

Letton's Weekly

\$1.00 A YEAR IN CANADA AND ENGLAND

Devoted to the Propagation of the Principles of International Socialism

\$1.50 PER YEAR IN UNITED STATES

COWANSVILLE, P. Q., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1909

LET US CLEAR THE WAY FOR THE SOCIALIST STATE

VOL. XXXVIII No. 24

SWEATED INDUSTRIES

Montreal prides itself upon its wealth and grandeur. It has many prominent citizens who contribute largely to philanthropic objects and hold up their hands in holy horror at the vice and misery of Montreal.

These same gentlemen pile up their wealth out of the labor of others. Montreal is a most backward city. Montreal's big men need the light of publicity thrown upon their actions.

Montreal is overburdened with churches and with ministers of the Gospel who see not the evils around them. Montreal possesses too many self righteous citizens who create great misery by their cynical, brutal and inhuman business methods and who take great glory to themselves when they give out of their large revenues from over-worked employees, a fifty dollar bill or even five hundred dollars to some charitable object.

Montreal needs less religion and more humanity. Montreal needs fewer ministers who blind the eyes of the people and more men who possess the revolutionary spirit of Christ.

Montreal needs the muck rake.

We know many excellent Montrealers who treat us as one gentleman should treat another. These same citizens are brutal in their attitude towards labor.

Montreal needs awakening. Let the men of Montreal leave their large churches, with their false and petty philanthropy, to the little priests and ministers who go through useless ceremonies, and let the men of Montreal turn the search light on the crying evils, the over-worked men laborers and the overworked and underpaid girl workers.

COMPETITION

According to the Manchester School of economics we must let commerce take its course. The law of supply and demand will regulate industry and will do away with the abuses of monopoly. Competition can be relied upon to prevent unjust discrimination and inordinate profits.

Competition is the foundation of this system. Men will compete and goods will be cheap. Competition, according to this school, can be relied upon to keep man economically free.

If competition fails then the whole system falls to the ground.

Now competition has failed. This is a recognized fact. Carnegie has declared that the day of competing has gone and the industries must be regulated by government action. The capitalist papers are declaring that competition is dead. We can see competition dying in Canada. We have agreements as to prices by various producers. We have hardware trusts and railroads and many other trusts. Even the beekeepers of Ontario meet in annual session in order to fix a standard price for their goods.

The Laurier government is trying to prevent combines by penalties. This Laurier government has failed in its endeavors. Competition means a business war, and you cannot force business men to fight, any more than you can compel two dogs to fight, by an act of Parliament.

The Laurier government is backing the G. T. P. in order that Canada may have two railroads across the continent and that there may be low rates through competing lines. The C. P. R. and the G. T. P. will not compete. There will be tacit understandings between the executives of the two lines and the public will be skinned.

If there is no competition there is no protection for the public. We will have an industrial tyranny, and some other remedy must be put into operation.

That remedy, full and complete, is socialism. That is to say the democratic control of the industries of the country by the workers themselves in the interests of the workers. The industrial barons do not like the idea of a political democracy.

Socialism is bound to come as it is the next step in the evolution of the race.

SALVATION ARMY SWEATING

An anti-sweating committee is investigating the conditions of the Hanover Carpentering Establishment of the Salvation Army in London, England.

The Salvation Army has gone into industrial operations. It picks up out-of-works from the London streets and sets them to work at their trades. The Salvation Army pays the men, sells the goods produced and gets the profits. When the men are picked off the streets they have to sign a contract that they will work for their board and lodging. In the Hanover establishment there are about sixty-five skilled workmen who are working for their board and lodging. To keep the men contented the Salvation Army gives them about sixty cents a week pocket money. The Salvation Army gets an income, from selling the work of these men, of about seventy thousand dollars a year. This is what an ordinary carpenter shop employing the same number of hands would get.

The Salvation Army collects from the public considerable sums of money to keep the Hanover Street place going. They work the men over time and give them no pay. They compete in the open market with employers who are giving union wages. They are adopting trust methods of exploiting labor, but they are doing it under a cloak of religion.

The Anti-Sweating committee are investigating their operations, and the Salvation Army may experience some lively times at the hands of people who believe that labor should be given a fair return for work done.

