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OLD AGE PENSIONS

When the idea of a universal old age pension is mentioned the hands of the petty bourgeoisie and of the defenders of plutocracy go up in horror. According to the defenders of individualistic capitalism there is much harm in old age pensions for workers. The old age pension applied to the worker would turn free and upright, independent workers into paupers. The old age pension would give the workers the spirit of beggars who cringe for alms. The old age pension would discourage thrift. The poor workers, instead of being thrifty and frugal in order that they may save up a competency for their old age, would immediately begin blowing in all they earn on the most extravagant things, such as a really stylish dress for the wife. The old age pension would work all sorts of evil upon the present character of the worker.

Of course we cannot expect the capitalist-minded to be logical. If they were they would not be capitalistically minded. When the worker is discussed, not as a future pension receiver, but as a present worker, the capitalistically minded person heaps all sorts of abuse upon him. He is a drone, a waster, a spendthrift, a lazy, shiftless person who will not save his money but who scabs his work, wants big pay for little effort, and who will not work when he can idle. In fact, the capitalistically minded person draws such a horrible picture of the worker in the present that a really logical person has to smile when the objector to the old age pensions proceeds to depict what a deterioration will take place in the character of the workers, should they be given old age pensions. The present worker is such a fearful creature that a future deterioration is impossible.

But apart from the inconsistencies of the critic, will an old age pension work deterioration in the workers' character. That is the question of importance. Let us see.

A Superior Court judge in the Province of Quebec gets from five to seven thousand dollars a year. If he becomes ill and cannot continue his active service, he is given a pension. If he stays on the bench as a judge for twenty years, he gets a pension equal to two-thirds of the salary. If he remains on the bench for thirty years, he is retired on full pay.

The worker and the judge are both human beings and both subject to the same reaction to the same environment. When a judge gets seven thousand dollars a year do the people say that the beggar should be frugal and save up for his old age? Not a bit of it. The judge is supposed to be a free spender. He is supposed to "live in a manner befitting his station." There is no talk about the necessity of the judge living on a back street and smoking three-for-five cigars. When the judge gives a wine party to his friends the finger of scorn is not pointed at him. On the contrary the people declare what a fine, generous chap the judge is.

When the judge has done his twenty years just outside the jail doors and he is entitled to free board and keep to the extent of four or five thousand dollars a year from the nation's pocket, does the judge wax indignant at the thought of being fed at the public expense? Not a bit of it. He is anxious for the day to come when he can eat without work. When he gets his pension his friends congratulate him. He smiles and thanks them for their solicitude and declares that he is glad the long pull is over. Never a word about his being pauperized. Never a word about his not having saved enough to live on. All is gay and glad with his friends.

The civil servants of the Dominion government get pensioned off. Last year the Dominion government paid nearly two hundred thousand dollars in pensions. Yet no outcry was raised that the government was pauperizing the civil servants.

There is not a single valid argument against an old age pension for the workers. Yet as long as capitalism exists the funds that could go to support the aged in comfort, will be frittered away in the foolish manner of rent, interest and profit to the useless labor thieves, and the same old stale arguments about pauperized workers will be trotted out to do duty against granting relief to those whose lives have been spent in unpaid toil.

The Canadian Parliament costs about \$38.00 a minute. Plute government comes high but then it is necessary to let the workers think they are governing themselves.

The Potter's Field for the worker, the granite tomb for the labor thief.

If the workers once get the control of the machinery of production it will mean a long goodbye to the capitalist system.

The capitalists tell the workers to be frugal and live on little. The parasites live on the best of the land.

During the last panic in the U. S. it is estimated that seventy new millionaires were created. Capitalism is a fine culture ground for parasites.

The Morgonization of the trusts is proceeding apace in the U. S. The quicker Morgan Morganizes the lesser labor thieves, the quicker will the nation demorganize Morgan.

There are men who can find no work to do and there is work to be done that is not done because such work will not pay a toll to the labor thieves. Socialism will set the workers to work at the work to be done.

The staff of the Montreal morgue has been increased by a third doctor. The victims of Montreal capitalism are getting so many that a third doctor is necessary to look after the nameless and homeless dead.

The workers do the work and the parasites get the revenue. It is a nice system for the parasites. But why the workers think it a fine system is a question the fool workers will have to answer for themselves.

When a financial panic strikes a city the mills shut down. A financial panic shows that the capitalists cannot run industry. When the next panic strikes Canada, why not let the workers run the mills in their own interests?

Revolution makes the capitalists ill. They fatten on reform. Capitalism, with all its tin-trumpet brigade, and pot-bellied manipulators, must go, before the proletarians' chains can burst.—Dan Sproul.

