THE

LABOR ADVOCATE

A WEEKLY
LABOR REFORM NEWSPAPER

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THE CHURCH AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

THOUGH the attitude of the churches generally is one of indifference or hostility, more or less pronounced, to the Labor Reform movement in its broader aspects, it is gratifying to note an increasing number of exceptions. In pleasing contrast to the truculent antagonism of the *Christian Guardian*, to which reference was made in our last issue, is a paper which appears in the current number of the *Canadian Methodist Quarterly*, by Mr. Albert R. Carman, on "The Gospel of Justice," which is a very radical deliverance on the social question. It boldly faces the issue as to the duty of the church towards the masses, and the cause of the decline of Christian influence among the people, pointing out that the founder of Christianity did not hesitate to arraign in the most scathing and forcible language the scribes and Pharisees and those who oppressed the people This boldness in preaching justice and denouncing robbery and wrong was the reason why "the common people heard him gladly," and the failure of the modern church to follow His example is the cause why the workingmen are becoming alienated from an institution which they look upon as inimical to their interests.

The writer considers that Christianity was not meant to be merely an alleviation of the ills of life, but a cure. "It is not," he says, "intended to merely patch the fabric here and oil the machinery there, so that this great multiple whole we call the world may grind and creak and blunder on without utter collapse; but it is capable of making out of present materials an ideal world in which every man, woman and child will be just where, in divine justice and infinite love, they ought to be." There is no wrong or injustice in the universe for which Christianity has not an adequate remedy. "A Christianity that has not these attributes" he goes on to say, "must be a failure, and a Christianity that is a failure must be a fraud."

Mr. Carman, in the concluding portion of his admirable paper, gives a very clear presentation of the evils and abuses of the capitalistic system, taking the ground that actual service to society is the only fair basis for a share in the product of industry, and that profits made by buying labor in the cheapest market, the increase in land values or speculation are robbery, and should be treated as such by the church The generally excellent tone of Mr Carman's paper is marred by one or two needless flings at Socialism, probably due to his not having sufficiently familiarized himself with the actual teachings of modern Socialists, as when he speaks of it as "the brotherhood of man coupled with an orgy and not with divine order" But take it all in all it is a most timely and suggestive utterance, addressed in a direction where sight of the principles of the Labor movement needed

The editor of the *Methodist Review*, Dr Stafford, was apparently afraid to allow so much publication to emanate from his pulpit under his auspices, which is evidently intended to counteract the effect of Mr Carman's article. It is very convenient to furnish of the objections to Socialism which have been answered again and again and which any one possessing a slight acquaintance with Socialist literature would have been ashamed to put forward. But it will probably answer as a soporific to the consciences of such ministers as may be hesitating between a timid desire to speak out on the social question and the apparent necessity of keeping on good terms with the wealthy members of their flocks

THE CAUSE OF CORRUPTION

THE investigation into the scandals in connection with the Public Works Department at Ottawa have resulted in the resignation of Sir Hector Langevin, the head of that department The suspected minister loudly protests his innocence of any actual complicity in the iniquities unearthed: but even giving him the full benefit of this plea, he has, on his own showing, been guilty of carelessness and incompetence in allowing the reign of corruption to go on so long unchecked Under an honest and vigilant chief such abuses could not remain for any length of time undetected and unpunished It will strike most people, however, that Sir Hector, even if he did not claim anything personally by the wrong doing of his subordinates, must have known and winked at their dishonesty.

It is altogether likely that a soft spot has been prepared for the late head of the Public Works Department to fall on, and that as soon as the excitement has a little subsided he will be provided for, or perhaps return to the cabinet. He has too powerful a following among the French Canadians to be made a scapegoat of for the sins of the ministry.

The exposure of the scandals which have forced Sir Hector's temporary retirement has furnished the text for a good deal of moralizing concerning the iniquity of the Tory party and the corruption of politics in general, nearly all of which is entirely wide of the mark. The newspaper sermonizers who are lamenting over the depravity of politicians, and calling upon an outraged public conscience to show its abhorrence of the ruling faction at Ottawa, take a very short-sighted view of the matter. They do not see that political corruption is merely the result of the general rottenness and lack of conscience characteristic of a society based upon injustice. The politicians are no worse and no better than the general run of citizens, whose votes keep them in office, and whose ideas, principles and methods they very fairly reflect.

