

CANADIAN LABOR PRESS

A National, Sane Labor Paper

True Confidence and Understanding Between Employer and Employee Absolutely Necessary to Industrial Peace.

VOL. VI., \$1.00 Per Year., National and Rational OTTAWA, ONT., SATURDAY, MAY 30th, 1925. Live News and Views Single Copies 5c. No. 34.

The Fruits of Nationalization

It is a curious mental attitude amongst a section of the Canadian public and especially amongst a section of the Labor movement of Canada, to believe and assert that nationalization of various utilities is a panacea that will correct Canada's economic ills.

The advocates of this policy, time and time again, publicly declare that nationalization of utilities having national scope would mean a cheapening of costs, reduction in price, better industrial harmony and freedom from exploitation of the members of the community.

Let us analyze these claims and for a moment refer to the system of private ownership that at present obtains. With all its defects, private property and private enterprise has outstanding merits. It is the most wonderful system for the production of wealth and the cheapening of commodities that has ever been devised. Private property enables the liberation of that initiative and energy that has made possible the tremendous industrial strides of the world to-day. It is private enterprise that undertakes risks in any new line and once solidly established the advocates of nationalization unjustly seek to convert it into common property. One would imagine that those who believe in nationalization as a "cure-all" would urge the state to interest itself in unfertile fields but such is not the case; it is left to private enterprise to hew off the way and after that way has been made successful, then those who seek to establish common property, come forward to press their claims.

Private enterprise has brought what were formerly luxuries, within the reach of every person and enabled literature and the press to come into every home, thus tremendously increasing the level of education and intelligence. Even the advocates of Nationalization admit this but claim that their policy would go even further. From what we see of Nationalization in practice, this is very doubtful. The state railways of Europe in many cases provide infinitely poorer services than the private owned railroads of the U. S. A. and Canada, while the dangers of allowing state monopolies are seen by the control of tobacco by France. Nationalization in practice means that the community must pay in taxation heavily if an adequate service is to be rendered and economically the average citizen a worse off than under private enterprise which must stand on its own feet and bring all its efficiency and initiative to bear so that the best possible service can be rendered in order that the private venture be made a success. There is however more than an economic aspect to this question; there is the ethical and political aspects also which may be and usually are of immense importance to the people of an organized community. We have very few classes in Canada owing to the fairly even distribution of wealth but if we can be said to have any classes they are usually designated as capitalists, workers and farmers. Now it is a fact that public officialdom forms a class in itself, with different characteristics and reactions from any of the others. For example workers usually do not want to see their numbers increased whilst the amount of employment remains limited because of the belief, that increase will create a struggle for employment which will mean lowering of living standards for them. In most countries farmers likewise do not want to see their numbers increased because the land by which they make their living is like employment, limited. The ten-

dency of modern capitalism with the advent of the large industrial establishment having tremendous efficiency and economy in operation is whilst passive capitalists are greatly increasing in numbers, active capitalists tend to become fewer. The curious and paradoxical characteristic of public officialdom is that they are the only class who desire to see their numbers enlarged because each addition to the official bureaucracy means a strengthening and consolidation of their position. A bureaucracy is more susceptible to attack and criticism when say, it consists of one thousand persons, for in a population such as ours the influence of that number even with the indirect interest of their dependents is small, but if the personnel of public officialdom increases to let us say, two hundred thousand, then with the added influence of their dependents it forms a formidable machine closing its ranks and entrenching itself solidly so that criticism or attack cannot dislodge it very easily. We have seen examples of this in the commonwealth of Australia and this will be the road we are heading for if common sanity does not regain its position in the public opinion of our country.

Then there is the political aspect, a very vital one for it has been found in practice that public officialdom can exercise a vast and unseen influence upon the policies of a government. If anyone does not believe this is so let me quote from the report of the Commissioner of Accounts of the City of New York, published September 18th, 1924, in which is shown quite clearly that public officialdom will make its policies; supposedly for the benefit of the whole community, subservient to the political policies of the Government of the day. On page fourteen the commissioner in making his report to Mayor Hylan of New York does so in this language.

