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CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH

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## MONTREAL BY COMMISSION

The business men of Montreal have been shocked by the revolutions of the Royal Commission with regard to the business corruption existing in the Council. A lot of these same business men have taken part in that corruption to get contracts from the city. Nevertheless the business men were shocked.

From the examinations before the Royal Commission now sitting in Montreal it appears that Aldermen were in the habit of getting a large rakeoff on all contracts given. The contracts did not go to the lowest tender but sometimes to the highest, the Aldermen getting their commission. It appears also that the men employed in the fire department and other departments of the city had to pay to get their jobs. Those higher up got the pay. Out of the pay coming to them the employees had to give fifty or a hundred dollars. This to the plute papers and plute business men is considered to be perfectly horrible. The business men are squealing for a business administration. The big men of Montreal are holding street corner meetings for the purpose of inveigling the workmen of Montreal into voting for a business administration of the city. These big men when they talk and block the streets are not run in like the wicked socialists by the police. They are given all the rope they want. The police are there to stop all rows that would prevent the words of the business men from being heard. At socialist meetings the police are used to create disturbances. The business men want their fallacies to get before the workers and do not want socialist truths to reach the ears of the people, and the police are ever the instruments for the execution of the desires of the ruling class. The goody-goody paper of Montreal, the Witness, has declared that Cotton's Weekly is wickedly pernicious in declaring that the workers are not interested in the question of a business administration.

The Aldermen have been getting their rakeoffs from city contracts. This is a matter of indifference to the workers. The workers get their day's pay which is about one-fifth of what they produce. The other four-fifths is stolen from them by the labor thieves who are the business men of Montreal, and their parasites, the Forgets, the Drummonds, the Van Hornes, the Carsleys, the banking magnates, the lawyers, the stock brokers, the Aldermen, Archbishop Bruchesi and the Catholic clergy, Bishop Farley and the Protestant ministers who minister to the spiritual needs of the labor thieves and get in return some of the wealth stolen from the laborers.

The vital question to the workers is to get back the four-fifths of their product now stolen from them. It is a matter of utter indifference to the workingmen of Montreal who gets the the swag. It does not matter to the workers whether that swag finds its way into the pockets of an Alderman through a bribe or whether it finds its way into the ecclesiastical pocket of Bruchesi in return for prayers for some dead laborer thief.

Now the Montreal business men who are plundering the laborers of four-fifths of what they earn have elected to the City Hall certain parasites to do their bidding. The business men want to get all the swag in the shape of stolen labor that they can. So they put these men in the City Hall and give them a small salary. Then the business men make these Aldermen swear that they will take no more of the swag than their small salaries. The Aldermen swear. Then the business men go about their business of plundering the laborers. They talk to the Aldermen about the honor of their position as City Fathers. They tell them to be moral and honest and upright, which being interpreted means that the business men do not want the Aldermen to take more of the swag than the business men have fixed as the Aldermanic reward.

But the Aldermen, seeing all the plunder going, perceive that the business labor thief is a hypocrite and begin to steal on their own account. The Aldermen do not steal from the laborers.

The laborer by the capitalist system has already been robbed of all beyond a bare living. The Aldermen therefore, when they steal, must steal from the labor thieves their masters.

The business men in robbing the workers feel happy. They talk about the rights of capital and that labor must be submissive. Here is where the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, find themselves useful to the labor thieves. They can talk about heaven and keep the workers quiet. But when these same labor thieves find that their henchmen, the Aldermen, have been surreptitiously taking unto themselves part of the stolen labor plunder, the business men get mad. Like all thieves the business man cannot stand being deprived of what he has stolen. Therefore he begins to howl about corruption and dishonesty. Therefore he waxes indignant and rails again his henchmen. These henchmen must be sacked and a new method of choosing these henchmen must be devised. The business men have come to the conclusion that a government by commission is the thing necessary. So the business men who need the votes of the workers for this change come to the workers and tell them to vote for a change. If the workers are wise they will go about their business laughing in their sleeves at the blue funk of the labor thieves since the thieves have discovered that a part of their swag has not been reaching their own pockets.

But, say the labor thieves, look how the poor workers have been plundered. Why, to get a job with the fire department they have had to pay one hundred dollars. Is not that robbery of the workers?

