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Cotton's Weekly

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A Toronto Objector Answered

A LETTER OF REASONED PROTEST

Toronto, Ont.
Dec. 30th.

Dear Sir:—
For the past month I have been following your Socialistic arguments and I must confess that they have failed to convince me. If Socialism has any strong points in its favor, why don't you bring them out and not be continually harping upon imaginary wrongs and heaping abuse upon the government which we workers have elected to safeguard our interests. You would have us believe that the present government has been forced upon us by the capitalists and millionaires and that they do nothing but "talk" and protect the interest of the money-grabbers. You also use such words as "slaves" and "slavery." Sir, as a Canadian citizen I take exception to that word being used for Canadians. In Canada we have no such class as slaves. You would by Socialism do away with what is known as the "poor class," but that is a hopeless task since Christ Himself says, "The poor you have always with you." Don't you believe in Christ?

You are endeavoring to arouse the workers by deceiving them. Someone must do the work. We workers realize that we all can't be bank managers and railroad magistrates. We all like to see our burdens lightened as much as possible but we realize that all of us cannot have a fortune and be independent.

In your editorial, "The Farmer and the General Strike" you remind us that the western farmers want government ownership of railways, etc. Are the Western farmers the backbone of Canada? By no means. Don't you know that the value of the live stock raised in Ontario exceeds in value the wheat market of the West? You would lead us to believe that the Western farmers just about own everything worth having in Canada. Right in your midst you have the I. C. R. as an example of government ownership of railways. Don't you know how this railway is draining the public treasury in order to keep it going? Why then do you condemn the government for being adverse to the farmers' demand?

Already the effect of the farmers' agitation has made itself a burden on us workingmen. Take Welland, Ont., as an example. The John Deere Plow Company, one of the largest manufacturers in the world, purchased land there and were proceeding with a large factory. They intended to employ one thousand men. Since the tariff negotiations came up the company have stopped work entirely and will do nothing until the question is disposed of. In the mean time 1,000 men who might otherwise have been employed remain idle. A similar attitude is taken by the Standard Sanitary Company of Pittsburgh who were planning to build in Canada and carry on an extensive trade.

But, you may argue, that the tariff forced the Massey-Harris Co. to build outside of Canada. They have taken over a large company at Batavia, N. Y. The reason they did this was not because of our tariff arrangement. The United States enjoy certain privileges with Germany and other countries which Canadian manufacturers cannot get. Hence Massey-Harris goes to the States quite naturally, just as many more American firms are coming into Canada if tariff charges do not keep them out. Reciprocity and Free Trade appear fine in theory, but for a country at Canada's stage of development and contiguous to a great nation such as United States, it would be extremely dangerous in practice.

In conclusion I would ask you if it would not be better for the Socialists if they would cease hammering the government which the workingmen have elected (the workers are in a majority at the polls) and devote their attention to helping it. Socialism in Toronto is put forth by a few foreigners such as Lindala, Sidall, etc. What business have these gentlemen got to stir up strife among our people? They don't come to help. They come to knock, and as long as they assume that attitude I, among hundreds of thousands of broad minded workers will cease to follow their course.

Yours truly,
Francis McMullen.

ANSWER THERETO

For the first time in a long while, Cotton's has received a letter of reasoned protest. We get many letters of abuse, but the writers of such letters cannot be argued with. Therefore this letter is all the more welcome as it shows the viewpoint of our conscientious opponents.