Now, society in general regards it as praiseworthy in an individual to accumulate as much wealth as possible, regardless of whether he gives any service to the community in return for what he draws from it. Its principal rewards and honors are reserved for the cunning, selfish and tricky, who manage to get as much and give as little as possible. The moral standards of the competitive system are just as low and its practices as dishonest as those of the political boodler. To get an easy, and, if possible, a luxurious living out of the public, by shifting the burden upon the laboring class, and extorting, by means of profit, rent, usury or other legal methods of robbery, as large a proportion of their earnings as practicable is the great end and aim of modern industrial and business methods. What wonder, then, that the politicians elected by constituents who approve such a system should use the position to enrich themselves by the same and another which cannot and apparently can escape. The surprise would be if they were anything else than corrupt

It is folly to hope for any improvement from a change of government or any change in the system of government Political corruption is not a matter of party or politicians nor of immorality. Its roots lie deeper. It is the legitimate outcome of capitalism and the competitive system, and we shall never get rid of it until we abolish privilege and reorganize society on an industrial commonwealth, in which the real value of labor performed is the only claim to share in labor products

THE MAYOR AND THE BOODLERS

IN the present crisis in connection with the Street Railway scandal the public confidently look to Mayor Clarke to maintain his ground and to refuse to sign the agreement until a thorough investigation has been held. His action, so far, in urging delay and guarding the interests of the city against the attempt of the thieving aldermen and their masters of the Syndicate, to rush the agreement through before the rascality of the deal is fully brought to light, has been most praiseworthy. It is probable that next week will witness a desperate effort on the part of the scoundrels who have sold their votes and the cowards and imbeciles who are gratuitously doing the syndicate's work to close up the agreement and stifle enquiry It is useless to hope for anything in the way of honest or intelligent action from the Council. But the Mayor has it in his power to block the game of the corruptionists by adhering firmly to the position that the agreement shall not be signed until an investigation has been held In so doing he will be fully sustained by public opinion

All good citizens, and more especially all Labor Reformers, should do what they can to support him in taking such a stand.

BOUGHT BY THE SYNDICATE.

ACTUATED by a mistaken feeling of gratitude for past services the Trades and Labor Council, at its last meeting, refused to pass a vote of censure on the *News* for its shameful treachery and venality in opposing a reasonable delay in signing the street railway contract with the Kerly-Everett gang of boodlers. It is time that the true position of that purchaseable and unscrupulous newspaper was understood by the working classes, while confidence in it has so villainous abused. The Toronto *News*, as is well-known in newspaper circles, is, like the *Mail*, the property of the Tory clans, who have never shown the least sympathy with the labor movement. Some years ago, while under the management of Mr. E. E. Sheppard the *News* was a genuine Labor Reform paper, going further in this respect than any Toronto daily has ever done before or since, and owing to its outspoken course in connection with the frequent labor troubles of that period—notably the street railway strike—making for itself a record as a consistent and thorough going champion of labor's rights.

Since the change of management the paper has been simply trading on its past reputation. It has felt bound, of course, to make a show of retaining its sympathy for the movement, by a half hearted advocacy of such measures as it could safely support without interfering too much with the boodling schemes or the party feelings of its proprietors. It has never, since the change, advocated anything like an independent political action and at election times it has used such influence with the workers as it still possessed, to bring grist to the Tory mill Its course on the street railway matter shows it to be entirely devoid of principle At first a strenuous advocate of civic operation, as soon as it was apparent that there was money to be made by championing the Kerly Everett syndicate, it suddenly shifted round and joined in the jeering of the boodlers at the City Hall but putting the agreement through without stopping to investigate the means by which it had been secured.

It is simply a case of bargain and sale. The paper has been bought up, or most probably, the man in its chair made weight in the deal by which the syndicate secured the most valuable advocacy of the *News*.

If after such shameless turpitude the members of labor organizations ever allow the *News* to deceive them again it will be their own fault.

FOOLS AND COWARDS

THE stupidity and childishness of Canadian loyalists were never more strongly brought out than in the action of a pack of fools at Windsor, Ont., who, when a number of citizens decorated their places of business in honor of the Grand Army of the Republic celebration at Detroit, grew indignant and telegraphed to the government asking that the offending parties be compelled to remove the decorations The brainless dude at the head of our Militia Department, glad, like most jacks in office, to have a chance to display his authority, ordered out the local militia to enforce the removal of the flags. Such an arbitrary interference with the rights of the people would not be tolerated in a really free country. What law gives this consequential Caron the power to say that a man shall not hoist any flag he chooses? The Essex County Fenians who did a dirty work of bulldozing peaceful merchants are a set of pot-valiant swaggerers who, in case of real trouble, could run like cowards at the sight of the Stars and Stripes if confronted by a force of half their number. By the petty malignity the Windsor loyalists drove a number of good customers from their town as all the G.A.R. men stopping there sought quarters on the other side of the river.

