

Lemieux Gives Words Instead of Justice

Cotton's Demands a Free and Impartial Postal Service in Canada for the Workingmen's Press

On March 18th, members of Parliament asked the Postmaster General if he had written Mr. Cotton. He declared he had. The following is his letter:

Ottawa, 18th March, 1910.

Dear Sir:—
I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 15th inst., couched in language which is open to grave objection, but to which I do not intend to refer otherwise.

Before dealing with certain points which you have raised as to the powers of the Postmaster General, I desire to state in the most emphatic manner possible that, in giving the instructions to the Postmistress of Cowansville to see that proper rates of postage were paid on copies of your publication deposited in that office for transmission by mail, the Department was in no way influenced by the character or object of your publication, nor has anything been done to in any way interfere with the right of a full and free discussion of social, labor, or other problems. Moreover, I have ever been a sympathetic supporter of the laboring man, and my endeavor and efforts have always been directed towards assisting him in the betterment of his position.

As to the powers of the Postmaster General with respect to the rates of postage, you quote only a portion of the Post Office Act dealing with this matter, the whole sub-Section being found under Section 9 of the Act entitled "Powers of Postmaster General," sub-Section "e" reading as follows:—

(E) "establish the rates of postage on all mailable matter, not being letters, newspapers or other things hereinafter specially provided for, and prescribe the terms and conditions on which all mailable matter other than letters shall, in each case or class of cases, be permitted to pass by post, and authorize the opening thereof, for the purpose of ascertaining whether such conditions have been complied with."

As the Statute only determined the rates of postage which should be levied upon copies of newspapers and periodical publications mailed from the office of publication, addressed to regular subscribers or newsdealers, and upon specimen copies, it became necessary that regulations should be prepared, by virtue of the authority conveyed in the above sub-Section, governing the rates of postage upon copies sent under other conditions than those specially alluded to in the Statute, the Act not having provided a rate of postage for what is known as transient newspapers. The regulations to which you refer, and to which you have taken exception, were not originally prepared during the time I have been Postmaster General, but are of long standing. If the Department had not been authorized by Statute to make regulations governing the rates of postage on other classes than those specially enumerated in the Statute, then in this particular case the result would be that no provision would be made for the transmission by post of copies intended for other than subscribers, newsdealers, or those sent as specimen copies, a condition which would not be in the interest of the general public.

As to your statement that other publishers have been sending bundles through the mails to parties who order an occasional bundle, at the low rate prescribed by the Act upon copies intended for regular subscribers, or newsdealers, I beg to say that, if particulars are furnished as to the names of the persons thus receiving such copies, prompt enquiry will at once be made. The duty of seeing that proper postage is paid upon newspapers deposited for transmission by mail rests with the Post Office at the place where the paper is posted, and if any error or neglect has occurred at any particular Post Office, the Department, upon being advised of the same, takes steps to see that such matters form the subject of careful enquiry.

Yours truly,
RODOLPHE LEMIEUX.

COTTON'S REPLY

This letter has been sent in reply to the above:
Cowansville, P. Q.
March 23, 1910
To the Honorable the Postmaster General, Ottawa, Ont.

Sir:—
Your letter of March 18th to hand. I have also read your explanations in Parliament made on the 2nd and 18th inst. Neither your letter nor your explanations are satisfactory.

You state that my letter was couched in language which is open to grave objections. I am perfectly con-

vinced from your point of view my letter was couched in language which was open to grave objection. Yet I had many things to say to you and I choose the language which conveyed the ideas I wished to impart.

Motives Judged by Past Events and Present Actions

You declare that in giving the instructions to the Postmistress at Cowansville to collect four cents a pound on bundles of papers purchased and paid for by the workers, your Department was in no way influenced by the character or object of my publication. Moreover, you declare you have ever been a sympathetic supporter of the laboring man, and your endeavor and efforts have always been directed towards assisting him in the betterment of his position.

I have no means to obtain a true insight into the motives actuating your Department when instructing the local Postmistress with regard to purchasers of transient bundles of Cotton's Weekly. I can only judge by past events. As to your being a sympathetic supporter of the laboring man I can only judge by your present actions.

Sir, four years ago your Department, under the control of A. B. Aylesworth, illegally forbade the mails to the Appeal to Reason, a Socialist paper published at Girard. When an excessive postal charge was levied against my paper under your administration, it is but natural to conclude that the same animus against Socialism was at work in you as was at work in Aylesworth.