KING EDDY AND KAISER BILL

King Edward the VII, by the Grace of God and the foolishness of the British people, King of Great Britain, and Kaiser Bill by the Grace of God and his military forces, Emperor of Germany, have been recently meeting in Berlin and kissing their cousinly cheeks. At the same time that the royal osculations were being performed an army of starving wretches were marching through Berlin. They came to the street where royalty was parading in pomp, put they were not allowed to approach the royal presences. They were beaten back like dogs. They had no business to come near their full fed rulers. But their jeers and howls afflicted the delicate ears of the osculating monarchs.

Capitalism has become international. Monarchies have become intertwined and the socialist parties of all countries have become international also.

The master classes are putting Edward and Kaiser Bill up as dummies. The capitalists are declaring that Edward and Bill are the great peace lords. This is arrant nonsense. It is the socialist parties of the various countries who are fighting against war. King Edward is but travelling around visiting people in his own social set and is taking the credit to himself of the peace work done by the internationalists.

The money spent in Jords, dukes, and kings, military pomp and similar extravagances, could be better employed in feeding the hungry and in clothing the naked.

King Leopold of Belgium has obtained a vast concession from the Chinese government. Leopold wants the Parliament of Belgium to officially recognize the trade concession. Leopold wants to make money by oppressing the Chinese and when the Chinese object he wants his dear Belgium subjects to fight the rebels and to foot the war bills.

Many good people wonder at the increase in the number of jail birds. It is more comfortable for a man to commit some petty crime and go to jail than it is for him to starve or to wear his life out at the tasks set for him by the lords of commerce.

No man ever made a million dollars. Those who are worth a million have got their property by theft, legalized or otherwise.

The criminal law is against gambling by the small fish. The big gamblers are looked up to as astute business men.

BOURASSA AND THE CONSERVATIVES

The Liberals of the Province of Quebec are chuckling. They are chortling with joy. The Conservatives have united with Bourassa and his gang. A love feast has taken place. Bourassa and the Conservative leaders of the Province of Quebec have fallen on each other's necks and have become united as one soul.

This means the death of the Conservative party. The Conservatives have learned their lesson badly. The last elections and the elections before those, and the elections before, should have taught them that it was dangerous to monkey with the buzz saw.

The Province of Quebec is awaking.

The lessons of France are being learned in Quebec. Bourbonism and priest craft are dying. The Province of Quebec is none too well pleased with the Liberals and the Liberal government. The voters are convinced that Quebec politics are corrupt and that the Liberal government is not honest. Yet when the voters have to choose between a corrupt administration and a reactionary and priest-ridden movement, they cry almost unanimously, "Let's have the corruption."

Bourassa stands with the priestly and reactionary element. The Conservatives see in him a new and brilliant leader and with one accord they cling to his garment's hem.

Wherefore the Liberals rejoice. Wherefore there is joy in the camp of the government. The Conservatives have killed their party. They are the lady inside the Bourassa tiger.

A GLEAM IN THE DARK

Bourassa is a good man. He is one of those moral creatures who are narrow but intense. He is a creature who carries his morality aloft like a banner.

A JUDGE AND SOCIALISM

We were recently conversing with a judge whose function it is to give long and learned decisions on mooted points of our anomalous and antiquated system of laws.

We were not interested in law nor discussing it. We were endeavoring to persuade His Lordship that he should part with fifty cents and get in return this valuable sheet for a certain period of time.

His Lordship was not persuaded by our blandishments. He was not interested in a socialistic publication of a revolutionary type. To him the world and its conditions were the best possible considering all the circumstances. Yes, there were hardships; but they had to be. In looking back over history a tremendous improvement had taken place. The world was growing better and had little use for socialism. He approved of socialism as long as socialism proceeded decently and in order and was not too badly tainted by the fundamental philosophy of the materialistic conception of history.

We parted good friends. The judge could not help holding the views he did. Economic determinism was at work on his mental outlook. He was in receipt of a solid fat income of five thousand dollars a year or more. No wonder conditions and the world appeared good to him. He drew this income from his knowledge of law and in return for deciding judicial cases and for giving long learned judgements on mooted questions of law. No wonder the law appeared to him to be a good law.

To the workers of the world the law is unjust. The laws exalt property rights and debases the rights of man. The laws are making the rich richer and the poor poorer, and the judges get good fat salaries for presiding over the operations of the law and helping on the progress.

The revolution must come. When the laborers cease being the fools that they are, they will swing legislation against property rights and in favor of the rights of those who work.