The laborer will smile. When he knows that the man who is talking to him has a part of the four-fifths of the workingmen's labor and is living off of new labor continually being stolen from them he will tell the labor thief that he is straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. The workingman will know what it means when the business man talks of a business administration. He knows that business buys men's time like it buys hogs. Business asks, "Where can I get workingmen for the least money?" It takes pains to find out and then hires the cheapest men who can do the work. The workingmen know that at present a fireman can afford to pay a hundred dollars to get a job on the fire department. He knows that when the business men of Montreal get to running things the men on the fire department will not be able to keep a wife and perhaps their own sisters, to get a living, will have to submit their bodies to the embraces of the respectable labor thieves.

The commission plan will be a good thing for the labor thieves. It brings about a system of checks where nobody can do anything unless all are agreed. It brings into play a big and unwieldy constituency in which the true will of the people will be stifled. Even as it is the council of Montreal is a better representative body than will be the business commission which will represent the labor thiefing interests alone.

Imagine the Commission controlling things. The city instead of paying a dollar and a half a day for its labor will pay a dollar and thirty-five cents like the Street Railway. That is good business. All the leaks will be stopped and Montreal will have low taxes and good services. Will this benefit the workingmen? Not at all. It will benefit those who still plunder him. The Aldermen will not get so much but the labor thieves will get more. Houses will become more valuable because the landlords will not have to pay so much taxes. Gas may become cheaper and water and therefore it will not cost the workers so much to live. This will not benefit the workers but will benefit the labor thieves as the labor thieves will not get so much wages. The lower the cost of living the lower the wages. Cornwall, Ont., is an example of this law of wages. In Cornwall the workers mostly own their own homes. Consequently having to pay no rent they can work for beggarly wages. You see, the labor thieves of

Montreal and elsewhere see to it that all but the barest living wage is taken away from the wageslave.

Will the Commission plan of government raise wages in the Montreal Cotton Mills? Will Morgan or Simpson or Carsley or the street railway or the other instruments of separating the worker from four-fifths of his product raise the rate of wages because of a changed political form? Will the landlord reduce his rent? Will the policeman be less brutal when he knows that big business is backing him instead of an Alderman who must look well after the interests of his ward? Will fewer of the girls of the working class be forced into prostitution because the value of her work has been stolen from her by a department store or a shirtwaist factory and the plunder is not divided up with an Alderman? Be not deceived. The Commission plan of government will not benefit the workers at all. It will hurt them inasmuch as the city hall government being controlled by business interests, will be less responsive to the will of the people. Of course the capitalist papers and the big labor thieves are hot for the civic commission scheme. This proves conclusively that labor is likely to get it in the neck under the new regime.

The only hope of the workers is to expropriate the mills and dwellings and railways, street and otherwise, and departmental stores and all the other means whereby the workers are made to divide up with the labor thieves. Under the commission plan the city will be less responsive to the will of the workers and more subservient to the interests of the labor thieves. If the socialist revolution is going to come about by means of political action this commission plan is bad for labor. If the revolution is to come about by the political general strike tolerated and protected by sympathetic soldiers, who refuse to obey the dictates of the cynical bloody-hearted business men, then the commission plan will be a matter of indifference. The workers had better be on the safe side and oppose the commission scheme.

## THE BATTLE FOR BREAD

W. R. Shier.

All self-respecting workpeople want the best of food, the best of clothing, the best of housing.

They want security of employment, short hours of labor, healthy conditions in the mines and shops and factories.

They want education for their children, freedom from the fear of want and a voice in the management of industry.

They want the means and the leisure with which to enjoy life. In short, they want the good things of life, and they want them in abundance.

Are they getting them under the present industrial system? No. Notwithstanding the fact that all is produced by labor, the workers must be content to eat cheap food, wear shoddy clothing and live in tenements or miserable-looking houses.

New York bankers have borrowed four hundred million dollars this summer from Europe. It is reported that this debt will be liquidated to Europe partially by the sale of new securities. Europe will take the securities, the American capitalists will fling the concerns into bankruptcy and reorganize them freezing out the European lender. That is the way the American plute gets his plunder. But as the fight is only over the spoils plundered from the workers it is a matter of indifference to them who gets the swag. The workers know they don't get it themselves. All they get is given to them in the neck.

At Battle Creek, Mich., a monster Socialist picnic was held last Sunday. Battle Creek is noted for being the home place of C. W. Post, a hater of Socialism. Charlie has the thing right in his home town. Cheer up, Charlie. You will soon be beaten to a standstill by the advance of what you think is your enemy.

The Swedish unionists are scoring a victory. Organized labor is there with the goods when it sets itself to work along right lines.

## THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Edison, the inventor, has recently been prophesying a glorious future for the air-ship. He gives, however, a note of warning. He declares that in his opinion the inventors are working on a wrong principle. He says that the success of the aviators has been so immediate that they must be working on a wrong basis. His own experience has been that the easy, simple way of doing a thing was not the right way. Nature shuts herself in mystery and is not easily elucidated.

In the same way there are many reformers who are trying to reform on astoundingly simple lines. These reformers declare that man could be good if he would only try to be good. Working along these lines, they go about telling men and women to be good. They draw illustrations from the aspirations of man and exhort the men to turn these aspirations into deeds. They declare that the way to goodness lies open to humanity in general. It does not matter whether a man be rich or poor. Let him try to be good and he will become good.

Occasionally circumstances so work together as to produce a man whom these reformers and teachers consider good. Finding a few of these good men, the reformers conclude that they have the right way and keep on hammering at their dogmas of reform.

The way to regenerate humanity is not so easy or simple as these reformers believe. Man's nature is founded on a material basis with material needs. Those material needs must be satisfied else the body dies. The law of self preservation is the first law of nature and man is a natural animal. Until the system is evolved under which self preservation coincides with race preservation, the struggle for existence will rule. The law of the beak and claw will hold good for humanity. Reformers may try experiments and may get passing results due to the chemism of emotion, but these results will be transient in the vast majority of cases. They will be permanent only in a few cases where the necessity for the coming into action of a law of self preservation does not exist.

To get permanent results in race morality, the manner in which the various groups of individuals come into contact with the necessities of life must be studied. When these are unravelled, it will be found that there are useful producers and useless non-producers. It will be found that a struggle is taking place under which the useful producers are trying to prevent their products being consumed by the non-producers. It will be found that the non-producers are endeavoring to keep the producers in subjection. With the evolution of industry the bondage in which the producers are held is becoming more and more apparent. The lines of the class struggle are becoming more clearly defined.

Until this struggle ceases by the triumph of the productive workers and their organization in the industrial democracy of the socialist state, the law of the self-preservation of the individual will not coincide with race preservation. Consequently, humanity will not be able to rise into the intellectual, moral and spiritual realms, and the preaching to men to be good will be more or less wasted effort.

## PARASITE LABOR

There are many men who work hard and earn grey in the harness. These men grow a livelihood by their labor, sometimes good and sometimes precarious. These men perform services which are socially unnecessary but which, under the legislative enactments of a capitalist system, bring their reward to the individual performing them.

The advocate, the stock broker, the commercial traveller, the retail trader these men perform more or less socially unnecessary tasks. Nevertheless they work hard and frequently get little return for their labor. These men will talk indignantly should you tell them that they are good for nothing. The lawyer will point to his rows of antique law books and to his docket and will

tell you that he has studied far into the night and has worked hard for every cent he got. The retail trader will tell you of how he gets up early and stays up late, of worries about meeting his obligations, about his stock-taking and patient waiting upon the whims of disgruntled customers. He will tell you that every cent he got, he got by hard work.

The fact that many men work hard does not prove that their labor benefits the community. With the evolution of industry those classes performing socially unnecessary labor will find that they have to work hard to get less money and that their professions or occupations will finally disappear altogether. The catcher of runaway slaves had to work hard to get his money. In slave days he had to go into bogs and all sorts of nasty places in order to follow up his occupation. With the freeing of the slaves his occupation was gone. The buyer and seller of slaves had to take long journeys to exercise his trade. He worked hard but his work is now looked down upon with contempt. In the same way there are many men whose occupations will disappear in the coming of the socialist state.

## TIMID CAPITAL

Capitalist newspapers never tire of sounding the modesty and timidity of capital. Capital is declared to be so timid that the faintest breath of criticism will drive it out of a city. A least little law will turn capital away from a place and send it somewhere else.

As a matter of fact, capital in the ordinary acceptance of the word is one of the boldest, most impudent and most corrupt things. Capital will pour itself into a hole in the ground called a mine. Capital will stick its nose into primitive communities of savage Africans, much to the disgust of the swarthy inhabitants. Capital will send armies to China to force itself into the unwilling villages and cities of the Chinese. Capital will push its way into the Arctic snows and the swamps of the Equator. Capital will take up the most foolhardy ventures. It will enslave white, brown and yellow races to make them do its bidding. It will corrupt legislatures and municipal governments. It will crowd men and women together into one-roomed hovels. It will take little children and bind them to giant machines to grind their little lives into more capital. Capital, which might be a glorious benefit to the human race, is a hideous, slimy monster which devours the bodies and bones of wage slaves.