Words are Cheap

As to your sympathy towards the laboring man, I reply that words are cheap. Have you read Machiavelli's "The Prince"? In that book Machiavelli lays down the principles of government by tyranny. Speak the people fair, says Machiavelli, and drill an army. Give doles, and prepare instruments of war. Sympathize with the common people, until you become powerful; then let the soldiers at them and crush their liberties. You are a public official, and I am going to talk to you plainly. My language may be very objectionable to you, but public officials under a capitalist government, when they plead that they sympathize with labor, and that they are endeavoring to better the lot of the working man, must be pulled up short and spoken to in very plain language. You say that you have been a sympathetic supporter of the laboring man. Rather have the laboring men been unwilling supporters of yours. Your annual pay is seven thousand dollars a year and pickings. The average annual pay of three hundred thousand odd industrial wage slaves of Canada, according to 1906 statistics, is about three hundred and eighty dollars. You, Honorable Sir, receive an annual income twenty times that of the average industrial wage slave of Canada. As all wealth comes from labor, it follows that the wage slaves of Canada are supporting you to the extent of twenty times their own income. I am not blaming you for this. You get the benefit of the capitalist system under which we live. I give these statistics to show that you are not a sympathetic supporter of the laboring man, because men cannot live on sympathy. The workers are supporting you, and many of them unwillingly, if you will but read the letters your Department has received of late.

Efforts Not Directed to Helping the Workingmen

Your efforts and endeavors have not been of late directed towards the betterment of the worker. When you make him pay eighteen cents per hundred copies of Cotton's Weekly out of his scanty wages, you are not helping him, but you are draining him of his revenues because of his desire to help his fellow workers wake to the truths of Socialism. Unless you consider Socialism to be against his best interests. If this last be the case, then you convict yourself of being influenced by the character of Cotton's Weekly, which you deny.

You are not directing your efforts to assist the laboring man. The very fact that you are a member of the Laurier Cabinet proves that you are not helping the workers. You sit cheek by jowl with the Minister of War, and have assisted in doubling the cost of the army in Canada and in doubling the Canadian Army. Now this is not in the interest of the workers in Canada. You know well that modern armies are not drilled and disciplined to fight a foreign enemy so much as to keep the home wage slaves in subjection. Troops are now guarding the slave pits operated by the Dominion Coal Company. Troops fought the workers in Fort William last summer. If the

wage slaves of the Dominion Steel Company should revolt the troops of Canada would be hurried to drive the workers back to their back breaking tasks on a pittance wage. There are many other things which show that you, as a member of Laurier's Cabinet, are not the friend of the working man. You deceive yourself when you think that mere words will prove your friendship to the laboring man.

Cotton's Familiar With the Law

I have not forgotten Section 9 of the Postal Act, sub-Section (e), neither have I forgotten sub-Section (g) of the same article. It was in view of these sections that I intimated to you that you had not the power to pass or enforce regulation 63 of the Postal Guide. It was in the light of these two subsections (e) and (g) that I called to your attention two elementary principles of constitutional law. These two principles thrown together amount to this. When a legislative body has delegated its law making powers to a public official, that official must exercise his law making power in a very circumspect manner, and if the legislative body has made laws partially governing the matter at issue, that official must make laws as similar as possible to the laws enacted by the legislative body from which he derives his authority.

I want to call your attention particularly to this rule of constitutional law. In Parliament you asked Mr. Lennox as a distinguished advocate the legal definition of a "bona fide subscriber." I ask you as presumed distinguished authority on constitutional law, if that above maxim be not one of the elementary rules applicable to public officials like yourself with regard to delegated law-making powers?

What the Law Lays Down

The statute law lays down the rate on sample copies, copies to newsdealers, and to bona fide regular subscribers. Sample copies must be done up into packages and the postage thereon is one cent per pound for each bundle. Copies addressed to regular subscribers and to newsdealers go for one-fourth of a cent a pound. This is what the statute law declares. The statute law gives me the right: First—to send out packages of sample copies to parties who have not paid one cent for same, at the postal rate of a cent a pound. Second—to send out packages to newsdealers at a postal rate of one-fourth of a cent a pound. Third—to send out packages of Cotton's Weekly to non-newsdealers at a rate of one-fourth of a cent a pound, provided that the non-newsdealers agree to take and pay for their bundles for a period of three months or more.

