



Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press



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 A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

CANADIAN OLD AGE PENSIONS

Dr. Fontaine, Liberal M.P. of Hull succeeded in carrying the entire House of Commons with him Monday last when his motion declaring for the principle of the establishment of old age pensions in Canada was carried without any dissenting voices.

Herbert Spencer said there is no sight so sad as that of a man willing to work, and able to work, but for whom no work is available. Canada has seen too much of that in the past couple of years.

Something equally pathetic however is the sight of a man who has worked all his life but who, through the casualties of age, is no longer able to make a decent living for himself and his family.

The casualties of war were so striking and unusual that they won immediate sympathy, and in most cases substantial pensions covering such casualties were granted fully and freely. The casualties of industry is something the world has had with it ever since men began to work, and the conscience of the world has been seared to this form of misery.

It so happens that the man at the head of the Canadian government at the present time is a deeper student of industrial and economic affairs than probably any other living Canadian. The burden of war finance may delay the inauguration of old age pensions in Canada, but Hon. Mackenzie King may be trusted to introduce such legislation here as soon as the financial condition of the country would warrant such advance.

THE COAL-STRIKERS' VERDUN

If Falkenhayn had taken Verdun it would possibly have meant the winning of the war by Germany, a fact which justified the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives in attacking and defending that stronghold. So, as several editors recognize, the non-union coal mines of the country are the Verdun of the coal strike; they form the strategic objective of the union strikers' drive and are the key to the strike situation. "The coal strike is being fought out, won and lost, along the rim of the great non-union fields in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Maryland; there is, and will be," declares the Philadelphia Public Ledger, "the real battle-line, 'the big show' of the present strike." Any popular indifference to the strike based on the belief that continued or increased activity in the non-union coal fields would make up for the cessation of output from unionized mines should cease, declares the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"There will be a serious bituminous coal shortage throughout the country inside of four weeks," one of the strike leaders predicted a few days ago. During the first week of the strike the total coal production in the country—3,784,000 tons, practically all bituminous—was about a third of normal and was, in fact, the lowest recorded for any week since the United States Geological Survey has been compiling statistics. Approximate estimates made by union leaders after the strike had lasted two weeks gave a total of 665,000 strikers, something more than 65,000 of whom were recent recruits from non-union mines. More exact figures, not including districts in Kentucky and Alabama, compiled at the United Mine Workers' headquarters, and given to the press from Indianapolis, showed that on April 15, 514,000 union miners were on strike and that 117,000 non-union men had joined, making a total of 631,000.

In the West Virginia sector of the drive against the non-union mines, legal weapons have been figuring conspicuously. Coal-carrying railroads reported a drop of more than 50,000 tons in non-union soft-coal production in the first ten days of the strike. In one important West Virginia field, operators admitted that only about half of their normal tonnage was being mined during this time. The injunction weapon is no new thing in West Virginia, where, it should be noted, the strike situation merely accentuates a campaign for unionization that has been going on continuously and at times spectacularly for years. The operators' attorneys have managed to secure injunctions from a Federal Court covering several different coal fields in the State. The attitude of the union is expressed in this statement by President Lewis of the United Mine Workers:

"The United Mine Workers regard issuance of these writs as an unwarranted trespass upon the rights of citizens and an effort to strip the United Mine Workers of their natural and legal rights as an organization.

"We have no objection to being enjoined from doing things in themselves unlawful, but these writs seek to enjoin the union from committing acts which are lawful."

Editorial Flashes

Why not settle it by permitting miners to strike on Tuesdays and Fridays?

Once it was "marry in haste and repent at leisure," and now it's "marry in haste and repent at leisure" intervals.

When a man cranks a Ford in that jerky way, he's probably keeping time to the rhythm of explosive epithets.

Every time we gasp with dread to see Lloyd George slipping, it develops that he is merely reaching for a better hold.

There seems to be some kind of law against having an adult party without inviting some loud-mouthed fool who thinks he is witty.

About the only moral atmosphere lady jurors have been able to improve is that in the jury room.

As the average American reads of Japan's activities in Siberia, his only reaction is a comfortable reflection that he doesn't care a darn.

Most of the literary critics praise Homer, but "Babe" Ruth knocks him nearly every day.

Modern fairy tale, Goldilocks and The Three Bears—Bare Cheek, Bare Back, Bare Knees.