It is not quite correct to say that I consider that the present government has been foisted on us by the millionaires. That would give the impression that the Conservatives were worthy of our support. Both political

parties are controlled not in the interests of the workers but against them. A Conservative government would be as hostile to the interests of the workers as is the Liberal government. The people have no control over the government during the four years it is in power. What would you think of a man who appointed a set of men to run his business and who would say of them, "I won't interfere with you for four years. Run the business as you like. But mind, if you don't run it honestly or as I like it, at the end of the four years I will turn you out." You would think him very foolish. Yet that is what the people of Canada do with regard to Laurier. Monk proposed that the question of the establishment of a navy be submitted to the people. Every Liberal voted against the referendum. So Laurier does not want the people to rule through initiative, referendum and right of recall. The Liberals can give sixteen millions as a present to the makers of steel. That is what the Liberal government has given to the multimillionaires of the Canadian steel plants. This was given AS A PURE GIFT. The Liberals and Tories have given a hundred and thirty-five millions to the private owners of the railway systems of Canada. This was given AS A PURE GIFT. Yet when the men strike against these private owners the government gives them no money to help them support their families. Instead they let the railways starve them into submission and at the least sign of resistance on the part of the men to slow starvation the government turns the soldiers loose on unarmed workers. Millions for the rich in gifts and hot shot and cold steel for starving workers. Do you consider this a square deal for the workingman, Mr. McMullen?

Mr. McMullen objects to Canadians being called slaves. This shows that Mr. McMullen has not studied slavery. You put a slave in a tobacco field, make him work under the overseer with a physical lash to urge on the slave. This to Mr. McMullen is slavery. But put a worker into a tobacco factory under an overseer who has been chosen because of his driving powers, make the worker work till he is exhausted and has barely the energy to crawl home. Tie the worker to the slave job day in and day out by the fear of unemployment and starvation for himself and family. To Mr. McMullen this is not slavery. Strange that people cannot recognize the same thing when it is called by a different name.

I am endeavoring to rouse the workers by deceiving them? There are millions of workers who are marching under the banners of Socialism and these millions are constantly being added to. It is strange, to say the least, if in the Socialist movement the process of history is being reversed and error is triumphant over truth, that millions are basing their hopes on error and that the brightest scientific and literary minds of the day share this same error.

Do I believe in Christ? Which Christ does Mr. McMullen mean? Does he mean the Greek Catholic Christ, the Roman Catholic Christ, the Calvinistic Christ, the Church of England Christ, the Salvation Army Christ, the Pelagian Christ, the Arian Christ, the Mystic Christ, the Christian Science Christ, the Mormon Christ, the Mohammedan Christ (Mohammedans recognize Christ as one of the five great Prophets) or some other Christ? No doubt Mr. McMullen will reply, "I mean the Christ of the Bible." Now this Christ of the Bible is sketched only in outline. Boswell wrote the Life of Johnson in two or three large volumes. Johnson was a very unimportant author and dictionary maker. Christ was a very important personage. But Christ's life is given in the Bible in a bare dozen pages. The result is that we know little about him and that each one who strives to grasp what he was like has little historical data upon which to base their conception of him. Consequently each makes of Christ their Ideal Man. They read into him all their noblest aspirations. They fill in the blank spaces in his life, and character out of their own imagination and say, "This is Christ. Do you believe in him." These different imaginations of what Christ was

like have been crystalized into the various church dogmas and conceptions of him. Do I believe in Christ? I can only answer, which conception of Christ do you mean?

"Some one must do the work. All of us cannot have a fortune and be independent." This is what Cotton's has been saying. There is work to do. Then let those who are doing the work organize, capture the political power and usher in a condition of affairs wherein the work will be reduced to a minimum, and those who do the work shall have the control of the distribution of the wealth produced by that work. Of course if the workers want to do the work, surrender all they produce to the master class, and get a daily wage while at work and let the masters say whether the workers shall work for a slave's pay or go workless and starve, if the workers want this condition to continue let them keep on voting for the politicians who support wage slavery.