The statute law does not declare what a party is to pay who takes a special bundle for one issue, and pays for the same. You declare that he must pay four cents a pound, a rate sixteen times that to newsdealers and to parties who take a bundle for three months, and four times the rate on packages of sample copies.

Does it Not Look Ridiculous?

Now does not that look ridiculous? Cannot even you see that it is ridiculous? Does it not violate the elementary principles of constitutional law that a public official like yourself, when allowed to complete the gaps in the statute law, must close those gaps with laws as nearly as possible like those laid down by the legislative body from whom he derives his authority? Acknowledge that you have been acting in an arbitrary manner. It will be the best thing for you in the end.

Surely you do not pretend that you could make the postal rate one dollar a pound? That would be outrageous. But you violate the principles of constitutional law when you jump the rate on me sixteen times, just as you would did you jump the rate on me two thousand times.

Postmaster General Must Give Fair and Impartial Mail Service

You say that if you did not make these regulations then no regulations would be made and I could not send bundles to transient purchasers at all through the post. Pardon me for correcting you. If you did not give me the right to send bundles through the mails at all, your fate would be the fate of your predecessor in office, the Hon. A. B. Aylesworth, in short order. You are not Postmaster General of Canada to do or not to do as you see fit. You are there to give a free and fair postal service. The trouble you are now experiencing is that you thought you could enforce a bundle rate on the workingmen purchasers of my paper sixteen times what you could exact from newsdealers. If you do not serve the workers of Canada in a just manner, you will quickly give way to some other Postmaster General who will.

Let the Department Get Its Information from Proper Sources

You say that you did not make the Postal Regulation No. 63 and therefore you should not be blamed. Par-

don me again for correcting you. You are enforcing it. And you are responsible for it when you apply it.

You ask me to give you the information about those papers which are not paying on their bundles the exorbitant rate you are charging. I am sending under separate cover the last four copies of Cotton's Weekly, which you can peruse at your leisure. In one you will find an affidavit of H. A. Webb with regard to five capitalist dailies. Beyond that I will not go at present. I do not intend to act the informer that your Department may land with both feet on other papers as you have landed on Cotton's Weekly.

Department Deceiving the Public

I would call your attention to a grave charge I made against your Department in my last letter to you. That charge was that your Department was deliberately deceiving the public upon the question of the law applicable to your Department. When Canadian citizens wrote your Department, your Department sent out a circular statement in which it was declared that Parliament had stipulated that one-fourth cent rate should apply only to regular subscribers and newsdealers. Now you admit, as you had to, that you could make similar rates for transient purchasers, and you cannot deny that if you obeyed the principles of constitutional law, you would have made similar rates. Why does your Department deliberately deceive the workers of Canada with regard to the postal rights of their paper under the Canadian laws?

Lemieux a Skillful Dodger

Now for your explanations in Parliament. You have shown yourself to be as skillful in dodging the main point at issue in your answers in Parliament, as you did when Clarence Jameson, M. P., questioned you to the discrimination practised against weekly papers in favor of dailies when sent to the United States.

Let me bring you right up to the point. On March 2nd you spoke about regular subscribers. On March 18th you had changed your tune. You then spoke about "subscribers." There is a difference between "Regular subscribers" and "subscribers." A subscriber is one who pays or undertakes to pay. A regular subscriber is one who undertakes to pay for a definite time. There is a difference. When Mr. Lennox cornered you, you slipped out by saying, "My honorable friend is a distinguished member of the Bar, and he knows the legal definition of 'bona fide subscribers' used in this sense." You were well aware, when making your statements in the House that the bundles upon which the rate is in dispute, are subscribed for in a bona fide manner, and are paid for. The workers cannot seem to get proper information from your Department.