"Early in 1922, just before the

"Mire" committee of ill-famed memory, appointed "to get something" on the Hylan administration and prevent your Honor's re-election in the following November—"

This quotation shows quite clearly that a public official, paid by all the taxpayers of New York City is quite content to allow his office to be used for the purpose of furthering the political interests of the existing Mayor. The same danger would occur under Nationalization in Canada and shows quite clearly the need for sound education to controvert this dangerous policy inimical to the welfare of the citizens of this country.

Let us view the claim that greater industrial harmony will result under nationalization. Past experience shows how ill-founded this claim is. In Canada bitter disputes have taken place between a national utility and its employees and even in such an example of common property as the British Co-operative movement disputes acrimonious and bitter have been frequent between the Co-operative and the National Union of Distributive Workers. And it was under a Socialist minister, Aristide Briand, that the striking employees of the French State Railways were drafted into the army as conscripts and compelled to break the existing strike.

To sum up, in practice, Nationalization of National utilities does NOT cheapen cost, does NOT lessen price, does NOT prevent exploitation of the workers employed by it and causes serious evils to flow which may have dangerous after-effects for the community. The claim of a man to property is the voice of his independence, and independent action, independent resources, and capabilities are the proper functions of a man. Nationalization would tend to subvert these principles and breed a citizenry apathetic and indifferent to the welfare of our country.

THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND IMMIGRATION

According to press reports, immigration to Canada from Great Britain is likely to be disappointing to those who have the welfare of Canada at heart, and who believe that the country needs more immigrants in order to equalize the burden of taxation and spread it over a larger population base.

"The Canadian Labor Press" feels that every effort should be strained by the authorities at Ottawa and who are in a position to do so to induce large numbers of British immigrants to come out here especially to settle on the land.

"The Canadian Labor Press" believes it the duty of the Dominion Government to help those who come here as newcomers to the country to become absorbed in the agricultural and industrial life of the community and we must candidly confess that up to the present the results of the present Government's activities in this respect have been extremely disappointing. We feel that the Federal Government could take a leaf from the Australian Government's book and see that a large appropriation was set aside each year to aid in bringing larger numbers of settlers from Great Britain. If something

Child Labor in the United States

After five hours' discussion, the Republican Party of the United States Parliament has decided to take no action on the Child Labor Amendment (enabling, not compelling the various Federal States to pass legislation restricting Child Labor that this decision the Republican Party has definitely ranged itself on the side of the organized manufacturers, although it had earlier declared in favor of ratification of the Amendment.

The storm centre of the Child Labor agitation is North Carolina, one of the most important textile manufacturing districts of the U. S. A. It was in North Carolina that the suits originated which led to legal decisions denouncing two Federal child labor laws as contrary to the American Constitution. But the textile manufacturers were not eager to bear the odium of signing in the public eyes as the champions of child labor. So the literature against the Amendment which flooded the country was sent out by the Farmers' States Rights League; and it is only

High Shoe Tariff Urgently Needed

Union Official Says Unemployment Situation Would Benefit

Montreal, Que.—Declaration that a high tariff on all shoes imported into the United States and Canada is urgently needed in view of the great amount of unemployment in the industry was the declaration made by Collis Lovely, of Boston, president of the International Boot and Shoe Workers' Union.

Post-war depression and tariff are cited by Mr. Lovely as the two chief causes of unemployment in the boot and shoe industry. While a higher tariff would not altogether eliminate unemployment, it would do much in that direction, he said. Constant change in style in women's shoes is largely responsible for the high cost of shoes today, he said. Change in patterns caused much wastage and adds greatly to the overhead costs.

Offers Civic Insurance Scheme

Toronto, Ont.—Douglas Keir, insurance agent, submitted a scheme of insurance for civic employees to the Board of Control which would give the employees special benefits without requiring any contribution from the city. The Board referred it to the Finance Commissioner for a report.

The principles of the scheme is that the city should collect the monthly premiums from the employees' salaries and the company with whom they were insured would deduct from the charges the amount that is ordinarily charged for collection. The employees would enjoy regular insurance at reduced rates.

THE PROBLEM OF BRITISH IMMIGRATION

Editor of "Canadian Labor Press" Delivers Lecture on British Conditions—Fears Canada Is Not Getting Sufficient Proportion of British Emigrants

Recently James T. Gunn, editor of "The Canadian Labor Press," delivered an interesting address on Social and Industrial conditions in Great Britain to the members of the Men's Brotherhood of Earle Court Methodist Church, Toronto.