It is not a half bad idea for the workers to get into their heads that they are entitled to all they earn. When they get that idea into their heads there will be a great change in the methods of carrying on political government.

When the British Labor bureaus were opened they were overwhelmed by a rush of unemployed wanting their names taken down for a chance for a job. The decadence of capitalism is shown by starving men in the midst of plenty.

In Montreal the organized workers are becoming wider visioned. They are investigating the cause of high rents. They want cheaper dwelling places. This is a good sign as it shows that even in Montreal the workers are not taking everything that is handed to them lying down.

What will the Board of Control do in Montreal? Will it widen the fashionable thoroughfares? Will it build new thoroughfares through the present poor regions? Such a course will but thrust the poorer tenement dwellings into more overcrowded areas.

Kier Hardie declares that the Labor members are going to maintain their freedom and are not going to follow the Liberals. This will make the Liberals sit up and take notice. If the Laborites will stand straight for the workers against the exploiters they will grow in power.

The Hon. Geo. P. Graham, Ministers of Railways, stated in the House of Commons with regard to the government owned elevator at Port Colborne, "I was not at all sanguine that this elevator, if carried on by the government, would handle any great amount of grain. I think it is no secret that corporations only use government property when they cannot do anything else." There you have the reason why many government undertakings do not pay. The private concerns take good care not to patronize the government service, because the people might wake up to the fact that social ownership is better than private ownership. The remedy is not to give way to the corporations but to expropriate the property of the corporations through the political action of a class conscious workingman's parliament.

THE QUEBEC & LAKE ST. JOHN RAILWAY

There is a little railway that runs north from the city of Quebec to the Lake St. John region. This railroad runs through a new region of the Province of Quebec which has been colonized within the last ten years. This railroad under the capitalist system of rent, interest and profits, has not been able to meet its obligations to the labor thieves. Hence it has been thrown into bankruptcy and a receiver has been appointed.

Under the capitalist method of production the one thing a company must do is to pay its toll to the useless bond holders. If this cannot be done then the business of the company must be wound up and the bond holders will get what they can out of the wrecked business. Thus it is with little concerns that many of them get wiped off the map. Many of the businesses are wound up and vanish.

But a railroad is something that is socially necessary. The Lake St. John region is dependent upon the railway for contact with the outside world. The government of the Province of Quebec will not allow the railway to become defunct. If private initiative cannot run it then the government will have to take over the railroad.

If the railways can pay toll to the labor thieves under a slave driving management the government will not interfere but will let it be sold to some company with the "initiative" of slave driving. The railroad in question will probably be acquired by the Mackenzie and Mann group of labor thieves.

This shows the foolishness of the workers allowing the henchmen of the capitalists to control the government of the machinery of production. The henchmen of the capitalists work on the principle that if profit can be squeezed out of a concern the labor thieves must have that profit. If no profit can be got then the government must run the road "in the interests of the people."

When Socialism comes the ideal of government functions will be altogether changed. The ideal government will not be profit for the labor thieves. It will be income for the persons who do the work. Therefore every working person has a vital interest in the coming of the socialist state.

The Standard Bank of Canada made net profits last year of \$342,258. Some day I will get a special edition out about the banks. There is over a score of them, all nearly useless and yet all piling in a lot of surplus-labor products. This particular bank, took enough from the workers to keep itself going and pay all its bills and expenses, and in addition give to its owners enough to keep in feed clothing and shelter for one year nine hundred Canadian workers. No wonder the bank owners can have personal servants and big houses built. But the working-men vote that way and if they want to vote themselves into slavery they are perfectly free to do so. The slave masters will not stop the slaves working hard to allow the masters to live in idleness.

The Laurier government is introducing legislation to curb the trusts and to force humanity back into competition. The childish thing. Does it not know that this is the day of combination and co-operation? The trust is here to stay. The trade union organizers are here to stay. The trust owners and the labor organizations will fight it out between them as to which shall control the trust organizations. The labor organizations, comprising all the workers, will win out. Then the trust will be the social property of the workers and Socialism will be here. Does wee Laurier and tiny King think they can make a broom to sweep back the social processes?

"After all it is money that counts, not men or citizenship." This is the statement made at the beginning of an editorial in the Montreal Witness, a paper that stands for the individualist system. When a Socialist paper makes that statement the paper is called a materialist sheet. The Witness has frequently criticized Cotton's Weekly because of its Socialist utterances. Yet the Witness gives ex cathedra, and in a crude way, the underlying idea of Socialism. Will the Witness have the logic necessary to follow its dictum to its natural conclusion? I trow not.

The gain of the dividend receiver is the loss of the worker.

THE COMMISSIONIZING OF GOVERNMENT

The Socialists are frequently laughed at because they declare that the old political forms of government will vanish and new forms based on industrial commission will take their place. But right under the observation of these scoffers the old forms of government are vanishing.