You deceive the members of Parliament and they in turn deceive the workers in their constituencies. "You will understand," writes Walter Edward Nesbit, member for North Oxford, to a person writing to him, "that where newspapers are sent direct from the publishing office to subscribers, they go at a very low rate of postage; when they are sent on speculation, that is shipped to points with the hope of selling them or distributing them, they are charged at a very much higher rate. This applies to all papers." You will see how your explanations are making Liberal members of Parliament appear very foolish in the eyes of their constituencies. There are four separate and distinct errors in this letter with regard to the point at issue. (1.) Cotton's Weekly is being sent to non-subscribers on speculation. That is erroneous. The papers are paid for by the parties getting them and the parties are therefore bona fide subscribers. (2.) Papers when sent on speculation go at a much higher rate. This is erroneous. If the papers are sent on speculation to a newsdealer they go at the low rate. (3.) They are charged at a very much higher rate. This is true, and not true. This is the sample copy rate of one cent a pound. You are charging four cents a pound. (4.) This applies to all papers. This is again erroneous. The high rate is not charged.

Still Another Error

Another error you led Mr. Lennox into. "The fact is," you say "that Mr. Cotton is sending his paper in bundles to certain individuals, who distribute them to other parties." "They are not individually addressed?" Mr. Lennox then asks you. "They are not," you reply, and then you wilfully uttered a falsehood in the House declaring that it makes a great difference with regard to the status of a bona fide subscriber whether he takes one copy or a hundred copies. Here is your own ruling on this point:—"Copies of a weekly newspaper sent to a subscriber who takes five or more copies per week, for one year, paying for them in advance at the regular subscription

rate, are entitled to pass by post at the statutory rate." Why are you everlastingly trying to deceive the people of Canada with falsehoods with regard to the real points at issue? Do you think that your cheap little tricks will not be discovered? I informed you before, that you could not stick your head, like the ostrich, in the sand of your own wandering thoughts, and think you will not be discovered.

Political Ambitions Can be Broken

You say that if Cotton's is scurrilous it will be forbidden the mails. Sir, this shows that you are ignorant of the statute laws under which you act. You have power to forbid obscene or immoral publications; but scurrilous publications are beyond your power to prohibit. I am perfectly well aware, and Cotton's Weekly readers are perfectly well aware, of the machinery you have prepared to put Cotton's out of business. Canada has given no power to prohibit scurrilous publications. We are a mixed community, and Parliament has not put it into the power of a Catholic Postmaster General to decide what scurrilous literature is, neither has it put it into the power of a Protestant Postmaster General to decide what scurrilous literature is. Be careful how you threaten to prohibit what your brain may conceive to be a scurrilous publication. That way lies the breaking of your political ambitions.

Peculiar Regulations

I have wasted enough of my time trying to clear up a little of the fog which your Department spreads around its affairs. I have spent some little time in following up your regulations you are so proud of. So far as they relate to newspapers, I can assure you they are, to say the least, peculiar. Not one paper in a hundred obeys them, or pretends to obey them. If you endeavored to enforce them there would be such a furor raised from Atlantic to Pacific that you would be glad, within one week, to seek succor from worry by resigning.

Cotton's Has a Right to Complain

I have a right to complain from the mere fact that you are enforcing your impossible regulations against me. The last ruling you have given is strictly against Article 22 of the Postal Act. That article gives me the right to send out sample copies in packages. You declare that I cannot send out sample copies in packages. You prove yourself to be peculiarly interested in Cotton's Weekly.

Workers Want Justice

Will you give laboring men the right to have shipped to them through the mails transient bundles of Cotton's Weekly purchased by them at the same rates as newsdealers can get transient bundles? Or will you continue to mulct them a charge of eighteen cents a hundred? Remember, money is more valuable to the wage slaves of Canada than it is to you. They only get three hundred and eighty dollars a year. You get seven thousand. Eighteen cents may seem small to you, but twenty cents to you is less than one cent is to them. You would yell like a scalded cat were you in the publishing business and the Postmaster General charged you \$3.60 per pound postage. That is just what you are doing to the workers when your wages are compared with theirs. Can you blame them if they protest.

WILL YOU GIVE THE WORKERS JUSTICE? REMEMBER, THE EYES OF THE WORKERS ARE ON YOU AS WELL AS THE EYES OF THE CAPITALISTS.

I am publishing this letter in Cotton's Weekly. Deny me the mails IF YOU DARE.

Yours truly,
W. U. COTTON.

