

# The Observer

WE FIGHT THE BATTLE OF THE PLAIN PEOPLE

VOL. XXXVIII

\$1.00 PER YEAR

COWANSVILLE, P. Q., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1908

3 MONTHS FOR 25c

No. 8

## CONSISTENCY

There are some individuals who are blaming THE OBSERVER for inconsistency. In many ways we admit the charge. If consistency means always maintaining the same ideas and always fighting for the same things then we are inconsistent. After giving considerable thought to the question, we have come to the conclusion that the most consistent thing that has come under our observation is a bump on a log. The bump is always there and could it talk it would no doubt intimate its utter abhorrence for animated creatures who skip all over a back pasture.

The greatest fact in the world is the fact of life. In the studying of life, and of the vitalizing forces in the material, mental or spiritual realms, to always maintain the same point of view is to limit the discussion of the problems of life to a narrower range than nature herself has laid down. The prohibitionists believe that the liquor traffic is one of the greatest curses at present afflicting humanity. We agree with them and as a practical maxim we believe in the statement that wine is a mocker. We must admit, however, that many men evidently find more enjoyment in being mocked than they do in keeping a wise head on cool shoulders.

In the realm of our duty towards our fellowmen we find that the socialists are about correct in their philosophy. This does not prevent us from perceiving that many men, through the perversity of their inherited characteristics, are more fitted to be governed than they are to govern themselves.

Consistency to our way of thinking, means taking hold of one idea and sticking to that idea through thick and thin, no matter how disagreeable the idea may be and no matter how erroneous it may be.

Shelley declares that "Life," like a dome of many colored glass, stains the white radiance of eternity." For ourselves we intend to discuss the various colors in which life presents itself to us. If sometimes life appears blue and sometimes rosy, if at times life appears good and sometimes evil, that is the fault of the variegated nature of life itself and not the result of our inconsistency.

## CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

Charles Edward Russell, writer for Everybody's, author of "Soldiers of the Common Good" and many books dealing with social subjects has recently formally allied himself with the Socialist party of the States. Next to Upton Sinclair, another Socialist, Russell is perhaps the best paid writer of the American republic. His income is twenty thousand dollars a year.

The general impression through the Eastern Townships is that the Socialists want to divide up with each other. According to many the Socialists want to count noses and then count the aggregate of the bank accounts and divide that aggregate by the number of individuals there are in the world. We are certain that a man with an income of twenty thousand dollars a year would not be willing to divide up with a man with an income of two hundred dollars a year.

The ignorance in the Eastern Townships on the subject of Socialism is colossal. Socialism does not stand for dividing up the visible wealth. It does not stand for the equality of mankind and a dead level state of society. It does not stand for anarchism. It does not stand for government ownership as such. The things which it does not stand for and which it is blamed for standing for are so numerous that it is impossible to enumerate them all.

Charles Russell, having joined the Socialist party, can now be comraded to Eugene V. Debs, the ex-jail-bird, Haywood, who narrowly escaped being hung for the murder of Steuenberg, and many others of the same stripe. Regarding these gentlemen from one point of view they are little better than felons. Regarding these gentlemen from the view-point of the Socialist organs of the States; they are martyrs and heroes, worthy to take their place by the side of St. Paul the prisoner, and other early Christians who suffered

unjustly because of their intense desire to render the lives of the oppressed brighter.

## FOR A PURER GOVERNMENT

The consensus of opinion among newspapers is that Sir Wilfrid has been given a mandate to finish his work and also to clean house. Many Liberals who stuck to the party through the elections did so with the distinct intention of insisting on a clean up after the fight was over.

There were many Liberal supporters, some of them Cabinet ministers whom the country as a whole would like to have seen defeated. The verdict of the people is that these persons should not be re-trusted with power.

There are many problems facing Canada. The English periodicals warn us against becoming enslaved by our own material success. The development of great national resources and the consequent gathering up of wealth is apt to dazzle the eyes of the people and to make them forget the sterner lessons of life. Races as well as men forget their early training of adversity in the days of their prosperity. Canada may be on the verge of corruption in national life such as that from which the American nation is just emerging.