"Some one must do the work." This is not wholly correct. The proposition should be stated, THE NECESSARY work ought to be done. There are three inaccuracies in the proposition as stated by Mr. McMullen. First, Some ONE need not do the work. All can do it. Special labor can replace individual labor. "Must" is too strong a word. The work can go undone. Under capitalism people get consumption because of a lack of proper clothing. The work of properly clothing the people is left undone. Consequently the work need NOT be done. Capitalism proves this when it lets people die for lack of proper clothing, proper housing and nourishing food. Third, "the work" are terms which give an idea that the work to be done is a fixed and settled quantity. This is not true. A lord hires a valet and says "Go clean my boots." The valet says, "You go to blazes. That is the work of some one else." The lord replies, "The work must be done, and I have no bootblack to do it." The valet is fired, and the lord's boots go unpollished for that day. "The work" of polishing milord's boots was not done.

Have you ever stopped to think how much "work" is absolutely wasted. Under a social system of production and exchange the lawyers' work will be done away with. The commercial traveller will be dispensed with. The stock broker, the land speculator, the landlord, the rent collector, the bill collector, the selling of dope as medicine, the banks, the retail managers, the lightning rod agents, the personal servants of the capitalists, champagne suppers, company promoting and the terrible expense of POLITICAL GOVERNMENT will be eliminated. For under a sane system, the political state will be swept away and merged in the industrial state. Fully half of the work now considered necessary will be done away with.

"All of us cannot have a fortune and be independent." A fortune depends upon the possession of the machinery of production. Those who own take toll of those who own not but do the labor. Mr. McMullen's argument is that as we all cannot rob the workers let the workers submit to robbery and uphold with their votes those who if elected will enforce that robbery. This argument is very foolish. It is in fact no argument at all.

Mr. McMullen has missed the whole point of the editorial on "The Farmers and the General Strike." This was written to show that the interests of the OWNING farmers was NOT the interests of the PROLETARIAN workers. The gist of that editorial was that the farmer wanted cheap transportation of their goods so that they could get bigger profits. The railroads would not give it. Therefore the farmers were provoked at the railroad owners and when the railway men strike for higher pay the farmers sympathize with the men and want to see them get higher pay in order to hit the pockets of the railroad owners. But let the farmers control the railways by government ownership or otherwise, then every strike that raises wages will mean higher cost of transportation. The western farmers' agitation simply shows that the property owning farmers want bigger returns on their "capital." In other words they want to get more wealth from the unpaid labor of wage workers. I think I have made this clear in former editorials.

I do not think that I have stated that government ownership is Social-

ism. We do not aim at government ownership. We aim at working class control of the means of production and distribution. The private railroads drained the government of over a hundred millions in cold cash and have fifty million acres of land given them free. The I. C. R. has drained the government. You see, the government is controlled by the capitalists. So the government is used to keep the workers in slavery and as long as the capitalists control, it matters not whether a railroad is government owned or privately owned. It will be used for the private gain of those who possess.

Mr. McMullen has not grasped the first principle of working class ownership. The John Deere Co. was going to "give work" to one thousand men. He looks to the capitalists for employment. He does not see that labor creates all wealth and that under Socialism the workers will "give work" to themselves, that they will OWN the John Deere Plow Company's works, the street railways, the tobacco factories, the railroads, the coal mines, and the workers themselves, producing the food, clothing and shelter which are necessary for the workers to live, and CONTROLLING these things, will look to no capitalist for employment.

Mr. McMullen is still worrying over the fate of the various classes of capitalists. He is arguing between free trade and protection. This is a question for the capitalists. To him it is a great question whether a thousand wage slaves will be employed in Welland or in the United States. He has not yet realized that the wage slave has been pried loose of all property and must follow the job. If a factory is built in Welland to employ one thousand slaves, the jobless slaves from the U. S. will flow in to the work. Mr. McMullen has not yet perceived that it matters little to the propertyless wage slave whether he is exploited in England or in Canada, in Germany or America. To him, wage slavery in Canada smells sweet.

Mr. McMullen would have us Socialists support the Liberal government instead of hammering it. Mr. McMullen has not yet learned the first step in practical politics. It is just such confiding natures as Mr. McMullen possesses that the capitalist exploiters love to see possessed by voters.

