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Cotton's Weekly

W. U. COTTON, S.A., B.C.L., Managing Editor
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Oil for Battleships

It was not so very long ago that the ruling class of Great Britain considered the tight little islands were immune from attack. Their publicists and politicians boasted that Britain was the workshop of the world. It was confidently assumed that the sons of the old country were dowered with a special faculty of ruling alien peoples. The ships owned by the master class of Britain plowed the distant seas carrying shoddy and dolls, missionaries and booze, traders and soldiers to the lands upon which the ruling class had cast covetous eyes.

When these soldiers had murdered the natives and created another little patch of red on the map, the deities were sung in the English churches to the god of love and the god of war.

When the traders had corrupted the natives and shackled them to the rubber trade, or shut them in compounds in the diamond fields, the politicians boasted of the great growth in world trade of the islands.

When the missionaries taught the naked Africans to clothe themselves in cotton cloth, thus furnishing new markets to the Lancashire cotton kings, the churches issued books showing how Christianity was spreading. It did not matter whether the natives, no longer going naked and having the sun dry the rain that fell on them but going clothed in cotton garments which clung in a moist steam to them after a rain, took tuberculosis and died like flies. That did not enter into their official reports.

Now conditions are changed. The ruling class are in a panic. There is no getting away from this fact. Whether it be the Tory Law, or the Liberal Asquith, or the half-half turncoat Churchill, the cry goes up that Britain is threatened. God who in the days of prosperity and gigantic thievery of the rulers was calmly appropriated as the property of Britain's masters is not now being appealed to as formerly. It is ships that are wanted and guns, and men, and munitions, and the rulers beckon frantically to Canada and to Australia to come help the world plunderers continue their piratical appropriation of revenues produced by the slaves of other countries.

Wherefore rises this great outcry of fear? Why these frantic appeals? Has God gone back on his chosen people?

The riddle is solved in oil.

The power of rule is passing from coal to oil.

Great Britain's dominance did not rest in her power to produce great men, nor in her righteousness, nor in her capacity to rule. Her power rested on coal near the seaboard. Britain arose to might in the beginning of the railroad abundance of coal, easily mined and transported to the water's edge, gave her the power. And she had iron near the coal and these two factors made her great. Coal to smelt the iron to fashion weapons and ships to take the users of weapons to India, Canada, the South Sea Islands, she grabbed the new islands and exploited them like Tyre and Sidon grabbed the trade of the Mediterranean when that was practically the only known large body of water.

Getting the start, she used the revenues of exploitation to create further exploitation and her greatest robbery was the robbery of oil, as a victorious robber band grows great and has power to crush out rival bands of robbers small at the start.

But conditions are changing. The economic base of society is shifting. OIL REPLACES COAL AND BRITAIN HAS NO OIL WEALTHS.

The British master class realize their coming eclipse and fear. They do not go to their temples and pray. They do not rely on religion, but they frantically endeavor to GRAB OIL WEALTHS.

Oil is the explanation of the struggle to the death in Mexico. Oil is the explanation of the importance of Venezuela and the Caribbean sea. This is the explanation of the struggle in Columbia. The British ruling class know they have to get oil driven battleships to maintain their international exploitation, or lose out in the race.

In Mexico the Pearson syndicate has been endeavoring to capture the Mexican government by financing revolutions in order that Mexican oil may be always open to British ships. She has lost out. In Columbia Lord Murray of the Pearson syndicate spent large sums of money with the Colombian government to get oil concessions. President Wilson thereupon gave a new interpretation to the Monroe doctrine by declaring that foreign syndicates getting large concessions from South American governments in such a manner as to control the natural resources of such countries would not be allowed by the United States. Lord Murray has returned to England and announced the failure of his schemes.

It is now said that Britain must go back to the smaller type of ships. The superdreadnoughts and even larger vessels are only possible when oil driven. Coal takes up too much bulk and cannot develop the horsepower. Smaller ships mean smaller guns and smaller guns, according to the lesson of the last naval wars, mean defeat.

The British battleships of the Queen Elizabeth type are 27,500 tons, with 15 inch guns, and 25 knots, using exclusively oil fuel. If Britain cannot get oil fuel, her big ships will lie like helpless logs in time of war. The program was to build five ships this year of 30,000 tons. But Lord Murray has lost out in Columbia, owing to the American interference, and the plans have been altered. Now it is announced the five new ships will be coal burning, 25,000 tons, 21.5 knots and with 13.5 inch guns.

