

THE CANADIAN FORWARD

To Our Contributors—

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No notice will be taken of anonymous communications.

All contributions intended for insertion to be addressed to the address given below, and must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

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"It is all nonsense to say that the accumulation of great wealth is the result of great ability. It is the result of great robbery."—Keir Hardie.



THE HIGH COST OF LIVING.

The economic problems entering into the question now generally referred to as the high cost of living have for long been agitating the working-class mind. So marked and so rapid has become the advance in prices of commodities that even our so-called middle classes are finding in this question something more serious than a drawing-room topic.

There is no dispute about the fact that prices have everywhere advanced prodigiously. A glance at what remains in the pay envelope any week-end is sufficiently convincing evidence. Likewise there is little dispute conceivable regarding the assertion that the price of the most important commodity of all—labor—has met with no compensating increase. These two facts side by side are the obvious reasons why this problem has forced itself into public purview.

Social-Democrats throughout the world are amused at the temporizing, jerrymandering methods now being suggested and adopted to dull the keen edge that profiteers have created. It can well be understood that no capitalist municipality or government will introduce a measure that will effectively increase the price of labor commensurate with the increase in price of other commodities.

Wherein lies the secret of the

rapidly increased cost of commodities of general consumption? Any capitalist newspaper seems quite unwilling to explain the problem in its naked truth.

First and foremost, the situation created by the war has a most marked relation to the problem. Germany's merchant marine, which in the past was an important factor in the world's commerce, has been shut off. Over and above this, a not altogether negligible portion of the British, French and neutral merchant service has been destroyed. Add to this the many ships which have been commandeered for war service, and it is readily seen that a sudden limitation in the world's merchant marine has been brought about. The private corporations who own these remaining vessels, the all-powerful shipping combines, using the pretext of extra war risks and the importunate demand for their service, have followed their great god of profit so implicitly that their dividends have grown beyond measure.

Again, it is worth while noticing that many manufacturers have found the belligerent governments such good customers that they have grown to expect equally enhanced prices from the general public. Nor have the vested interests been slow to show their patriotism to the call of profit. The railways have everywhere increased their rates. The dairy inter-

ests have everywhere used the dry summer as an excuse for an entirely disproportionate increase in the price of milk and butter. And behind all these profiteering institutions lies the halo embracing the machinations of high finance, which is seeking a higher and higher return for the money invested in war time.

In short, the high cost of living is but a manifestation of our economic system. Is it not obvious that the problem created by this profit system can only be permanently solved by eliminating profit and making use of the basis of our economic life, by the act of making those who now face the high cost of living on a par with those who now discuss the cost of high living? That process, and that process alone, will prevent a fluctuation in the price of general commodities. With it must come the abolition of the wage system—the commodity of labor can then look to its just reward.

AN ANTHOLOGY OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

N.B.—This is No. 2 of a series of passages culled from the works of the world's greatest sociological writers. In their final form these articles will make a worth-while anthology of Social-Democracy.

IS GREED THE ONLY INCENTIVE?

With how little wisdom is the world governed? What do you think of the morality, what do you think of the intelligence, what do you think of the knowledge of these "practical statesmen," these men you cheer and vote for?

They tell you that unless you pay clever men big wages, they will cease to work.

They tell you another day that if you pay clever men at all, they will cease to work.

They declare first of all that it is only lust after money that makes men great.

They declare next that money is such a vile thing that if you pay members of parliament you will ruin the country, because only greedy adventurers will work for money.

Is the swinish lust for wealth the one motive power of all clever men, except our members of parliament?

What do you think is the chief food of genius? Does the prospect of wealth inspire Hamlets or Laocöons, the steam engines and printing presses? The true artist, the man to whom all creative work is due, is mainly inspired, sustained, and rewarded by a love of his art. Milton wrote "Paradise Lost" for \$40. Can greed produce a poem like it? Many improvements in machinery are made by workmen. Often they get no profit. Sometimes the master patents the improvement, pays the drudge a few shillings a week for his ideas and makes thousands. Shall we measure men's brains like corn, or gauge the pressure and the power of fiery passions and quenchless faiths by horse power? All the forces of all the kings on earth cannot make one brave man turn on his heel; all the wealth of the nations cannot buy one pure soul; all the fools in a big city cannot conquer one strong brain; all the drilled and crammed dunces that political economy and hide-bound school systems can band together cannot advance the cause of knowledge or liberty one inch.

Was it greed made Socrates expound

philosophy, or Shakespeare write plays? Was it competition made Watt invent the steam engine? Or Davy the safety-lamp, or Wheatstone the telegraph? Was it greed that abolished slavery? Was it greed made Darwin devote his life to science? Was it greed that unfolded the secrets of astronomy, of geology, or of other important facts of nature? Or did greed give us musical notation, the printing press, the pictures of Turner and Raphael, the poems of Spenser, and the liberties of the English constitution?

This paltry plea about pay! Yet, even if we admit that "pay" is the one prize, the one incentive of life, it would seem as though the men of "ability" are not the men who get the most of it. It would seem a sad thing that Darwin should get no more "pay" than the "clod" who breaks stones. But there are "clods" who break backs and hearts instead of stones, who get more than the men of ability. For instance, Jay Gould, the "financier" got more "pay" and held more wealth than Gladstone, and Carlyle, and Darwin, and Koch, and Galileo, and Columbus, and Cromwell, and Caxton, and Stephenson, and Washington, and Raphael, and Mozart, and Shakespeare, and Socrates, and Jesus Christ ever got amongst them. So perfect is the present system of "pay."

Are the best men of to-day the best paid? Are the most useful men the best paid? Are the most industrious men the wealthiest? Do the noblest and the cleverest men work for gain? Do they get rich? Did the love of gain ever make a hero or a martyr? Will a man do most for love or for money? For honor or for money? For duty or for money? Having no money does a genius become a fool? Having much money, does a fool become a genius? Did any nation, loving money, ever become great?—From Blatchford's "Merrie England."

OUR EDITORIAL MAILBAG

Toronto, Oct. 29, 1916.

Sir,—In your last issue of the Canadian Forward there appeared a letter signed by B. Tromans consisting of a number of dogmatic phrases used by Socialists 40 years ago, which when analyzed have nothing to them. One wonders what kind of men are on the editorial staff who allow so much of their valuable space to be taken up with such rubbish.

"As Students of Evolution" he proceeds as follows:—"To those who imagine that this system of profit will change by a gradual process (that is by evolution) I should advise them to produce the facts."

The facts will be found in the following books: "The Collectivist State in the Making," by Emil Davies; "The Orthocratic State," by Crosby; "The Telegraph Monopoly," "The Railway Trusts and the People," by Frank Parsons.

After Mr. Tromans has read these books he can then write another letter to the Canadian Forward.

Yours, etc.,

BILLY FAIRPLAY.

Who Controls the Press?

During the Presidential campaign in the United States hardly one of the capitalist newspapers in Canada made mention of the fact that there was a Socialist candidate running for President, evidently desirous by such action of withholding the truth—preventing the public from being informed upon a matter of great concern. This is damaging evidence of capitalist policy, and leads us to believe that to them this information is undesirable evidence of "the menace of Socialism."

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