A DOMINION LABOR BUREAU.

THE little interest which the Canadian Government, notwithstanding their professions, really take in the condition of the working classes may be judged from the fact that the Dominion is behind nearly every civilized country in the matter of the collection of labor statistics. For many years the United States has had a Bureau of Labor Statistics, which, despite some imperfection, has done excellent service in the collection of data showing the actual condition of the laboring masses, and making suggestions for practical reform measures. Most of the States, especially those in which manufacturing industries are largely pursued, have also their State Bureau, by means of which a vast mass of information has been got together, which has been turned to good account by social reformers. The Province of Ontario has its Bureau of Industries, which, though not sustained by the Government on anything like the scale on which similar institutions in the principal States are supported, has done excellent work, as far as the means placed at its disposal permit. But the Dominion Government, despite frequent promises made at election times for the purpose of securing the workingman's vote, has done nothing in this direction beyond passing an act empowering them to create a Bureau of Labor Statistics, which, so far, has not been put into operation

At Monday's session of the House of Commons, however, Mr. Haggart, in reply to Mr Lepine, of Montreal, promised that the measure would be put in force as soon as the census returns were completed. There has surely been sufficient delay about the matter, and it is to be hoped that at last the long promised institution will materialize It would be a mistake, however, to be over sanguine as to the results The value of a Labor Bureau depends almost entirely upon the man entrusted with its organization and supervision.

If the Government could bring themselves to appoint as chief of the Bureau a man of broad and progressive views, one thoroughly in sympathy with the labor movement, and sufficiently courageous and independent minded to carry investigation into the causes of existing injustice, instead of merely dealing with the surface of the problem, great good might be accomplished. I fear that they are more likely to appoint some easy-going fellow who will provide instruction for the resources of the Bureau by quoting the N.P. and other tales of monopoly. In the latter case work is will have small reason to congratulate themselves over the creation of the Bureau

LOOKING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.

THE principal reason why workingmen have gained so little after years of struggle and hardship and sacrifice of the Labor Reform agitation is that they have, for the most part, been content to ask such a mere fraction of their rights. Instead of boldly and clearly demanding that all the means of production, including land, capital and machinery, should belong to the community, and that the worker should receive the full value of his services they have been haggling with employers for a small percentage of increase on their present pittance for an hour or two of toil less in the day. When they have won, the victory has nothing permanent about it, because so long as conditions remain as they are an increase in the number of competitors or a spell of hard times may at any time put them back to the old level

There can be no permanent and satisfactory settlement of the labor problem until the wage system is abolished. This will never be done until the worker unite for political objects and assert the right of society to control production. But the average workingman is such a purblind idiot that he imagines that all he has to do is to bring pressure to bear on his employer to make him give up a greater proportion of the profits of his business. He ignores the fact that the public is the real employer and that usefulness to society is the only just claim that he or anybody can have for maintenance. His particular industry, and all other industries, are land under tribute to support an increasing swarm of idlers or people whose so-called "labor" is useless, such as land-owners, investors, usurers, politicians, lawyers, bankers, agents, etc. Add to these nine-tenths of the business men whose labor is superfluous and would not be required if distribution were properly organized and it is obvious that with this enormous class of loafers and non-producers all to be supported by labor, the wage earner cannot possibly get much more than at present so long as the competitive system is allowed to continue.

If workingmen were to cease figuring how much more they could manage to squeeze out of their employer and devote their attention to abolishing monopolies and freeing labor from the burdens entailed by the existence of a useless class, the problem would be much nearer solution.

THE Kingston *News* is a very silly and ill-informed paper. In reply to the contention of the Single Taxers that poverty is due to land monopoly, it quotes the case of Western Australia, with a population of 50,000 and an area of 975,920 square miles, yet with a couple of poor houses in its capital city, Perth, the population of which is less than 11,000—and an average of 400 paupers. "Will some of the zealots of the single tax idea" asks the *News*, "please inform us how Western Australia should have her quota of paupers with her vast area of exceptionally fertile land?" The LABOR ADVOCATE is not a zealot of the single tax idea, as we believe that many other abuses than land monopoly must be removed before poverty will cease, but it occurs to us that probably one explanation of the anomalous state of things referred to is that Western Australia has not got the single tax and that the most accessible and available of her fertile land is monopolized

THE Single Tax cause has received a severe blow, in the sudden death of William T Croasdale, editor of the New York *Standard* and one of the most enthusiastic and best known advocates of the movement. Mr Croasdale, who died on Sunday last, was