Compare this with other nations. The United States government is planning to buy Texas oil wells and pipe the oil to the seaboard for the battleships. Her warships building are of 32,000 tons, and with 14 inch guns. Russia, with oil wells in the Tiflis region, is building ships of the same weight and big guns. Germany and Italy are building 15 inch guns for their ships. Italy can get oil from Austria as long as the triple alliance lasts. Japan is arming with 14 inch guns.

As coal gave Britain dominance and she took, so oil is giving other nations dominance and they will take.

Great Britain has thirteen billions of dollars invested in foreign countries. This brings in an annual revenue of \$650,000,000. This annual tribute does not rest on justice. It rests on the power of big guns.

If Britain cannot put up the big guns, she will have to put up with a loss of her revenue.

A Capitalist Problem

Farmers around Cowansville sending their milk to the city of Montreal, get three and nine-tenths cents net per quart for it. City users pay ten cents a quart.

The middleman step in and take the difference.

Should we, as a Socialist body, begin to agitate against this huge cost of distributing milk? Should we pour forth lamentations as to how the poor consumer is robbed?

We should not, and we do not, not so anyone would notice it.

This tremendous waste in distribution is a problem of capitalism. Let the capitalist class as a whole to effect distribution as cheaply as possible.

Profits depend upon the difference between what the working class can produce and what it costs the working class to live.

The working class will get but a living wage. The rest goes to the masters and their agents.

If, therefore, there is waste in distribution, the cost of living of the workers will be high, and high wages will have to be paid. If the distribution of commodities is simplified so that the cost of distribution is small, the cost of living will be lower, and lower wages will be paid.

And that portion of the workers' product which now is wasted by a costly and inefficient distribution will be added to the profits of the owning class.

Already the capitalist class are taking steps to cut down the cost of distribution. A parcels post is being established to put the farmers in contact with the city buyers.

Express charges from Cowansville to Montreal, fifty-seven miles, for an eight gallon can of milk — thirty-two quarts — is thirty-five cents, over a cent a quart.

With the government carrying the milk at a lower price, the cost of distribution will be lowered, and the farmers will get a better price for their milk. This will benefit the capitalist class as a whole at the expense of that section of the capitalist class which now runs the express companies.

The Farm Capitalized

The farmers are workers. Throughout the Eastern Townships of the Province of Quebec there is hardly a farm-owner who runs his farm with wage slaves without himself working.

There are farm mortgages and rented farms where one person runs and manages the farm and divides up with the capitalist, but the person on the farm does the work.

No doubt a few will wonder why the capitalist class will be benefited if, as stated above, the farmer gets a better price for his dairy product.

The reason is that the farm is on the point of becoming an instrument of capitalist exploitation.

Expanding capitalism needs ever new fields to conquer. It can live only by expanding and converting all society to its own image. Then, when this process is complete, it will fall of its own weight unless the working class rise sooner and abolish it. Profits are so enormous that they must be re-invested, or the rich will choke in their own wealth. War and destruction may waste a little of this wealth, but with working class pressure against war, wars will become fewer.

The capitalists are turning their eyes towards the farm.

If the farmers get less than four cents a quart for their milk, this means that the farm will give but small profits. If the farmers can get seven cents a quart for their milk the farm will be transformed into the capitalist model.

The cheap parcels post is an important factor in this transformation. It is the opening wedge in the capitalization of the farm.

Government Help Capitalist Class

The Borden government has granted ten million dollars of the Dominion funds to aid agriculture. The government has not granted this money to loan to farmers to pay off their mortgages and debts (it is estimated that the farmers of Saskatchewan province alone are paying twelve millions of dollars a year in interest charges), but to aid agricultural colleges and out better and more efficient ways of farming. Efficiency in farming means higher capitalization of the farm with a lower unit cost of production which will make the difference between what a farm slaves creates, and what is needed to keep him far greater than at present. Then the ineffectiveness of the farmers will be used to squeeze them out of their ownership. Farms will pass to the hands of capitalists to be consolidated into larger agricultural areas and operated at lesser unit expense through division of labor and machinery.

Sir Wm. C. Macdonald, the tobacco millionaire of Montreal, has spent several millions of dollars in founding the agricultural college of Ste. Anne de Bellevue, near Montreal. This college is continually investigating the cost of farm production and devising ways of greater efficiency.

It has discovered that one good cow will produce more profits than a hundred and ninety-five poor cows.

A good cow will bring its owner ninety dollars per year in milk returns. A poor cow will bring in a little over forty-five dollars. It costs \$45 to keep and operate a cow. Thus the poor cow will give thirty cents profit over cost of labor, etc., while a good cow will give \$45.

