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## WESTERN CLARION

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## Empire Unity

HE Clarian editorial comment on Dr. Haden Guest's letter of invitation to a purposed exhibited a comprehensive grasp on Empire problems.

Contrasted with the quotation from the "Socialist Review" and the gist of Newbold, Johnston, and Scurr's views on Empire affairs, the editorial indicates the illusion permeating the British Labor Party as a whole on the trend of Colonial—and particularly Canadian-politics.

Newbold, Johnston and Scurr, seem to take it as granted that there is a racial, cultural and political solidarity between the English speaking colonies and Great Britain, which will indubitably survive the strain of developing economic rivalry or politieal revolution. Whatever validity such a premise had prior to 1914 it is now without any substantial foundation, due to the war and economic develop-

The illusion to which I have referred is not confined to the average stay-at-home Briton, to whom the wish is father to the thought, or to the M.P. whose understanding of the native Canadian's outlook on Empire problems is obtained from a brief, best served by breaking away from the A. F. of L. visit to Canada-hobnobbing with the Babbitry or the hierarchy of the Dominion Trades Congressbut it also colors the outlook of some British-born socialists, who have spent years in the Dominion.

In an article which appeared in the O.B.U. Bulletin (Aug. 21) under the heading "Canadian Workers and Wars," Chas. Lestor gives vent to a rhetorical outburst, quite in line with the views of Newbold, Johnston, et al., on Empire-Labor policy. Lestor's article deals with the imminence of war between Japan and the U.S. He quotes a quasi-Military journal to the effect "that Canada would play the part of Belgium; she must fight whether the Empire fights or no."

While agreeing with the above prediction in principle, it is more likely that Australia will be the cockpit of the Orient should such a war occur. Lestor goes on to say, that the British and Continental movement are twenty-five years ahead of us. I presume he means the U.S.A. and Canada, as it is impossible to consider these countries, especially Canada, as having independent labor movements. Lestor asserts that the interests of the workers of Canada can best be served if they break away from the A. F. of L. and link up with the British and Continental movement. The Empire is evolving and it is "our duty" to transform it into a co-operative Commonwealth; "this will destroy capitalism the world over," says Lestor.

This view of the destruction of capitalism is rampart among those people who consider the "tight little island" as the Bastile of Capitalism, the seat of proletarian culture and the field of practical experiment in social reconstruction. It is an implication from the new mood which seems to gain favor among some of "our" folk, under the assidious tutelage of "C."

Still, Lestor has an adumbration that John Bull is not quite the biggest toad in the capitalist pond. For he says: "The longer the Yankee octopus is held back the better. American capitalism is barren and has no past and no future; it will not evolve, but destroy itself. When the working class of Britain

get hold of the reins of government on a class-conscious ticket, as loyal sons of the blooming Empire it Inter-Empire conference on Labor policies is our duty to fight if necessary for the overthrow of Capitalism." Making the world safe for Socialism! eh! If, as-"C" has it, "The progressive (economic) degradation of the working-class is not in the interests of social revolution," then Lestor's assertion as to the British and Continental movements being twenty-five years ahead of America, has no logical premise. The real wages of the American workers are double that of Britain. And the standard of living -access to those feasible, immediate, material things on which "C" bases his philosophy of proletarian progress—is correspondingly higher. The vicissitudes of unemployment are no greater in America than in Europe. That this fact is common knowledge to the workers of Britain-and for that matter Canada-is manifested by their eagerness to enter the clutches of the Yankee "octupus." The British quota is long since exhausted. The progressive degradation of the European workers is a fact, and as true of England as when Jack London wrote 'The People of the Abyss."

> As to the interest of the Canadian workers being and linking up with the British movement-and this matter has a bearing on an Empire labor policysuch action on their part would be quite in accord with their economic interests if they had a habit of seeking jobs overseas. But it is not "feasible." It is to the "barren" land of American capitalism that the Canadian workers go, in large and increasing numbers, to seek a job. Outside of a few weak branches of the Amalgamated Carpenters and one local union of Wireless Operators there are no British Labor unions in Canada. Economic determinism or racial solidarity. Which?