If Laurier, however, heeds the voices of his friends and the advice of the Liberal as well as of the Conservative press, we may yet emerge from the coming period of national development with a reputation for government honesty second only to that of Great Britain.

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

The distribution of wealth is a subject of study all by itself. The little present is apt to overshadow the great past, and the little localisms are apt to be regarded as the law of the great world.

We are apt to regard the maker of goods as the one who should be rewarded with great wealth. We find that the captains of industry are the ones to whom this age gives the power of controlling others to his own sweet liking. The type our twentieth century civilization raises to the apogee of material success is a type which former ages looked down upon.

In former ages the person exalted was the strong individual who could go forth and fight for what he received. The warrior conqueror was the man revered as worthy of having laid at his feet the best the earth produced. This individual breathed the free air of heaven and cultivated the manly graces of vigor and strength.

In India and the East it was frequently the religious fanatic who was considered the one who was worthy of the good things of this life and today the Yogis are treated with respect and gifts are brought to them.

Our own age elevates these individuals who can shut up the greater number of men for ten or twelve hours a day amid the smoke and grime of a factory away from the fresh air and the green fields. Great is our twentieth century civilization.

## AERIAL CARS

Regarding Zeppelin's present plans Director Tollman, who is associated with him in the German company bearing the distinguished aeronaut's name, has made the following interesting statements:

"We have received," he said, "a large number of orders for airships from societies which propose to organize tourist trips through the air. These can only be filled upon the completion of new buildings, where the work can be carried on. This will be, probably in 1909. In from three to five years, however, we will probably have gone so far that airship tours over Germany will be feasible.

"It may sound fantastic, but the Zeppelin Company has already worked out plans for a series of round trips of this kind from Friedrichshafen to Cologne, Hamburg and Berlin and back. On such a tour it should be possible to provide accommodation for 30 persons on each trip without inconvenience. This is the music for the future, but of the possibility of realizing these ideas the members of the Zeppelin Company are convinced.

## RIGHT OF EMINENT DOMAIN

Great Britain and European countries have not altogether forgotten the laws of injuria. These old laws have taken the form in public matters of the right of eminent domain. This right is the right the people possess of taking some land or thing for the benefit of the people as a whole.

As long as the new continents possessed vast unsettled resources the right of eminent domain was little regarded. This right is coming more to the front as the people find that all natural resources are more or less trust controlled. The demand is growing for government ownership of public utilities and the management thereof in the interests of the people. The large corporations stand in the way of this reform, but when the people really become awakened to their own interests the great corporations will have to yield.

One of the greatest examples of the right of eminent domain was the French Revolution. The King and his nobles thought they owned the country and the people in it. The laws declared that they did possess the land and the people also to a certain extent. The people, however, without studying deeply the rules of law, exercised the right of eminent domain and confiscated all the property of the king and nobles for the use of the people. Democratic government originated in the exercise by the people of the right of eminent domain.

## WOMAN SUFFRAGE

The woman suffrage movement is again to the fore in England. The ladies have been interrupting the deliberations of the House of Commons. The police in endeavoring to remove them found that some of them had chained themselves to the House itself. These ladies have been fined and, as they were not willing to pay their fines, they have gone to jail.

The thinking women of England have become convinced that they want the suffrage. They want the right to vote. Thoroughly convinced of this they have started out to get and will succeed.

Woman should have the franchise if she wants it. If she does not want it then there is no use giving her that which she cannot appreciate.

Our Canadian women are more or less asleep on this question. They are content to let the men monopolize all the questions of government. Consequently parliament occupies itself with such secondary questions as the tariff and the incorporation of railways. Questions of the sanctity of the home are not considered. The overcrowding in the slums and the stunting of little children in mills are considered only as fourth rate questions to be taken up when there is absolutely nothing else to do.

In England the women are awake. The male party leaders are disgusted because they see that they must soon cease to putter about those foolishly grave questions with which they have been accustomed to occupy themselves and to take up such questions of social reorganization as the hearts of the women say are necessary.

