. on an investment of \$145.00. This is quite true, but she did not pay that sum to the company; the stock was sold on the market and she paid \$145 to the private stockholder who paid no more than \$100 for it. So that all the B. C. E. Ry. has to account for is \$100, and with that amount at its disposal it paid, instead of 3.6,—5.1 per cent. per annum upon all of poor Mrs. Blank's money that came its way.

Not that we are concerned at all with the difference between these rates of interest. Financial concerns have always been anxious to hide away from public knowledge the actual figures of their returns, and this is only a local example of a carefully presented statement, which, however dexterous its figuring may be, yet shows that the workers of that company presented to somebody who did not work for it value to the amount of \$62. So that the actual sum missing is \$62.

And who "missed" it? The street railway workers.

### THE WAGE SLAVE.

IN order that human needs may be satisfied we carry on what is usually referred to as wealth production. This is the process of producing food, clothing and shelter for the human family.

The methods employed in this wealth production have varied with the different periods and stages that society has passed through in its development. Not always had we the alarm clock to startle us from slumber, the steam whistle to prompt us, as to time, nor the gigantic machinery we use today in our labor.

But while the forms under which wealth has been produced have changed, there never has been any process whereby the needs of humankind could be satisfied without labor. From nature the material has been obtained wherewith to fashion and construct all things useful to man, that is, obtained by the hand of labor. Nature provides the needed material and labor moulds it to suit the requirements of mankind.

In past systems, men have been able to produce for their individual requirements by their own efforts. Today the process of wealth production is characterized by a sub-division of labor, so that the workers are dependent upon each other in mutual effort.

But all do not work. We have classes. An employing class and an employed class. The employing class own the machinery of wealth production. The employed or wage-working class own nothing but their labor-power, which they sell to the owners of the machinery of wealth production, and that labor-power or energy is spent in the process of wealth production. The worker sells this energy in order to obtain food, clothing and shelter, and he obtains of these but a bare share.

He works for wages. His constant desire and effort is to get as much as he can—to sell his energy at as high a figure as possible. His employer's interest is to pay him as little as possible. His employer's purpose in buying his labor-power is to realize a profit. The wage worker is not paid for his labor. He is paid for his labor-power, to maintain which a given amount is required of commodities in the shape of food, clothing and shelter. The wages he receives reflect the prices of these things, and to the product of his labor he has no title. The product of his labor belongs to his master, who owns the machinery necessary to the process of production.

The worker is a slave. He produces more than he receives. The surplus belongs to his master, whose existence is maintained through the exploitation of labor.

Today on every hand the workers manifest dissatisfaction and unrest. Their attention is becoming more and more keenly applied to their status as wage slaves in a system wherein they serve to maintain a slave state built upon the exploitation of their labor.

The problem that confronts the wage worker who is conscious of his position is the enlightenment of

the mass of wage workers who are not. That enlightenment will spell emancipation from wage slavery.

### SOCIALISM.

WE are becoming used to the sight of the word Socialism in the public press these days. The next thing will be that the bewildered readers of the news items will themselves institute enquiries as to the meaning of the word that is always thrown at them as something so very terrible and with meaning so hurtful to them and their security of life that it will destroy their home life and cause to perish their every good impulse and notion of healthy life.

The world-wide movement that is embraced in the word Socialism may be understood by all who will learn, by all who are willing to undertake to examine the developing stages through which society passes in its struggle to grow and expand.

Socialists explain their present surroundings through the historical method; that is, they examine the past in order to understand the present and the conditions from which it grew.

Socialists maintain that the ideas prevalent in any stage of society are based upon and change with the methods used in that stage to obtain the necessities of life, which are usually summarized as, food, clothing and shelter.

The average man today knows that steam and electricity were not always used in the labor process of society in all its stages. He knows that a century or more ago crude tools were employed in production. Within his own time he has seen hand labor replaced by machine, and he has grown so accustomed to entering a factory, workshop, mill or mine that he has not considered or questioned the matter of the ownership of these "tools of production" which he must have access to in order to live.

The employing class are the owners of the machinery the wage workers operate. Property ownership is the keynote of the system. And the press, the laws, moral precepts and the functions of the State generally, operate in such a way that will tend to render secure that private property.

The nature of the production process brings men together. They are learning, or they will learn, that together they must operate, not only to produce wealth, but to enjoy it when it is produced.

Society develops. It has developed today to what we call social production.

Socialism is the social ownership of the needs of life that are socially produced.

### "INDUSTRIAL UNION NEWS" EDITOR RESIGNS.

THERE appeared in the "Industrial Union News" (Detroit), official organ of the W. I. U., a discussion upon the need and possibility of a revolutionary (i.e., Socialist) industrial union as a pre-requisite to the attainment of Socialism.

The discussion, which ran through three issues: May 15th, May 22nd and July 10th, 1920, was between the editor "I. U. News," Mervyn Smith, and F. S. Faulkner, who is a regular contributor to the columns of the CLARION.

The subject matter of the discussion is well worked, and the discussion has happily been carried on without rancor and with an evident effort towards thorough mutual understanding.

However, although Mervyn Smith has now been deported from the United States, or has been compelled by the authorities of that country to leave it "voluntarily," he has, independent of that fact, altogether, resigned as editor of the "I. U. News," declaring himself in disagreement with the W. I. U. position and conceptions. His letter of resignation is presented below. Our friends of the "Weekly People," allow it to go as a "remarkable case of change of views."

Mervyn Smith's open statement is worthy of a man whose mind is not closed to the light of reason. His future readers will experience the fruits of his

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