Capitalists in the east are already figuring on these statistics. The average herd runs from ten to twenty cattle. These cattle have to have buildings erected for them, hay and ensilage and horsepower to harvest the feed, etc. With 200 high grade cattle, the returns will be \$18,000 a year. On a dairy farm, hogs and poultry can be raised and other sources of revenue obtained.

With 200 cattle, milking machines can be installed, electrical machinery to do the churning to make butter and automatic manure handling machinery.

With intensive cultivation, from two to three acres of land will keep a cow. The average present eastern farm carries one cow for from nine to twelve acres of land.

If a capitalized farm can pay five per cent, which would be \$5,000 upon an investment of \$100,000 (the \$12,000 dairy farm is now the great exception) capital will flow rapidly to agriculture, and the small farmer will be as practically squelched as the small iron foundry has been.

The capitalist class are busily undertaking to cut out the middleman and reduce the cost of living. They are enthusiastically voting government funds to aid the intensification and increase the efficiency of agriculture. They want to oust the small farmer and introduce the typical wage slave form in this division of production.

The Child of Capitalism

Socialism is the child of capitalism.

Socialism comes when capitalism has prepared the way.

Individual industry is not the ground from which springs Socialism. From individual industry and petty production springs capitalism, and turning production from the small, independent form, to the giant form, conducted by wage workers.

When capitalism has expropriated the small owners and turned them into proletarians, the proletarians unite to capture the machinery of production and distribution through collective, political action.

The aim of Socialism is not to relegate the individual form of production, but the aim is to have the collective working class own the collective means of life.

Collective action, therefore, is necessary before the collective aims of Socialism can be realized.

For this reason we watch with interest the progress of capitalized farming. For we know that the capitalists in industrializing the farm are soundings their own doom.

Ellis—Legalized Killer

Capitalists foment wars and cause men to murder each other by the thousand for the sake of profits. The laws made by the tools of the capitalists say this is right. It is called patriotism. The murderer has no fault found with him, on the contrary, if he has been a very successful murderer and has caused an unusually large number of his fellow creatures (made in the image of God) to bite the dust, he is heralded as a hero, given medals, and a grant of money from the parliament of his country.

Capitalism forces men downward and still downward until their environment of misery and crime forces them to murder one of their fellows.

Capitalism refuses to stand for this. One less worker means so much profits lost to the game of greed. The murderer must be taught a lesson, so that the supply of workers will not run short. This paltry habit of murdering one man at a time must cease—there is no money in it; it is not good business. The fact that a murder can be committed with a club or a brick or an old jackknife does not appeal to the makers of arms. How do the unthinking murderers suppose the armament makers are to live if such crude methods are employed? It will not do. There must be a stop put to it.

Therefore the henchmen of the capitalists have made laws which say that the one who commits one of these unprofitable murders must himself be murdered. Thus the habit will be stamped out, and the job left to those who understand it, and do it in the method most approved of by big business. The man who is driven into bestial or degrading surroundings must put up with them; he must not let his passions rise when he is unable to secure work and sees the wealth he and his kind have created displayed daily before his hungry eyes. He must be docile and calm and contented, and when the price of labor has doctored to the low water mark, he may be given a job. If his criminal tendencies are brought to the surface by his hellish surroundings and he murders a man, he must himself hang. That is the law of the robbing class, and though public sentiment is decidedly against the carrying out of such law, it still stands and is enforced week by week, and day by day.

Judges, sheriffs and police take the unfortunate who has committed unprofitable murder, and he is passed through their hands and sentenced to be hanged. There they wash their hands of the whole affair. Who is to do the job of taking the life away from his fellow creature? The hangman, of course. The law has appointed one of these creatures to carry out its orders, and everyone concerned frees himself from all responsibility of the dirty job.

And it is a dirty job. At present one Arthur Ellis takes pleasure in being able to say he is the Dominion hangman. Recently he came to Montreal to strap a poor unfortunate, and march him to the gallows and draw the bolt that sent him to eternity. This Ellis animal had a few hours to spare and attended a theatre. Taking off his overcoat he pulled a revolver and fired it. The police nabbed him and ran him in. Horrors! Arrest him, a servant of the Dominion government, an ally of the all-powerful capitalist system! Such an idea was preposterous to Ellis. He appeared in the police station in all the magnitude of offended dignity. "The idea of degrading one of my position," he exclaimed. "It is terrible. Some person will suffer for it. The chief would never consent to this preposterous treatment—ridiculous!" However, the police sent him out to the jail where his victim was awaiting him, and kept him there. He was fined \$5 for carrying the weapon and let go on suspended sentence for being drunk.

This is Ellis, the scavenger of the master class. This is the creature whom the capitalists appoint to do their heathenish work. Where did he come from? He is ashamed to tell, but Gwynn Hall's description fits one of his ilk so well that we give it below.