No compromise, no political trading, say the Socialists. Now this political slogan seems foolish to the ears of a capitalist politician. The capitalist politician compromises in order to get on. He is willing to divide up the spoils with someone else in order that he may get a part. And the Socialist idea of no compromise is incomprehensible to him. But the Socialist can take no other stand. The capitalist politicians who squabble among themselves are like wolves who snarl over their prey, but who both eat the prey and do not stop to fight it out lest they both go hungry. Labor is the prey of the snarling capitalist politicians. Labor must fight all the wolves. It cannot afford to compromise with any of them. The cry, no compromise, therefore, is the only possible one for labor to logically give.

The thieves steal until they are compelled to stop thieving by the officers of the organized society. Is that not so? In the same manner the capitalists will continue to plunder the workers until the workers compel them to stop thieving and go to work.

WHAT IS THE CLASS STRUGGLE?

H. Martin.

The class struggle was born with the division of society into classes. Ever since the dawn of private property in the means of production, society has been made up of classes, known at different periods under various titles—masters and slaves, feudal lords and serfs, capitalists and proletarians.

Modern production is carried on by wage labor. The capitalist by virtue of the ownership of the means of production, (land and machinery,) owns the product of the laborer. The laborer is paid the price of his labor-power, the cost of reproducing his labor-power. The difference between this cost and the value of the laborer's product goes to and belongs to his master the capitalist.

Since the capitalist does not labor, he functions as a parasite, robbing the worker of the value of his product.

The class struggle is then between the capitalist class and the working class, the former to continue the robbery, the latter to abolish it. This class struggle must be fought to a finish over the robbery itself.

Production is carried on, of course, in the industrial field, the shop, mine, the factory, but the ownership of these means of production are determined elsewhere.

Through the machinery of the State titles of ownership to both shop and product is vested in those who, in the opinion of the State, are entitled to possess them.

The class struggle then becomes a political struggle between those who would perpetuate the present system of property, and those who would overthrow it.

By the transformation of the ownership of the means of production into the collective ownership of the working class, buying and selling including labor-power comes to an end, robbery is abolished and consequently the usefulness of the state, an instrument vested with power disappears.

In the place of production for profit, comes production for use. The state and government resolve into an administration of industry by the working class for the working class.

WHAT IS THE STATE?

The State is the public power of coercion created and maintained in human societies by their division into classes, and which, having force at its disposal, makes laws and levies taxes.

The State having been created by the division of society into classes it naturally follows that with the abolition of classes, the State disappears.

Where are the roots of all human institutions to be found? In the economic soil. Political, legal, ethical and religious. Any reform which does not go clean to the roots and effect the economic structure of society must necessarily be abortive.

If the social question is an economic question; why do Socialists instead of using economic methods to solve an economic question, organize themselves into a political party?

To abolish class distinctions, class oppression and class robbery. As long as the economically dominant class retain full possession of this public power of coercion "the State" they are able to use it as a weapon to defeat every attempt to alter the economic structure of society—the ownership of land and machinery, the means of life; hence every attempt to destroy economic privilege and establish industrial democracy inevitably takes the form of a political class struggle between the economically privileged class and the economically exploited class.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

Readers and hustlers for Cotton's will save time and trouble by sending all orders addressed "Cotton's Weekly," Cowansville. Letters addressed to individual members of the staff are apt to be delayed in various ways. We ask it as a special favor.

The capitalists do not believe that men should be rewarded according to their deserts. If men were rewarded according to their deserts then most of the capitalists would be in the poor house.

The Banner Collection

We have made a slight change in the titles of the books in the Banner Collection but it is a change for the better. The Banner Collection of books is the best obtainable for the beginner in the study of Socialism. Socialism is explained in a simple and interesting manner. The books are neatly bound in paper, and can be carried in the pocket without any inconvenience. Here is the list:

1. EASY LESSONS IN SOCIALISM—Leffingwell 50
 2. SOCIALIST CATECHISM—Ching 50
 3. PARABLES OF THE WATER TANK—Belamy 50
 4. MERRIE ENGLAND—Hatchford 10c
 5. WHAT'S SO AND WHAT ISN'T—Work 10c
 6. THE SOCIALISTS, WHO THEY ARE, AND WHAT THEY STAND FOR—Spargo 10c
 7. Socialism, What It Is and What It Seeks to Accomplish—Liebknecht 10c
- A Postal Note for 50 Cents will take the whole bunch. There is no better investment for the New Socialist. Seven books for 50 Cents from Cotton's Book Department. Ask for the Banner Collection.