We doubt, however, whether a radish soup will ever be as successful as a party soup.

The modern young man may have music in his soul, but most of it seems to be in his sole.

An ounce of warm weather on the thermometer is worth a pound of weather forecast.

Advice to young men. If the color of her eyes and the number of her auto license tag start sticking in your memory it's time to watch your step.

It would simplify matters for the short-term marriage and divorce addicts if marriage licenses could be allowed to lapse and expire like other licenses.

Somehow, that Genoa conference reminds us of an autopsy.

SCOTTISH DEER FORESTS RAPPED

One-Sixth of Entire Area of Country Given Over To Such Allocation.

The total area of deer forests in Scotland was, in 1883, 1,975,200 acres. In 1920 this area had increased to 3,432,385 acres—more than a sixth of the total area of Scotland. This fact is divulged by the Report of the Committee appointed by the Secretary for Land in 1919 to inquire into "land used as deer forests."

Last year, it may be remembered, the Committee which was simultaneously appointed to consider the problem of "Game and Heather Burning" in Scotland, issued a majority report with a minority report signed by one member only—Mr. James Scott.

Mr. Scott pointed out that "only ignorance and the numbing effect of custom can excuse public apathy in regard to the state to which proprietors of deer forests and the army of shooting tenants and gamekeepers have reduced so large a portion of Scotland."

From Sea to Sea. He mentioned that farmers have their crops eaten up wholesale and their grazings ruined by deer, that at least nine deer forests are over 40,000 acres, and that a few years ago an alien formed a deer forest of 200,000 acres, "stretching across Scotland from sea to sea."

The authors of the present report evade unpleasant facts as much as possible, and, doubtless, heartily disapprove of Mr. James Scott.

They cannot, however, prevent their record from forming one more chapter in the dark history of the Scottish crofter, whose dispossession was begun by the lords of the big sheep farms in the 18th century, and is being continued today by the lords of big business.

"In some cases," states this report, "sporting tenants offered the land-owners rents higher than any farmer could pay. In others these tenants bought up the rights of the adjoining sheep farmers. In others, farms were bought for the express purpose of forming deer forests."

"We are satisfied that, even at the prices then current, a considerable part of the area afforested at this profit could have been farmed at a profit after paying a moderate rent."

The Committee also comments on the unwritten law with regard to fences, which has caused the ruin of so many crops, and of not a few crofters, in Scotland.

One-Sided Law. According to this iniquitous customary law, "the owner of a deer forest can compel his sheep-farming neighbour to contribute to the cost of erecting a march fence to exclude sheep from the forest. . . . The owner of the sheep farm has no corresponding right to compel the deer forest owner to contribute to the erection of a march-fence to exclude deer from the sheep farm."

The authors of the report conclude with recommendations that a light stock of sheep or cattle should be introduced in those deer forests which are capable of carrying them, and that where deer forests are capable of bearing a full permanent stock they should be restored to pastoral uses, "unless no tenant is forthcoming at an economic rent."

In the last case a compensation should be given for loss of assessable rental.

The Committee also recommends that deer forests, where suitable, should be selected for land settlement or afforestation schemes in preference to land already occupied by pastoral or agricultural use.

HALF AN INCH OF RAIN

What exactly does half an inch of rain mean?

"Half an inch of rain fell yesterday at Beachpool," says the report one day. Is that a great deal, or merely a shower?

It means that enough water fell to cover the whole district to a depth of half an inch—and that would mean a very wet day. On every acre there fell no less than 3,136,320 cubic inches of rain—enough to fill 13,570 buckets, or a tank 8 ft. long, 10 ft. in width and 10 ft. deep. The weight of this mass of water would be 113,250 lbs. or more than 50 tons.

The average rainfall for the whole of this country is about 2 inches a month.

The world's record for rainfall is held by Hawaii. In spite of all that the songs have to say about those charming isles, one locality boasts an annual rainfall of nearly 500 inches—as much as falls on us in twenty years!—Answers.

A pessimist, again, is the man who doesn't bother with the rack under his restaurant chair, but throws his hat on the floor to start with.

Few business groups seem willing to trim their sails until they have made one more desperate effort to trim the government.

Life will never be comfortable for the pedestrian until he invents some kind of disguise that will make him resemble a tack.