During the course of his address, Mr. Gunn stated, "that Great Britain was still confronted with a severe unemployment situation, reaching a million and a quarter of registered unemployed during the first quarter of the present year." "The means taken," he said, to alleviate the conditions caused through severe unemployment was by the National Unemployment Insurance scheme and relief from the "poor rates." He doubted the wisdom of the dole, finding after investigation that the payment of the dole to adolescents, created a situation whereby the younger generation of Britain seemed not to care whether they got work or not as long as they were receiving their weekly dole. In connection with the social condition of the people, Mr. Gunn said that there still existed a great deal of poverty especially in

the large cities of Britain. Glasgow still had a large single slum area and it was practically admitted by everyone who had given any attention to the housing situation that the housing conditions on the Clyde area were a disgrace to civilization.

"There is a large feeling growing up," said Mr. Gunn, "amongst the rank and file of the British working men and amongst their leaders too, that some form of protection was necessary for Great Britain in order that she retain her industrial position in the world.

Dealing with immigration, Mr. Gunn stated that there existed amongst the thoughtful portion of Britain, a fear that Canada was not getting sufficient British immigrants in proportion to the numbers coming from Eastern and Central Europe. Mr. Gunn said "that he felt there was considerable justification for this point of view by reason of the immigration figures into the various Western provinces where the proportion of non-British immigrants coming in during this last two years greatly outnumbered the British immigrants. Mr. Gunn pointed out that insofar as labor was concerned, they did not object to the non-British immigrants who were generally industrious people and made good citizens, but he felt that if the present ratio continued, there was a possibility of acute problems being raised such as language problems in the various schools of the different Western provinces. He pointed out that the Australian government is extremely anxious to secure British immigration and for that purpose they are paying the fares and giving loans to young men and women who go to Australia for the occupations of fruit farming and domestic service. In this connection Mr. Gunn pointed out that every week, a boatload of British immigrants leaves London for Australia and so far as is known become good citizens in that Dominion.

Mr. Gunn felt that if the Canadian Government adopted a similar scheme with supervision over the immigrants who came to Canada under it that the difficulty of farm labor could be adequately solved. One of the problems he pointed out in connection with British immigration is that under the present system where the

May Close Oil Wells

Operators in Mexico Contemplate Move to Checkmate Unions

Mexico City.—A general strike is threatened in the oil regions, according to reports received at labor headquarters here, in consequence of the warfare now going on between the workers unions affiliated with the Mexican regional confederation of labor and those adhering to the rival organization, the general confederation of workers. The struggle has already resulted in the killing of one workman and the wounding of several. It is reported that the large petroleum interests are contemplating a suspension of operations unless labor conditions improve.

Canada Must Have More Immigrants

Former British Secretary for the Colonies Pleads for Speeding up Immigration

London.—The Overseas Settlement Department of the Colonial Office issued a message written by J. H. Thomas, who was Secretary for the Colonies in the Ramsay MacDonald Cabinet, and addressed: "To my fellow-citizens in the Dominions and Great Britain."

Mr. Thomas opens by stating that he is aware "there are many people who assume that the Labor leaders are against the development of the Empire. It is because I am a Labor man that I believe with all my heart in that great brotherhood of free, democratic peoples which is building up the British Empire."

Canada Must Have More People Dealing with the capabilities of the Dominions and the smallness of their populations, he expresses himself at length on the latter problem, and asks if the British people do not see that the existence of the Dominions as nations depends upon having them populated to a much greater extent.

Canada, he says, must have more people, and five or six millions of British could not hold Australia. The success of the white Australia policy depends upon having more inhabitants.

Get Together and Spend Money

Mr. Thomas points out that "those empty lands are a danger to us all," and, in connection with their development and settlement, shows that under the Empire Settlement Act the British Treasury can put up £3,000,000 annually, but that not more than one-sixth of this amount has been spent yet in any year. He urges the people of the Dominions to get together and find some means of providing this money, and more if necessary.

No Money to Buy Food

Montreal, Que.—Out of work for nearly a month, unable to provide food for his wife and two small children and having walked several miles to the city from his home in Cartierville, a suburb in a vain search for work, Robert Ernest Kemp aged 45, hanged himself with a clothesline from a beam in the cellar of his home. His body was discovered shortly afterwards by his wife who went to the basement.

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