

THE CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT BILL

The bill introduced into the House of Commons by F. D. Monk, M.P., for the establishment of co-operative credit societies has passed the banking committee. This bill is such as will enable small holders to secure credit when they need it. It provides a means by which the small farmer or working man can secure assistance which he cannot secure through the present banking system in Canada. The banking system of Canada, or, as it might be well called, the banking combine, exists chiefly for the benefit of the wealthy people and is of very little use to the people of limited means. If the latter do use the present system, they have to pay exorbitant interest rates. Down in Quebec, thanks to the influence of Alphonse Desjardines, M.P., there are now a number of small co-operative credit societies which enable every man, no matter how poor, to obtain credit when he needs it. A striking fact in connection with these societies is that there has never been a bad loan made. The system followed in Quebec is worthy of study. If it can be applied in the rural parts of Western Canada, it will be a great boon to Western farmers.

ROCKFELLER'S PHILANTHROPY

John D. Rockefeller, the Standard Oil magnate, who is virtually the uncoronated king of the United States, is now making preparations to dispose of his wealth for the benefit of humanity. He has already given away about \$52,000,000 in various worthy schemes, mostly educational. Just at present there is a bill before the American Senate to incorporate the "Rockefeller Foundation" by which the Standard Oil millions may be dissipated for the purpose of carrying knowledge and for the promotion of good throughout the world. Mr. Rockefeller has undoubtedly done a great deal of good with his money, but he did a great deal of harm in getting it. It is estimated that Rockefeller has a fortune of \$1,000,000,000, although of course, he himself has no idea of the extent of his wealth. The history of the acquisition of the Rockefeller wealth forms the blackest chapter in the growth of the American republic. The combines, railroads and various enterprises that Rockefeller controls have been made possible by special privileges and by robbing the citizens of the United States of their just dues. In the beginning, it was largely rebates on railway freight rates that gave Rockefeller the advantage over competitors. By this means he killed nearly all other companies and brought the whole business into his own hands. Even if this new scheme of philanthropy is perfected, it will be hard to get rid of more than \$100,000,000 per year and this will not reduce Rockefeller's capital. It is a snug income for a man to have, but it never could be acquired honestly. No honest man ever had or ever will have an income of \$100,000,000 per year. The citizens of the United States are sitting by and watching a privileged few in their midst gobble up all the wealth of the nation. It could be stopped in one year and the citizens be given a fair deal if the legislators in the congress and senate were all honest men. The majority of the legislators are controlled in one way or other by monopolistic influences. It is pretty hard to look thankful when a man like Rockefeller makes a donation to some deserving institution, and the other supporters of the institution know that Rockefeller's beneficence largely comes out of their own pockets.

IRON AND STEEL BOUNTIES

There comes to us like a cool breeze on a hot summer day the announcement that the government will not renew the bounties on the manufacture of iron and steel which expires at the end of the coming fiscal year. Since 1896 these industries have received in hard cash from the Dominion treasury no less a sum than \$14,000,000. This seems

a lot of money for the privilege of having two or three iron and steel industries in Canada. They must have been very weak infants to require so much pap to keep them running. But, by the able support of this \$14,000,000 which the government has given them, they have not only been able to operate, but have also been able to pay dividends. In addition to the tariff protection given these industries and the \$14,000,000 obtained through bounties, they have also been protected in other ways. Railways which receive government support must buy their equipment from Canadian manufacturers. It seems to us that the agricultural industry is one of the most important in Canada. We try to look at this from an unbiased view point, and in doing so, we think that the farmers have as good a right to the \$14,000,000 as do a handful of capitalists. Just imagine what the judicious expenditure of \$14,000,000 could do for the farmers of Canada. Every farmer in Canada has been compelled to pay heavily for the purpose of filling the pockets of the iron and steel magnates. We doubt very much if the farmers like this. We cannot see either, where there has been any reciprocal benefit to the farmers. When we look over the various trusts and combines and see where each farmer puts up \$10 per year for one and, \$25 for another, and \$50 per year for a third, we soon see that nearly every farmer in Canada is being taxed several hundreds of dollars for the purpose of supporting combines. This is a system which gives the manager of the combine the legal right to pick the pockets of the farmers. The farmer has no redress. He must simply sit still and let the combines take all of his money that they wish to and be glad if they have left any at all.