Socialism smiles its promise over all the world.

and marches straight forward without looking at what is in the way and careless of the toes he steps on. There is a good deal of religious fanaticism about him. He is honorable, headstrong and moral. He brooks no opposition.

The Catholic Church, which he upholds more or less, is dominated by its clergy. The clergy of the Catholic Church is also religiously fanatical. The leaders of the Church are headstrong and domineering. They brook no opposition. They have their man Bourassa in the Quebec Legislature and they expect him to be subservient to the Church.

Bourassa has the Papineau blood in him. He will take his course and stick to it. If the Church opposes that course, woe to the Church. He will turn upon it and rend it as he turned upon the Laurier government at Ottawa. In the very nature of things the conflict between Bourassa and the Church will come. When the conflict comes Quebec will awake.

The Catholic Church does not realize the Liberalism in thought among its members. The members do not hate their Church. They love it. But they want that Church to become modern. They are tired of priest craft and intrigue. They are tired of dead formalism. When Bourassa starts out on his own campaign against the tyrannical domination of the hierarchy the liberal element will leap to greet him and there will be stirring times in old Quebec.

Meanwhile, the socialists will keep on their campaign hammering into the heads of workers the economic bondage in which they live and will keep on pointing out the way in which freedom lies.

There is room in the Province of Quebec both for a rebellious Bourassa and for the socialist party of Canada.

LIBERALISM AND SOCIALISM

Liberalism is not socialism. Liberalism is the party of industry and commerce. It is the party that arose as a protest on the part of the manufacturers against the tyranny and revenues of the landed interests. Liberalism is not the party of the workers. This can be seen in Canada by the legislation the Liberal government enacted.

We have listened to Liberal orators who have told us what great benefits the Liberal party has conferred. One of these boons was the reduction of postage on letters from three to two cents. How did this benefit the workers? It was not a benefit to the workers; it was a benefit to the commercial and business classes.

How many workers write letters? Very few indeed. The workers write few personal letters and fewer business letters. The departmental stores, the legal firms, the collection agencies, the business houses and commercial establishments write many letters. These firms and business men have saved thousands of dollars a year on reduced postage. The profit has not dribbled down to the workers.

Advocates charge a dollar a letter. Formerly they had to put a three cent stamp on their missives. Now they put a two cent stamp on their letters and have not reduced their charges to ninety-nine cents. The departmental stores are saving hundreds of dollars a year and yet in Montreal, the departmental stores have neither cut down the long hours of their girl workers nor increased their pay.

Go through the businesses that have benefited by the reduced charges and you will find that wages have been cut and the conditions of labor have become worse. The other so-called reforms passed by the Liberal government have benefited those who control industry. If the workers desire to get the benefit of Liberal reforms they must become a political party and control industry themselves.

If you don't understand Socialism it is quite possible the fault is not with Socialism but with yourself.

MONTREAL UNEMPLOYED

Comrade St. Martin and a socialist committee want to interview the city council with regard to the unemployed of Montreal.

There are men and women who are on the verge of starvation in Montreal. They want work and cannot get it. The moneyed men of Montreal are heartless creatures and will do nothing. The city council will do nothing which they are not forced to do. The churches of Montreal will pray over the needs of humanity and will organize Dorcas Societies and will give a few cast-off, worn-out garments to a few of the respectable poor.

But as for the great unwashed, for the down and outs, for the slum dwellers, they must look out for themselves.

Our dear old friend the Montreal Gazette states that Comrade St. Martin threatens to bring the unemployed of Montreal to the City Hall. The dear old paper is slightly perturbed over the fact that hungry people want to eat. The city fathers want to consider the matter carefully. In the meantime the hungry can starve.

It is surprising to us that men will starve while food is so plentiful. The hoary-headed spirits that control the city council may receive a rude shock some day.

Hunger knows no law, moreover laws and social organizations that prevent men from eating are unjust. The restraint and self control of the starving may give way and the Montrealers may find that their cruelty, greed and heartlessness indifference will have bred a class of men who will be reckless as to the outcome of their acts.

ELECTION OF BISHOPS

In our early infancy ere yet we began to think for ourselves, we were taught that the Church was the visible body of God upon earth. When we came to man's estate we considerably modified our opinions on the subject. The last elections of the Anglican Churches for the Bishops of Montreal and Toronto have still further changed our opinions.

