

## Power and Petitions

By Florentine

The Montreal Light Heat and Power Consolidated has just issued to its customers a heart-rending appeal to protest to the Dominion government against the "injustice" of the Income Tax Act, which forces the company to pay income tax while the publicly owned utilities of Ontario and other provinces are exempt.

The company's indignation is of course not new. As it says, it has made "protests to the present and past governments, supported by the leading public bodies and the Press of the City and Province, suggesting that Income Tax should be assessed equally upon . . . both publicly and privately owned utilities or that both should be equally exempt. These many protests have been ignored".

Sad, isn't it? So now the company has hit on the bright idea of getting its "263,000 customers" to petition the government to the same effect (petition cards, postage prepaid, enclosed.) Surely at last Mr. Bennett's eyes, blinded no doubt by Socialistic prejudice, will be opened. Here is a private company, making profits, actually compelled to pay a tax on those profits; while the Ontario Hydro, which is mean enough to sell electricity at cost and so makes no profits, gets off scot free. Revolting! Positively Russian. Almost enough to cause a respectable company to stop making profits at all.

Fortunately, however, there are less brutal methods of meeting the situation. Hence the petition, which asks that either private companies should be exempted or publicly owned utilities should pay. Just how to assess a tax on profits which don't exist the petition doesn't explain, but that's a mere detail. The real point is that if the private companies can't get off paying, the public undertakings must be penalized somehow for their criminal omission to make profits for private shareholders. This sort of conduct, if not checked, is bound to undermine our institutions, and the enterprise and individual initiative which have made Canada what it is. "From Toronto", as the Montreal Gazette once remarked, "already emanate many sinister Communistic influences".

Of course the company does not wish to increase its profits. It is the consumer, not the company, which pays the tax. You doubt it? Let me explain. The company is a monopoly. It is in business to make money for its shareholders. It therefore charges the rates which produce the maximum net revenue for its shareholders. Any higher or lower rates would produce a smaller net revenue. Tax this monopoly profit: the company passes on the tax to the consumers by means of higher rates.

This means a smaller net revenue for the shareholders and therefore — no, I must have made a slip somewhere never mind: the company says the customer really pays the tax, so it must be true.

If you still have doubts the company will set them at rest. "If the tax is removed", it says, "the company has formally undertaken to pass on the benefit to its customers by means of reduced rates." Isn't that handsome? Could even Communist Toronto ask more?

You suggest that the company buys much of its power from other companies owned by almost the same people, and that there is nothing to prevent these other companies from charging more for their current and so "forcing" the M.L.H. and P. to raise its rates again? You have a nasty, suspicious mind. I believe you must have lived in Toronto.

I shall "confound your politics, frustrate your knavish tricks," by showing you statistically the blessings of private ownership which Montreal enjoys, by contrast with enslaved Toronto, cringing under the lash of the Hydro. A group of engineers and economists of Syracuse University have published monthly bills for nine different minutely specified classes of electric power service.

Here are the figures:

Domestic Consumers					
Toronto . . . . .			\$1.03	\$2.33	
Montreal . . . . .			1.17	5.69	
Commercial					
Toronto . . . . .			\$5.49	\$27.45	
Montreal . . . . .			6.50	32.50	
Industrial					
Toronto	\$28.04	\$94.01	\$252.57	\$790.36	\$2752.67
Montreal	43.45	163.75	324.13	1028.00	3219.38

Or take the even more complete figures for Hamilton and Quebec City (the cities chosen for comparison by the Quebec Power Co. itself, in its fight with the city):

Domestic					
Hamilton . . . . .			\$ .95	\$2.71	
Quebec . . . . .			1.98	3.13	
Commercial					
Hamilton . . . . .	\$ 3.24	\$16.16	\$35.44	\$62.22	
Quebec . . . . .	10.50	50.00	150.00	300.00	
Industrial					
Hamilton	\$23.19	\$73.87	\$234.94	\$716.56	\$2427.64
Quebec	39.25	147.08	400.55	1255.67	4365.60

The M.L.H. and P. says that it paid last year an income tax of \$808,360.92. If it had been let off this, it could have reduced electric rates by 1-6c per K.W.H. or (note the or, not and) gas rates by 14c per thousand cu. ft. Corporation income tax is

8% less \$2,000 exemption. At this rate the company's profits last year must have been  $(12\frac{1}{2} \times \$808,360.92) + \$2,000 = \$10,106,511.50$ . The elimination of profit therefore would have allowed a reduction twelve and a half times as large as that permitted by abolition of the income tax.

But shall we, for a miserable 4 1-6c per K.W.H. or a paltry \$1.75 per thousand cu. ft. of gas, a mere \$10,000,000 a year, barter our priceless heritage of rugged self-reliance, our "reputation for economic good sense" (Montreal Gazette), and that "acquisition of property which comes to a man of ability in this world if he has done his duty properly". (Mr. Bennett)? Sooner will the flower of Montreal die on the barricades in Pine Avenue (West).

## KURRAND - a - VAYRES

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ciating indecency, weakness, social ostracism, painful and deadly diseases, etc, with sex; and by exalting romantic ideals like faithfulness, loyalty, and the inevitable superiority of men in strength and intellectual power) they produce women that readily fit into the specified occupations society lays open to them. First, as cheap general labour, they unresentfully do the same work as men for much less pay, and are willing and fearful in carrying out their duties. Then, as teachers, they are of inestimable value in ensuring the further development of their kind. Those who ultimately break through the sex taboo are of two kinds, each equally important in maintaining the social order. There are those who, having accepted the stamp of inferiority set upon them by society, become the "owned" wives of good citizens; and as housekeepers demanding no salary are an economic pillar of domestic life. On the other hand are those who, losing their sense of decency, their self-respect, along with their loss of virginity, join the ranks of the acknowledged socially outcasts and are housed in brothels—those institutions which enable society to turn the human feeling to profitable account.

One cannot but marvel at the admirable ingenuity whereby the suppression and perversion of human feelings are made the very base and foundation of a social-economic organization. For having thus debased women to mere economic factors in organized trade, the state trains men to replace chivalry by cupidity, and to enthrone Cash above Cupid, thus reducing their vision of life to a level that will accept the denaturalized women the state has produced. Such men as prove to have hotter blood than do most are encouraged to become athletic stars, and to work off their energy on the hockey rink, the rugby field, or the boxing arena. These tourneys are then announced as sensations through exciting and colorful advertisements; great crowds