Practical politics is composed of getting all you can from the government. The practical politician hangs on to power for all he is worth. If one man goes to this practical politician and says, "You are a good man, I will support you." The practical politician knows that that man is safe. He need do nothing to get that man's vote. If another goes to the practical politician and says, "I won't support you unless you do this and that, and if I can get any other politician who will give me more, I will vote against you." The practical politician begins to cultivate that man. The easy man who votes for a rogue for conscience sake will be left in the lurch and the rogue who votes for the rogue for the sake of the government plunder will get part of the plunder.

If we were playing a little Sunday School game for children, and we were being asked by a Sunday School teacher with side whiskers, "Now children, who was the First Man, and who was the Meekest Man, and who was the Oldest Man?" We might support the Liberal government.

But we are not playing a Sunday School game. We are dealing with a pack of practical politicians who want power, and glory and snug berths. And we are dealing with a set of labor skimmers who promise the politicians nice fat berths and good jobs and a chance to strut before their fellow men, if these politicians will but pour the wealth of Canada into their banks and railroad treasuries and even directly into their pockets. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Unremitting opposition is the only hope of the workers. If the workers will but pull with the capitalist benchmark of the labor skimmers the capitalists will have a nice time. The capitalists can work this dodge on labor leaders and trade union officials. But they can't work it on class conscious Socialists.

Here comes the question of the foreigners. Lindala is a foreigner. And others are foreigners. What business have these foreigners stirring up strife among our people?

When speaking about foreigners we are pretty nearly all foreigners. This

country belongs to the Indians. What business has Mr. McMullen or his ancestors coming to Canada and depriving the Indians of their hunting grounds? It was a shame. Was it not? If Mr. McMullen can come against the will of the Indians, why can't Lindala come against the will of Mr. McMullen?

Mr. McMullen would have foreigners come who have good ideas according to his point of view. He is perfectly willing for foreigners to come, if they will only think as he does about Socialism. But I am a Canadian. My father was a born Canadian. My grandfather was a born Canadian. My great grandfather came to Canada sent out by the religious people of England as a missionary to the heathen. Now I hold Socialist views. I want people like Lindala to come to Canada to wake sleepers like Mr. McMullen. Would McMullen deny me the support of Socialists who come from abroad to help me spread my ideas and to wake sleepers like Mr. McMullen. Would Mr. McMullen only admit such persons as were opposed to my ideas. In the fight for the spread of intellectual concepts would Mr. McMullen overwhelm me and other Canadian Socialists by swamping us with ignorant foreigners? You think yourself a fair man. Play fair Mr. McMullen. Play fair.

As long as Socialists knock, Mr. McMullen, along with hundreds of thousands of broad minded workers will cease to follow their course.

The Socialists cry in the ears of the workers. "You are being robbed. You are asleep. Awake! Arise! Your wives and children suffer because of the robbery of those who live by stealth." And Mr. McMullen, says, "Don't knock. I'm a broad minded man."

Once upon a time a man was set upon and robbed. He yielded to the robbers who stripped him of all but a few coppers. The plundered man smiled into the faces of those who robbed him and said, "My wife will suffer. My children will be hungry. I have worked hard for what you have taken from me. But you must live. We cannot all be robbers. Therefore I give to you what you have taken and will come again this way and you can rob me again. I am a broad minded man." And the robbers praised him they had plundered and called him brother. And the man went his way rejoicing and swelled up with pride because of the good opinion he had of himself and the praise the robbers had bestowed upon him. But when the robbers get among themselves and made merry with the plunder, they said one to another, "What a poor simpleton."

Japanese competition is making serious inroads in British trade. Dinner and tea dishes can be bought in London for one third the price of the dishes made in England. Cotton, hardware and dressmaking trades are seriously affected. The Japanese with sweated labor are playing the same trick on England that England with its sweated labor eighty years ago played on the rest of Europe. The sweated labor of England furnished the surplus values that made the "grand empire" of Britain, and the sweated labor of Japan is furnishing the surplus values to build the Japanese empire.