Political democracy as we have known it is not suited to modern conditions. Government is a reflexion of the economic struggles and economic needs of the dominant class. That class is now the manufacturing labor-thief class, and the government forms are rapidly being changed to the form of the corporation under which so much business is done.

The writers on Canadian constitutional history point out the fact that the Cabinet is assuming more and more power while the House of Commons is sinking in relative importance. Our cities are no longer being governed by aldermen but by Commissioners. The maxim is being put into practice that government bodies must be business governments. This shows that the government of the whole people is being made to conform to the corporation form.

The corporation form is the one under which nearly all large business is transacted. Under this form the shareholders elect a board of directors with almost unlimited power. These directors choose a president and the president and the board of directors carry on all the business of the concern. They appoint the officials, they lay out the plan of business, they receive and pay out money and once a year the shareholders meet to hear reports on the state of the business and to elect directors for another year. The majority rules and the minority's wishes receive but scant attention.

Those who follow the trend of government evolution perceive that the standard is being made more complete with every change in law and practice. The idea of government functions has changed. The idea of government for representation and protection is passing. Cities no longer elect their aldermen in order that the aldermen may establish a police service and fire service and to levy the minimum amount of taxes. The cities elect Commissioners to run waterworks and gasworks and electric lighting and municipal baths on business principles. Governments are elected to appoint Cabinet Ministers to run railways and telephone systems, and seed farms and cold storage plants and elevators and canals on business principles. The whole of society is going into corporation work.

The Socialists do not want to stop that tendency but to increase and hasten the process. Let the sole corporation be all the people and let the only shareholders be those who participate in the work of production, whether that work be mental or physical. Government by commission under the corporate form is on its way. Let it come to its full fruition.

The Ottawa Electric Company "earned" twenty per cent upon its capital. That is what the plute papers gleefully report. This statement being interpreted means that the labor thieves, owing to their ownership of the machines of distribution, which they did not build, were able to rob living labor power of \$247,285.25. This sum of money represented the average wages of 666 Canadian workers for one year. Thus the street railways of Ottawa gave to their masters sufficient surplus labor to keep 666 persons fed, clothed and sheltered for one year. No wonder the labor thieves can employ numerous personal servants and can have automobiles, etc. The Canadian workers are easy chaps. They don't object. In fact they applaud when the bosses declare that the workers like to be robbed. They won't have anything to do with Socialism. Oh no.

Geo. P. Graham, Minister of Railways, points out a peculiar thing. Although business was better last year than the year before, nevertheless our railroads carried fewer passengers. Graham makes the cute remark that perhaps the people, having more business to tend to, had less time to travel. Graham stumbled onto a wise thought. Business is not always a blessing. When times are bad people take things easy and travel. When the gods of rent, interest and profit are dethroned and men shall live for the sake of living and shall have escaped the terrible driving force of destructive capitalism, then this world will be a better, saner place to live in.

The hellish capitalist system turns the underpaid girl worker into the mistress of the rich labor thief.

The pauperized rich fear Socialism as the pauperized poor fear the taking away of their charity doles.

The vast majority of the crimes committed are the result of economic want. Provide well for the workers and crimes will cease.

The capitalists are going to have some mighty big thinks forced upon them. The growing Socialist sentiment is giving them the shivers.

Wall Street and the Montreal stock exchange get the cold shivers at the mention of radical measures. The thought of Socialism makes the stock markets sick. The reality of Socialism will put the stock market out of business.

The unemployed person becomes the unemployable. Capitalism takes the jobs away from the workers and makes them unemployable. The capitalist looks upon the wrecks produced by capitalism and blames the incompetency of the wrecks upon their own perverse nature.

The old kings used to think that they were necessary and without them the social system would fall. So they used to hang or crucify those who said that kings were not necessary as the overturners of the divine government. Today the capitalists consider they are absolutely necessary for the carrying on of industry and they feel like jailing all those who utter the blasphemy against them that they are unnecessary. In Spokane and in India and Russia and in Germany they jail them. In Quebec they fine them if they go too far. Witness the case of Fournier.

Clifford Sifton has gone in for the hobby of conserving the national resources of Canada. Cliff was once upon a time Canadian Minister of the Interior and under his deft management large tracts of Canada's natural resources were handed over to be exploited and wasted. When Cliff goes in for reform it is proof substantive that the labor thieves do not fear reform one little bit.

The business men of Montreal and the parasites were greatly interested in the election of an honest capitalist Board of Control. There were two reasons for their interest. The first reason was that the little grafters were getting too much of the taxes paid by the labor thieves, and in the second place the parasites were suffering from epidemics of diseases owing to the dirty condition of the city. So the parasites had to bestir themselves for the sake of their own hides.