## SOCIALISTS AND RELIGION

One of the planks in the socialist platform is that all religious matters should be left entirely to the discretion of individual members of society. This idea is more or less a new idea for the Western world. We of the West during the past nineteen hundred years have generally considered that the religion of our neighbors was our own particular charge. So far as danger and threat are concerned we have not considered ourselves to be our brother's keeper. He was left to shift for himself. But so far as his soul was concerned that was our own particular charge.

We Protestants are apt to regard the Roman Catholic church as the mother of all persecution. This is erroneous. The Catholic church has not persecuted more than has the Greek church, nor than the American church according to its power. The Presbyterian church is not free from blame in

this matter and the poor old Quakers suffered at the hands of the stern Puritans.

It is the boast of the Buddhists that not one individual has gone to his death because of opposition to the Buddhist beliefs. It has been the boast of the various branches of the Christian church in the past that many infidels have gone to their death in bloody battle as well as in peacetime torment because they were opposed to the doctrines of the Prince of Peace.

If the Socialists can impose upon the quarrelling sects the doctrine that every man's religion in his own particular business they will have rendered a great service to humanity.

## INJURY IN CONTRACTS

Under the old French laws injury was one of the grounds for the annulment of a contract. If a man in a trade found that he had been injured in that trade to the extent of twenty-five per cent. he could go to the courts and ask that the contract be set aside on the ground of injuria. He did not have to prove that there was error, or fraud or violence but simply that he had been mistaken in the value of the bargain.

This idea has completely disappeared. Contracts are now binding. In the United States, according to the Constitution, no law can be passed for the breaking of a contract. It is this constitutional law which makes franchises and gas contracts so valuable.

Through trickery or bribery carried out in such a manner as to be absolutely impossible of proof, a group of capitalists will be given a franchise to run a street railway. Fares will be high and the group of capitalists will become very rich men. The franchise would be extremely valuable and the city would find that it had made a very bad bargain. Nevertheless the contract would be absolutely binding and unbreakable.

Did the people reenact the law that injury would be a ground for breaking a contract there would be many rich men who would become poor. The cities would benefit to a great extent. Car fare would be cheaper, gas and electricity would become commoner commodities and the excessive price of many services would be lowered.

## PROTECTION

We are glad to see those staunch organs of official Liberalism, the Montreal Herald and the Toronto Globe, coming out against the protection of home industries. The cry for protection is an insidious one. The eyes of the people are taken off the real issues by the appeal that the poor workingman needs to be employed. Our American friends have invoked the laborless man to help them protect industries and now many American industries have received so much protection that their added revenues given them by protection more than pay all the expense accounts due to the hiring of workers.

If the editorials of these two papers are going to make for reduced protection it is well. We would like to know whence comes the campaign funds for the Liberal cause in the last election. If duties are raised we can understand the source of the large sums spent. If the duties are reduced then we can know that the manufacturers have been frozen out. We believe they will get the cold shoulder.

Whenever a commercial traveller or a book agent calls upon us and tells us how much we will be benefited if we would only purchase what he has to sell we always feel that he is looking more to his own interests than to ours. In the same manner, whenever the manufacturers put forth a plea of how much we will be benefited if they can only make a fortune by artificial means we always feel as if they were endeavoring to pull the wool over our eyes for their own gain. The great west is now coming to the front and the agricultural interests of that region are opposing the granting of protection. This being the case it is doubtful if the Liberals would dare to increase the protective duties even should they desire so to do. Protection is not likely to be increased and there is a chance that it may be lowered.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

Canada has yet to develop an adequate law of eminent domain.

The Conservatives call it graft; the Liberals call it developing the country.

Everybody is radical now except the Canadian Pacific Railway and Standard Oil.

We wish to deny the rumor, before it gets started; that we have demanded a recount in Brome.

Our local contemporaries are saying that we received only seven votes. We received five times that number.

We call our civilization Christian, but it is hardly more Christian than was the civilization of old pagan Rome.

Men used to persecute because they really believed that the future life meant something. Now men do not persecute simply because men have ceased to believe dogmatically.

The labor leaders are provoked at Taft. When Taft was on the bench he handed down some famous labor decisions against the right to strike. Taft is all right with the trusts but labor does not love him over much.