> When I read Newbold's statement concerning Canada and the self-governing Colonies "that are as much England (and more Scotland) as Northumberland and Devon" I wonder by what method he reaches such a conclusion. Obviously his hopes and aspirations regarding the Canadian workers are based on racial bonds.

> Passing, for the moment, the fact of Canada's economic dependence and military inferiority to the U. S. A. we will examine this inferred racial solidarity of Canada with Great Britain: It is a statistical fact that 83% of the recruits for the First Canadian contingent raised in 1914 were Britishborn. Up until the passage of the Conscription Act in 1917 the majority of recruits were natives of the Mother Country. Yet 77.5% of the population are native-born Canadians, while only slightly over 12% are British-born. The balance of the population is about evenly divided between Americans and "others." (Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1922). The Canadian-born citizens did not spring to arms at the first roll of Drake's drum; a more insistent call, in the form of a Conscript Act, was necessary to remind them that the Empire was in danger. Consider Quebec and its large French-Canadian population-approximately one-fourth that of the entire Dominion. They look upon the English as intruders in "their" country. Even the awful fate overshadowing "La Belle France" during the late war left them unmoved. The conscription act in Quebec was practically a dead letter. And in the Maritime

Provinces, where the population is at a standstill due to emigration to the U.S.; despite the high birth rate, there you will find many descendants of victims of the Highland clearances, and hear the story, handed down from generation to generation, of how their ancestors were put ashore on the rocky beaches of New Scotland from British men-of-war, each head of a family "getting a hatful of oats" to transform into "mush," or to use as their means of.

In the Maritime Provinces, there is a movement afoot, the object of which is to abrogate the Articles of Confederation, disjoin from the Dominion Government and negotiate a separate treaty with the U.S.A. The fishing industry of these provinces is hard hit by American protective duties. By obtaining the free entry of fish to the American market through means of a reciprocal agreement—the proponents of such a course argue—the depopulation through emigration to the States would be checked by increased employment at home. Even annexation to the U.S.A. has been suggested as the only remedy for their economic troubles.

It is asserted that there are more native born Canadians now resident in the U.S.A. than in Canada. Every Canadian census has shown a deficit from the estimated number, based on immigration and natural increase. The census of 1911 reported one million, and that of 1921 one million three hundred thousand "missing." The soldiers killed in France being accounted for. Population experts claim that the population of Canada in 1921 should have been fifteen instead of eight million. Their figures are based on the total immigration and the average rate of natural increase. The Province of Quebec has the highest birth rate of any civilized country. Where have the "missing" gone? To the U.S.A.! Canada, from every fundamental aspect, \* economic, geographic, commercial, financial, military, even psychological, is much more a part of Maine, Michigan or Montana, than it is of Northumberland, Devon or Scotland. The psychology of the Canadian born has a closer affinity with that of his American neighbor than with his Empire co-heirs. The agriculturists and fishermen of the Eastern and Maritime Provinces, the "tin lizzie peasantry" of the Prairies, or the stump ranchers of the Pacific slope, in their outlook, on life, their aims and ideals, are as like their kind in the Republic to the south as Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's lady. "Once a worker always a worker" has no place in their common creed, by the dollar ye shall conquer.

Consider Canada's position in the event of a war between the U.S.A. and Japan, or Britain. Any hostile act or even gesture by Canada, and that country would become paralized. A few of uncle Sam's mighty engines of destruction operating out of the Puget Sound and New Hampshire naval bases could, in the space of a few hours, shut off intercourse with the outside world-without a blow being struck. Perhaps such an event as international warfare on a large scale may never again interrupt the habits of civilized men. I do not look forward to such a clash with "ghoulish anticipation." Yet Clausewitz's definition of war, "as politics carried

\* "Trade and the Future of the British Empire"-(Continued on page 8)