

General Council

I found this interesting and have reproduced it for private circulation. you will find it worth reading. The English are a great race.

15¹²/26

J.P. Phelan

England

Letter written by Lord Frederic Hamilton, author of "Vanished Pumps of Yesterday", etc. descriptive of the Great General Strike in England last May.

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13 Great College St.
WESTMINSTER,
London, S.W.1.

May 17th, 1926.

My dear Mr.

I was delighted to receive your letter with your notes on your English tour of last year, the more so, as two letters I wrote you to your London hotel last year were both returned to me by the Post Office.

Now for my account of the long and carefully prepared General Strike engineered from Moscow which was destined to paralyze the country, and then to bring the British Empire crashing to the ground, leaving the Red Flag flying triumphantly.

I must begin by saying that T.U.C. stands for "Trades Union Council" and O.M.S. for "Organization for the Maintenance of Supplies."

I need not go into the origins of the dispute with the coal miners beyond saying that the Trades Unions had imposed such conditions as to working the mines; had so limited the hours of labor and the output of each man; had raised the wages to such a pitch and had insisted upon such a number of unnecessary men being engaged, that it was impossible to work any colliery in the Kingdom except at a heavy loss.

The owners could have paid the high wages had not the output per man been artificially limited by the Trades Unions in pursuit of their fast policy of "Call Canny" their idea being that the smaller the output per man, the larger the number of men employed would be. This was an attempt to make water run uphill for the laws of economics are inexorable.

Had the dreams of the Trades Unions been realized and all the coal mines in the Kingdom been "Nationalized" the result would have been the same, for if the State or a private individual runs a business at a heavy loss, the upshot is the same--eventually bankruptcy. You cannot defy the laws of economics by using fine phrases and catch-words.

The mines once "Nationalized" the railways are equally to be nationalized and run, not as a profit making concern, but on economic lines.

Our experience during the war showed that commercial undertakings run by Government were invariably inefficient and hideously wasteful and extravagant. If my memory serves me right the state owned Intercolonial Railway of Canada has always been run at a heavy loss.

This was the position last year when Stanley Baldwin started a subsidy to cover the losses in operating coal mines under Trades Unions conditions. In nine months that loss amounted to £20,000,000, or \$100,000,000. This was clearly an impossible situation, and Stanley Baldwin announced that the subsidy would cease on May 1st, 1926, and that owners and men must mutually adjust their differences.

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