MINING THE AIR

Few people realize to what an extent the air is today being "worked" for raw materials.

Many millions of pounds' worth of chemicals is being extracted from the atmosphere every year, among them being some of the newly discovered elements which, until quite recently were regarded as rare scientific curiosities.

Some years ago the term "mining the air" was used by Sir William Crookes, who was among the first to foresee the possible bottling of its constituents as marketable commodities.

The air we breathe consists, roughly speaking, of a mixture of the gases, nitrogen and oxygen, in the proportion of four to one; but it contains considerable quantities of argon and neon, among other things, which have already assumed a serious commercial importance.

It has been recently stated that the annual "output" of oxygen in the United States alone amounts to a thousand million cubic feet, of the present value of nearly three millions sterling.

Oxygen is used on an enormous and rapidly increasing scale in the engineering world, and flame which cuts through steel rails like a knife, for welding, and a dozen industrial processes.

Nitrogen is being trapped from the air on an immense scale for the manufacture of fertilizers. In Norway 115 tons of calcium nitrate fertilizer was made with atmospheric nitrogen during 1905; by 1909 the output had increased to nearly 10,000 tons. Today it is enormous.

Every modern country possesses an inexhaustible supply of nitrogen for the manufacture of explosives for the next war.

The air is driven over an intensely hot electric arc flame known as the "electric sun"—six feet in diameter—and the nitrogen trapped as nitric oxide, from which the nitrogen itself is ultimately combined with other elements to form nitro-compounds.

THEATRE IN APPLE ORCHARD

Bernard Maddiman in London Daily Mail: To depict the Canadian drama a Canadian theatre stands in a 100-acre apple orchard at Naramata in the Okanagan valley of British Columbia.

Downstairs there is the usual apple packing house. Upstairs, however, the proprietor, a poet, Mr. Carol Atkins, of "Rekadom," is endeavoring to evolve a Canadian drama.

In his own words he offers to Canadians a theatre "for the service of beauty and for a true expression of the Canadian spirit."

In the upstairs room there is a subdued blending of greys and velvet greens. Seats ascend in graduated steps.

On each side of the stage there are scenery studios and costume rooms, while above are the dressing rooms. This "home theatre," as it was called, was opened last year by the ex-Premier of Canada, Mr. Arthur Meighen.

It gave on its first night two one-act plays, "Neighbors," by Zora Gale, and "Will o' the Wisp," by Doris Halman.

Since then many plays of distinction have been produced in this orchard left; among others, "The Maker of Dreams," by Oliphant Down, and Sir Gilbert Murray's translation of Euripides' "The Trojan Women." Carol Colby Atkins is a Canadian born poet, the son of the late Mr. Somerset Atkins, of Winnipeg, a nephew of Sir James Atkins, lieutenant-governor of Manitoba.

Though he is a fruit grower, he is also a poet and a dramatic producer. His mythological Indian play was produced at the Birmingham Repertory theatre here in England.

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 A new broom sweeps clean.
 Blood's thicker than water.
 Better an apple given than eaten.
 An old sack needs much patching.
 A fool when he has spoken has all done.
 Friendship cannot stand all on one side.
 Credit keeps the crown of the causeway.
 It is no time to stoop when the head's off.
 Take time when time is, for time will away.
 One gets small thanks for losing his own.
 Leave the court before the court leaves thee.
 One swallow does not make a summer.
 It is an ill wind that blows nobody good.
 An illy-willy cow should have short horns.
 If you may spend much put more to the fire.
 It is an ill cause that the lawyer thinks shame of.
 Better ne'er have begun than ne'er end it.
 Many purses hold friends together long.
 Stamp on a snail and she'll shoot out her horns.

ODD FACTS

Scientists have never satisfactorily accounted for the fact that when a man is puzzled he scratches his head.

Photography is eighty-three years old, the secret of the first pictures, those of Daguerre, having been disclosed in 1839.

Peas were first placed in churches for the use of Norman nobles. Ordinary worshippers sat on three-legged stools.

Hang it, the next time we have a war, let's work it on the pay-as-you-enter plan.

Whatever, a man seweth probably, won't come up. But gardening is good exercise, anyhow.

A muskrat makes the same set of furs last a whole year. But who wants to marry a muskrat!

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