Edward E. Grimmell, a New York criminal, has had an operation performed on his brain. As a result he has completely recovered from all criminal propensities and he has been pardoned. His skull had been fractured when a boy. Thus science and investigation is showing up our plute yawpers about the criminality of the people and the necessity of judges in a lurid and unpleasant light.

The Portuguese government has outlined its program of reform. The measures include a weekly rest day, old age pensions, public aid and protection for maternity and childhood, the creation of a large number of primary schools, with the free distribution of food, clothing and books to needy children, the development of higher education. Portugal is swinging into the newer lines of endeavor with a vengeance.

Eight men have been killed in Florence, N. S., by a mine explosion in a mine of the Nova Scotia Steel & Coal Co. The workers die but the profits are very satisfactory to the parasite labor skimmers.

SABOTAGE

In France the unions are revolutionary. They recognize the class war. They live up to it.

In Canada we have a strike. A few hundred workers leave their work. The other workers keep on working and the places of the strikers are soon filled with strikebreakers. Or a thousand workers strike in a coal mine. The other workers keep on working. The other coal mines keep up the output. The coal needed for running the machinery of production and distribution still goes on the market. The other workers work longer hours and make more pay for awhile and therefore are glad for a chance to scab on their striking fellow workers.

The strikers strike for months, perhaps for years. And their fellow workers keep on scabbing. In France two tactics have been developed, the general strike and sabotage. The general strike is not prolonged. It is short, sharp and sudden. The railway workers walk out and stay out eight days. Then they go back to work as quickly as they struck. Commerce is tied up. The whole country is in excitement. Then the men go back to work and commerce moves again. They have tested their power. They know their strength. They wait a little while and strike again thus finding the number of men who read their own interests aright.

Sabotage is the destruction of property. The workers work in the mills of slavery. The masters get all the profits above the bare living cost of the workers. The workers have to have a living or they die. So wages cannot go down.

The workers thereupon work and camp the jobs. They put in poor material. They hit the bosses in their profits, in the place where it hurts the most. The cost of building in Paris has gone up twenty per cent owing to these tactics of the workers.

In Canada the general strike is not attempted. You know, the capitalists would not like it. And the masters must not be discommoded. Of course the workers may strike a few at a time, just tickle the bosses a little as it were, so as to make them feel like giving a few cents more wages.

As for sabotage, it is not tolerated among Canadian workers. The bosses must have their profits. The workers are conscientious. They have been well taught in the religion the masters have educated the ministers in the churches to teach. Servants obey your masters. So the slaves of Canada are filled with reverence for the religion preached for slaves and conscientiously fulfil their slave tasks and watch the masters bourgeon out in houses and automobiles, and yachts and mistresses.

Some say that "They do these things better in France." But the Canadian workers have heard that France is an impious country. Hence they close their ears to the call of the French workers. It is the masters who, having piled up fortunes out of the labor of their slaves, go to Paris.

Hush! Don't say a word that will waken the workers. The bosses would not like it.

Two hundred jobless men gathered at a Toronto lively stable in answer to an advertisement for two men, and the police were called out to disperse them. The workers can go jobless and hungry, but Canada is filled with prosperity and there is no need for Socialist agitation. Sure thing. Do not the capitalists who live off the unpaid labor of the workers tell us how prosperous Canada is?

In British Columbia the provincial authorities are working the insane on farms as a cure for madness. In this age of the struggle for jobs the plute governments are setting the insane to work to help the capitalists get surplus values. And Premier McBride is slated for the next Conservative Premier of Canada.

A Chinese oiler was killed at Hong Kong when his queue got entangled in some machinery. This was effectively cited in the campaign among the Chinese for the cutting off of their pig tails. Within a few days eleven thousand pig tails were shorn off. Capitalism is prying loose the ancient habit of the immemorial East.

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