A RAILWAY OWNED COUNTRY

When we sit down and think it over carefully we wonder who really controls this great western country of which we are all so proud. For instance, let us consider a few facts. It is a very rare thing to see a railway brought into a place where the majority of the people concerned would like to see it. The towns and cities of western Canada have a decided grievance against the big railway companies. As soon as a company is chartered, it begins to look around for a place to build. Surveys are run in various directions. Every town along the line is supposed to donate pretty nearly all its available property to the railway for the privilege of having the line come near it. If a town or city will not come to terms with the railway a survey is then run in another direction. The civic authorities usually capitulate and hand over the plunder that the railways demand. When the railways think of building shops or any additional works the town is compelled to come up again with a good donation. When the railway has a hotel to build, there is another chance for the towns and cities to show their gratitude. A private individual can build a hotel in a city and get no bonus whatsoever, but a railway company is always sure of tax exemption, fixed assessments or a free site, or some other of the numerous privileges which the citizens have to pay for. When a survey has been decided upon by the railway and the line fixed, the friends of the railway company get in ahead and gobble up the land. When the farmers come in to get land for legitimate uses, they have to go back ten or twelve miles from the railway and then spend the rest of their lives working for the speculator. Ever since the first railway went through western Canada, the railway history of this country has been one series of hold-ups. There is no power in Canada that can say where a railway has to go, or at least if there is such a power it is never used. Governments vie with each other in giving subsidies to railway companies either directly or by way of bond guarantees. In giving all the various bounties and donations to railways

it seems only right that governments should be able to say where a railway should be built. The governments of the three prairie provinces have guaranteed bonds for railway development to the extent of \$60,000,000 and yet their control over railways is imaginary. In addition to this, the Dominion government has given hundreds of millions of dollars to railways. In fact, the Dominion government practically built the Canadian Pacific Railway from coast to coast and handed it to a private company, retaining little or no control. It is a well-known fact that the big railway companies of Canada can do pretty much as they like. The smaller roads are being absorbed by the larger ones until now three companies control the Canadian railways. The management of these three roads have a good understanding among themselves, and there will never be any competition that will affect the dividends which will be paid to the shareholders. The railways are very nearly kings in Canada, and inside another decade, at the present rate of progress, the heads of the big railways will dictate the policy, not only in all the provincial legislatures, but in the Dominion parliament. We hear a great deal against government owned railways, but there is certainly a great deal more to be said against railway owned governments.

FRUITS OF THE COMBINE

One of the brightest flowers that has been brought to perfection under the Canadian system of protective tariff is that known as the Canadian Cement Company or in other words the Cement merger. It is less than a year since this merger was arranged, and already the people of Canada are beginning to pick the fruit. These fruits come high, but they are necessary and the people must have them. The cities of Canada are almost unanimous in favor of the "Made in Canada" campaign. Just at present they don't like it any too well. The city of Winnipeg has just let a contract for 25,000 barrels of cement at \$2.24 a barrel. Only last July they let a contract and got their cement at \$1.77 a barrel. They are thus contributing 47 cents a barrel or nearly \$12,000 to the pockets of the men who control the cement combine. It is estimated that the three western provinces use upwards of 500,000 barrels annually. That means that this year the people in these provinces who want to use cement and use as much as usual, will be handing nearly \$250,000 to their friends who control the cement combine.

These are cold, hard facts. It must be a very patriotic man who is willing to pay 47 cents extra on a barrel of cement for the sake of getting cement "Made in Canada." This is another example of commercial patriotism. The citizens of Winnipeg do not like the extra tax on cement any more than the other consumers in the west. At the present time the duty on cement coming from the United States is 51¼ cents per barrel. In Duluth, just a short distance from Winnipeg, cement is selling at \$1.05. This is certainly a good case for investigation by the Dominion government. If the House of Commons does not forget to enact the anti-combine bill now before the House there will be a good chance for dealing with the cement combine before another year is ended. The people of Canada are great users of cement and it will be used more and more as time goes on. We doubt very much if there is any particular desire on the part of the consumer to pay this additional price for the sake of the patriotism which is used as the halo of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. The halo looks all right, but when it costs 47 cents extra on every barrel of cement, it makes an expensive halo.

If the domination of the corporative and monopolistic influences is to be held in check there must be inaugurated a bona fide system of "government by the people."