During the Indian famine wheat was being exported from India in order that it might be sold and the money go to the interest receiving labor thieves of Europe. When the Russians were starving for want of bread wheat was being exported. When famine struck Ireland and reduced her population from eight to five millions, the rents and profits going to the landlord and the interest receivers kept on growing in amount. Yes, capitalism is a beautiful system for those who work not, but own the machines of production. On the other hand it is hell for the workers.

Under Socialism the stock exchanges will go. There will be no chance to buy and sell railroad shares or cotton mills shares or shares in mining companies, any more than there is now a chance to buy and sell shares in the post office or shares in the Intercolonial Railway. Just think of all that will mean in the saving of labor. All the stock exchange news in the daily papers will be abolished. All mining and stock-broking advertisements will disappear. Just think what a saving of type-setting that will mean. The telegraphs will no longer be used to transmit stock quotations. Think again what a saving of useless labor that will mean. All the stockbrokers and their parasites will no longer be able to get incomes from the buying and selling of shares. Think what a lot of useless parasites will then have to get off the backs of the workers. The rent for stockbroking offices will no longer be paid and those offices will thereupon be used for some useful purpose. You workingmen produce the wealth that the stock exchanges with the allied parasites consume. You live cheap and they live high. You produce and you suffer yourselves to be robbed by all these parasites. Are you not foolish?

ADAM SHORTT AGAIN

Adam Shortt is at it again. He has been lecturing to the students of McGill University on Capital and Labor. "Opinions on the subject," he said, "are varied, and go all the way from the extreme anarchist doctrine of the sole possessor to the socialist ideal which says 'all wealth is the product of nature and labor.' Capital is the link between nature and labor. It is a necessity that must be obtained to supply the needs of the people while a market is being found for the manufactured products."

Thus speaks Adam Shortt, whose views are so pleasing to the henchmen of the labor thieves that parliament employs him to give forth noises like the above. I wonder if Shortt ever read any of Karl Marx, and I wonder if he ever heard the story of the old negro who was travelling at night. This negro was going along a road full of stones and roots of trees. The night was moonless and dark and the negro was continually stubbing his toes against the roots and stones. At last he tripped and fell and his wrath broke forth against the established order of things, and he asked the surrounding trees why the Lord had put the sun in the heavens in the day time when it was bright and the people didn't need the sun, instead of putting the sun in the heavens at night when it could shine and keep the night from being black. Professor Shortt reasons just like that old negro.

"Capital," says Shortt, "is the link between nature and labor. It is a necessity that must be obtained to supply the needs of the people while a market is being found for the manufactured products." This view he puts forth against the Socialist view that all wealth is the product of nature and labor. Evidently, according to Shortt, capital is the product neither of nature nor of labor but something different. It is a link between the two. What is capital? Shortt neglects to define it further than to say it is a link.

Capital is the machinery of production used to produce more wealth. Capital is the machines and food and clothing and raw material that goes to reproduce more machines and food and clothing and raw material. Now the machinery used as capital is every bit as much the product of nature and labor as is the new products produced by the machines with the help of labor. Shortt reasons just like the old negro with regard to the sun. It is not the sun that produces light in the day time but light. In the night however, if the sun should shine, there would be light. According to Shortt, it is not nature and labor which produces capital but capital. However if nature and labor combined to produce capital in non-capitalized production, there would be capital. Shortt, although a professor, reasons like a most ignorant man.

But there is a reason for his ignorant reasoning. He is lecturing to students in engineering who will go out and become higher-paid wage slaves to direct the energies of poorly paid wage slaves. So the lecturer cautioned his hearers that, as engineers, they would be in control of men, and must know the raw human material.

Even to the last Shortt maintains that capital is not the product of nature and labor, and in the same breath calls labor the raw material. Shortt reasons like a henchman of the labor thief system, but we cannot blame him. He is economically bound to his job and has to give the dope his masters want, even if the dope be horribly adulterated with sophistries and illogicalities.

Those who are getting a big graft out of the private ownership of the means of production do not want to have the workers wake up to the game that is being played on them. Constitutional history teaches us that property rights are valid only so long as the government is willing to recognize those rights. The moment the government ceases to recognize property rights then vested interest ceases. A tax is confiscation. Competition frequently results in the confiscation of the business of the beaten competitor. So the Socialist doctrine of expropriation of the expropriating labor thieves is backed by constitutional law books. But as that doctrine is against the interests of the ruling class the apologists try to make out that the Socialist views are immoral and unconstitutional. The Socialist doctrines have back of them the same authority that any other political doctrine has. It has no more and no less, namely, the right of power when the governing machinery has been captured and the workers become the dominant power.