"When God made the coyote, the hyena, the moose, the caribou and the skunk he gave the refuse to Belial, the Lord of greed, and villainess, and told him to take it to hell with the terrible substance. Belial bethought himself to play a joke on God, and, retiring to the slums of Sodom, placed the God-ordained stuff in the nest of a leopards vulture and she hatched therefrom the hangman, which was reared on blood and given a were-wolf soul by Belial. Since then this thing has been the murder-organ of the emperors, kings, nobles and capitalists have called the earth and maintained law, order, impartial justice, civilization and society from destruction. The difference between the hangman and the men who appoint him, with apologies to the vultures, is that between a hazzard and a carrion crow. Compared to a hangman, a politician is a violet and a coyote is a lion."

Clerks and even guests were pressed into service in London hotels on January 3rd to secure fuel, because of a general strike of coal-wagon drivers and porters. In Leeds in the recent strike of municipal workers the soft-handed gent, took a hand at rough work to show the strikers how unnecessary they were. These instances are fine. It shows that parasites can really do useful work. When the revolution triumphs it will be no hardship to set lords and financiers to digging sewers and the like.

Father J. S. Belford of Brooklyn, N. Y., has been in Montreal denouncing Socialism to the Knights of Columbus. This is the holy father we understand, who declared from his Brooklyn pulpit that Socialists should be shot like mad dogs. It must make the holy father writhe in spirit to see the steady advance of Socialism in adherents and respect. The poor fellow has our sincerest sympathy.

Capitalist officials who investigated conditions in Kingston penitentiary are now going to investigate conditions at St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary, P.Q. The investigation will be a whitewash. All the commission will do will be to see if the prison officials are as brutal as the capitalist law demands that they be.

Lloyd George's campaign against the land-lord in England is proving so popular that the Tories are coming forward with schemes to abolish the land-evil. When the people want a thing bad enough they will get it.

Graft at Quebec

A sensation has been sprung in the province of Quebec by the Montreal Daily Mail. The new morning paper of that city. This paper has been in existence but three months.

The paper, or parties backing it, has spent fifteen or twenty thousand dollars in uncovering bribery in the Quebec legislature and the Quebec Legislative Council, which is the upper house of the province.

It has been long considered that bribery and corruption was rampant at Quebec. The Daily Mail, to prove it, consulted the Burns Detective Agency which has become internationally known with regard to the McNamee trial and general anti-university activity.

After the plan was hatched, Burns operatives came to Montreal and opened a suite of offices in a downtown building, at a rental of \$1,200 a year. These gentlemen posed as American millionaires of the sports type, interested in getting a scheme called the Montreal Fair Association incorporated by the Quebec House. The charter, as drawn up, would allow the Association to conduct horseracing, to sell alcoholic beverages and to conduct lotteries. The bill was a private one and a most vicious one. It was so much of a bait to the legislative members and legislative councillors upon the private bills committee. It looked good for a great deal of graft to these members.

After opening the offices, room 300 with the three adjoining apartments at the Chateau Frontenac, Quebec city, was occupied. Room 300 was the room where the grafters were to be interviewed and bribed, while the adjoining rooms contained witnesses and stenographers. The inevitable telephone was installed.

This simply means that rival factions of the master class are quarrelling over the surplus value robbed from the working class.

If the American Tobacco Trust controls tobacco, raises prices, and extorts large profits, other capitalists native to Germany will not get as much profits as they otherwise would.

Moreover, in Germany, the military bureaucracy is still powerful politically.

The landed noble and the armament maker are among the chief exploiters of the German people. And they control the government.

Hence when tobacco magnates threaten to absorb too much surplus-values through raising prices, the government, as agent of the warlords and landlords, plays roughhouse with them.

The common people have nothing to hope from this struggle. Their only hope is the abolition of the parasites as a whole.

The Canadian Commission of Conservation will, at the present session, take up the question of housing and town-planning. Laws will be proposed preventing the individual building as he will on his own property. The individual liberty will be curtailed in the interest of the community. This is good. But if we can plan towns, and have publicly owned waterworks and street railways, and fire service, why cannot we plan houses fit for people to live in, and why cannot we build them publicly and allow the people to live in them without a landlord getting a profit off them?

In capitalist society the workers are the lower class; the capitalists are the upper class—because they are on the workers' backs; if they were not on the workers' backs, they would not be above them.

555 from various Montreal unions was recently forwarded to the strikers' fund of Vancouver. The solidarity of the workers is growing to be such that three thousand millions of territory means nothing to them.