When a flunkey press declares that capital is timid it means that the capitalist is timid. The capitalist is a fear filled creature who is timid about his fortune. The capitalist is all the time wondering whether his ventures are going to fail him. He trembles at the thought of a rival. He jumps at the thought of a strike. He is fearful about adverse legislation in the interests of humanity and keenly watches all bills before the Legislatures. His fearfulness and timidity imparts itself to the flunkey press.

The capitalist is only satisfied and at rest when he is screwing the last cent out of his wage workers and has a big army to shoot the workers down in the case of a slave revolt. When the capitalist feels secure his timidity vanishes. Then he purrs like a contented cat who is gorged on little birds. The capitalist then talks about vested interests and stable government and peace and prosperity.

When the papers are solemnly declaring that capital is timid the expropriated proletariat can rest assured that some capitalists at least are in a blue flunk. When the goody-goody papers and the capitalist press in general are protesting against attack on capital and decrying the social unrest and talking about the ungrateful laborer, the expropriated proletariat may take courage because his condition is likely to be bettered. But when the capitalist press purrs let the laborers watch out.

Have Cotton's sent weekly to your local editor. It will bring him out of his shell.

## THE CONCILIATION ACT

The capitalist press has nothing but praise for the Conciliation Act. The Conciliation Act is a fine thing for the bosses. The Conciliation Act provides for arbitration in case of industrial disputes. These arbitration boards decide what is fair for the bosses and what is fair for the wage slaves. In all these arbitrations the rights of the men are based upon the bare cost of living. The working plugs are supposed to get merely what will give them a chance to live and not die. All the rest goes to the bosses. No wonder the plute papers rejoice. No wonder that a sycophant journalism exalts the wisdom of the Ottawa politicians. A machinery is provided under which the laborers can be skinned with an appearance of fairness and morality.

The workings of the arbitration boards have been successful in avoiding strikes. The capitalist press hails this as a mark of its utility, and its justice and applicability for the solving of labor problems. There are two reasons why the act appears to be successful. In the first place, Canada is in the full flood of capitalist development. Mines are being opened up, railroads built, mills constructed and houses built in the West. Farm machinery is in great demand and the peoples of other countries are pouring in, thus causing great activity. The bright minds and active hands are trying to get hold of the natural resources of Canada in order that the owners thereof can become little plutes and tax the coming hordes of the expropriated proletarians of Europe. Consequently, times are good and the way of escape from wage slavery to a certain extent lies open. The workers who are expropriated can as yet find employment at any rate during the summer months. Canada is busy producing the means of production. The great crisis will come when her machinery of production has been prepared and production for consumption alone remains.

Another reason why the act appears to work so well is that it applies only to certain trades. The act does not apply to ordinary workers nor to ordinary disputes. It applies to those industries alone which are public utilities. Coal, iron, railroad, these are the principal disputes to which the act applies. In these occupations men alone are employed. The wages are fairly high as the work requires skilled men and the cost of living to which their wages are assimilated is that of the cost of the living of a family man. As the wage worker would rather bear the ills he knows than to fly to other that he knows not of, as long as the known ills are bearable, it results that the Conciliation Act has been fairly successful in the cases in which it has operated. Moreover, as the act prevents a strike without notice given to the bosses, the bosses can make arrangements to get strike breakers and to take means to defeat the strike even before it begins, the act has had the result of handicapping the men in the case of economic warfare.

In the Protestant schools of the province of Quebec there are certain teachers who make their schools stand fairly well in the competitive examinations between the pupils of the various schools. This result is achieved by so acting towards the dull scholars that the dull and stupid pupils who are most in need of education leave the school in despair. The bright pupils alone are left at examination time and the school stands high. In the same way, the Lemieux Act only deals with those trades where the wages are the best. It does not examine the wages of retail stores nor of the sweated industries. Consequently, the Lemieux Act seems to show that everybody is getting good wages and that it is a beautiful instrument for giving the wageslaves what is coming to them. This results first, from the temporary industrial condition of Canada and second, from the trades which the Lemieux Act refuses to deal with.

Diaz is at his old work of confiscating opposition papers and jailing the editors. Teddy would like to have been in Mexico with the Appeal to Reason where he could jab it good and plenty.