Now that the elections are over the Liberals are telling Laurier to go carefully. During the elections from the tone of the Liberal orators we were under the impression the Liberals wanted Laurier to run away with the country.

The difference between a trader and a professional man is that you pay the trader when you get the goods; you pay the professional man whether you get the goods or not.

A lawyer of London has given away a quarter of a million dollars to the poor and is now suffering hunger along with his fellow poor. But of course the average Christian will say that such conduct is foolish.

If we are so interested in Socialism why is it that we do not join them? Simply, gentle reader, because we are too well pleased with the fleshpots of capitalism.

Texas Halloween roisters started a fire that destroyed a quarter of a million dollars worth of property. The boys of Texas when they start out to do a thing generally manage to do it up brown.

The cry of the hunger smitten is going up from all the cities of the continent. We have not noticed, however, that the ordinary individual of the city is cutting out his theatre going in order that he might feed the hungry.

If we loved our neighbor as ourself, our neighbor would have a mighty good time of it as long as our money lasted. But such maxims are impossible. Ministers do not preach them from the pulpit except until after certain conventional restrictions have been tacitly set up.

The New Zealand parliamentary elections will take place on the 17th, when the maintenance, reduction of or total abolition of liquor licenses will be decided. In an interview concerning the suggestion that arrangements should be made for the free mail to be forwarded to Wellington immediately on its arrival at Sydney. Premier Ward stated that the arrangement would necessitate the employment of a special steamer, and the granting of a subsidy to provide a first-class service. He said it would be incomparably better to spend the money on the Vancouver route.

We are apt to regard whisky as the fountain of all suffering among the poor. This is a comforting doctrine. Formerly when a man went down in the struggle of existence men comforted themselves with the theory that he went down because he had sold himself to the Devil. Now they say that whisky did it. And in neither case did or do the critics stop to discover whether the Devil or whisky had anything to do with the matter.

In 1904 there were forty Socialist publications in the United States. Now there are a hundred and fifty. The unprincipled manner in which the corporations have carried on the commerce of the country is responsible for the growing idea that the people must themselves manage the business of the country.

We do not go out and capture slaves as did the old Romans. Why should we capture slaves when we can buy shirt waists already made for fifty cents apiece? Some hungry woman has worked her finger bones nearly off to make such cheap articles, so you see to keep slaves would really be more expensive.

Paris spends a quarter of a million dollars from its municipal funds in feeding the hungry school children of the city. Chicago will soon begin the same duties. Chicago is finding out that the process by which multimillionaires are produced will also produce city-fed children.

And still another libel suit. Hon. Geo. E. Foster has given notice of an action for damages against the Ottawa Free Press for alleged libel. Early in the campaign the Free Press published an editorial on Mr. Foster's handling of the I. O. F. funds, and upon certain statements contained in this the action is based.

The South Africans have been holding a conference to see whether South Africa would federate. Our daily papers have been saying little about this conference. They have preferred to discuss little questions of Canada than great questions of the empire.

A statement of exports from St. John to United States ports during the quarter ended September 30, prepared by United States Consul Willich, shows exports of \$589,137.83, a decrease of \$260,800.53 as compared with the corresponding quarter of 1907.

We hear much of the sacred rights of property, but little of the sacred rights of human life. People are starving in our great cities and they have no right to demand bread. We recognize the right of a man to own property but not the right of a man to live.

We do not lead our enemy captive through the streets as did the Romans. That sort of thing is considered vulgar. We undersell our enemy and take his business away from him. He may die a beggar but he should have recognized that business was business.

Let us see. The whole commandments consists of loving the Lord with all our hearts and our neighbor as ourself. We are all pretty well content to love the Lord but when it comes to our neighbor, well you know such a thing is impossible.

And the U. S. elections are over. Taft is elected and his sunny smile shines forth from every daily paper you pick up. This is the fourth consecutive victory for the Republicans.

There has been a large strike on in the cotton mills of Lancashire, England. So far £100,000 has been spent and £750,000 lost by the cotton workers since the lockout.

Governor Hughes has carried his election in New York state, and the moral forces throughout the continent rejoice.