The Bishop of Montreal was recently elected. That election partook of the nature of party warfare pure and simple. In reading the account thereof we were reminded of a Fifth Ward, New York Democratic Primary Convention.

In the Montreal election there was a certain restraint. There was a certain air of sanctimonious respect thrown over the meeting; but beneath the surface party feeling ran high. The decision was hotly contested and the wire pullers got in their work. Ballot after ballot was taken and finally a man was chosen as a compromise.

In the election in Toronto the opposing forces locked themselves together for seven ballots and the idea of both sides was "no surrender." Finally, after a wearisome session, one side gave in and a bishop was chosen.

Where God came into these operations we have failed to discover. It was borne in upon us that the election of a bishop differs in no wise from an ordinary every day election to some democratic civil office where the remuneration is fat.

As Gerald Desmond says, "Men, not gods, must right earth's wrongs. Willy priests have led us too long." Let the priests enjoy their revenues. Let them enjoy their gaiters, their white ties, their long robes; but let men who are men go forward to the fight against oppressive conditions, against the outrages worked upon those who toil, in the strength of a mighty impulse to better the conditions of men.

Old conditions must be broken up; new conditions must be brought about. These changes must come through men who are poor, but who burn with a love for their fellowmen. They cannot be brought about by bishops who serve God at four thousand dollars per annum.

Gentle reader, look over the voluminous advertisements in the Montreal daily papers. You will at once be able to perceive the reason why the Montreal papers are so piously quiet over labor conditions and the conditions of girl workers in Montreal.

GIRL WORKERS IN MONTREAL

The girl workers of Montreal are paid just enough wages to dress on. The departmental stores and factories give girls not enough money to live on.

If a girl has a home this is well. If a girl does not have a home to go to, what can she do?

Gentle lady reader, the next time you go into a departmental store will you kindly look into the tired eyes of the women clerks at the counter and try to enter into their position.

Gentle lady reader, you who love your fellow women, will you kindly go to the factories and ask to be allowed to see the conditions under which girls work? You will have your opinions changed on many questions.

If you are well dressed, the boss of the factory will treat you gently and will not let you in. He will be very sorry, very polite and very firm.

If you are not well dressed, you will be told to mind your own business or to, "Get to hell out of this."

Gentle lady reader, you whose head we have seen bowed in Erskine Church, in St. George's Church, in Emmanuel Church and many other churches—gentle lady reader, will you, for the sake of Christ, cease for a little, fussing about your own petty soul and endeavor to find out the conditions under which your fellow women work?

Gentle lady reader, if you will but do this, you will become a power in Montreal for good. If you do not do this, you will stand condemned in your own heart for the vice, disease and misery now rampant in Montreal.

THE TAX ON BOOT BLACKS

In Montreal the city has imposed a tax on boot blacks. This tax is two dollars for a street boot black and five dollars for every chair in a shoe shining emporium.

Five dollars is capital. Any plute will tell you so. Five dollars is not labor according to plute economics and we socialists are vain persons and foolish to consider a five dollar bill to represent nothing but labor.

The other day we wandered into a boot black establishment on St. Lawrence Main Street where the price charged for a shine is five cents. We counted the motions made by the Italian attendant and found that he made three hundred and nine separate and distinct arm movements in applying the polish and giving the shine.

For the job he got five cents. He would have to do one hundred such operations to get five dollars. This would mean that he would have to make thirty thousand nine hundred arm movements in order to get the five dollars to pay the city tax.

The plutes do not like the socialists. Socialists have a habit of puncturing plute arguments in a way distressful to those who uphold and benefit by the capitalistic theory of economical bondage.

Dear beloved readers, do you read the reports of the Parliamentary activities at Ottawa? Can you conceive of any intelligent men spending long hours discussing such piffle. Dear beloved readers, most of the members think they are doing themselves proud.

Premier Asquith of Great Britain would like to abolish the House of Lords. If the House of Lords were abolished and the House of Commons remained as it is, Great Britain would suffer from an attack of capitalism run mad.

The Big People of Montreal are going in for civic reform. Ames, Dandurand and Brierley want a small executive. Thus, our twentieth century cities are going back to the oligarchic principles by which the ancient Greek cities were governed.

Women must stand by women. Women must go forward to free their sisters from the awful conditions imposed upon them by man's brutality and selfishness.