THE TOILER

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ABOUT YOUR RENT

Who Are You Buying Your House for, Yourself or the Landlord

Most every man is paying for a house. Some pay for two houses in the course of their lifetime, and yet never own enough to stand on. What is the use of howling about the bloated capitalist, and yet year after year pay rent to make that capitalist wealthier? It is difficult work, attacking wealth, to the manual toiler. Somehow or other, it is hard to stick. Yet there are enough manual toilers owning their homes to show that more might own them if they would try as hard as their successful brothers have done. This question of attaching property to manual toilers is of national importance. Dudley Baxter, a careful statistician, computed that in 1868 the poorest 30 per cent. of all the families in the United Kingdom average £50 ($250) a year income. Charles Booth, in 1901, estimated that the poorest 30 per cent. of all the families in London received at most £54 a year ($270). This is family income, mind you. The figures for the United States show that seven-eighths of the families own only one-eighth of the national wealth. These conditions perpetuated and aggravated tend towards anarchy. Is it possible for every manual laborer who wants to, to buy his home? Yes, it is if we work on sound principles. It is possible on two conditions: (1) the man must receive help from the government; (2) the man must be willing, yea, determined, to help himself.

The foundation of a city's prosperity is its trade and commerce. It is reckoned quite a reasonable thing that the municipal government of this city should encourage enterprise tending to the development of trade and commerce. A capitalist may have half a million dollars in the banks, but he gets no bonuses or exemptions from the city. Another man may have only half that sum, but if he builds factories, employs many men and does a big trade, at once the city appreciates him, and gives him exemptions and privileges. Is not the good citizenship of manual toilers equally worthy of encouragement, and equally important to this city's prosperity? Then if it is right to encourage enterprise in manufacturers it is equally right to encourage good citizenship in manual toilers. But what is good citizenship in manual toilers? Well, from a business point of view, we must be good workmen. Manufactured goods command the market according to their efficiency and durability. We make the goods, but the manufacturer has to find and hold the market, therefore the boss should be the best judge of good workmanship. We want citizen toilers who can get a job, hold a job and leave a job with a good record behind them. Another trait in good citizenship is the honest payment of our debts to grocer, butcher, landlord, baker, etc. The Socialist tells us that six hours a day is all that a man would have to work if the country was properly governed.

Yes! If what? If you could remove or greatly reduce the three classes of criminals or crooks, middlemen and non-producers. The worst of these three classes is certainly the crooks. It is compiled that for every crook in jail there are two abroad, and their average income is $1,500 a year. Crime in the states, judges, courts, police, jails, sheriffs, etc., costs our neighbors seven hundred million dollars a year. That's where our extra hour a day goes, to pay for the crooks. Again, when you were out of work last winter, where did you get your groceries on trust, at Simpson's, or Eaton's, or at the corner grocery? Yet do you know that most every corner grocery of any length of standing carries a burden of bad debts of from $500 to $1,000? Will you join hands to help defend our friends, these small merchants, from the robbery of unprincipled deadbeats? Or do you say it "is no business of mine?" There are just as many deadbeats among the rich as there are among the poor. Do you know that if we "hold a candle to the Devil" in this world we shall certainly stoke his fires in the next? The grand old gospel of Christ with its beautiful Golden Rule, and its Sermon on the Mount, would have made this old world happy long ago if it were only given a chance. Playing good Lord, good devil, has made the gospel look ridiculous, but when Reckoning Day comes it won't be the gospel that looks ridiculous. Well, what can we do to defend all honest men, whether merchants or toilers, from this army of dead-heads and crooks? We can adopt the society or union ideal of New Zealand. That is to say, that the government must recognize no person as an individual, only as members of societies or unions banded together to uplift and protect humanity. Then let every poor man who is trying to buy a home be endowed by his union or benefit society (if he be worthy of it) that he is a sober, industrious, good workman, and on the strength of that endorsation let the government advance him a further loan on easy terms. One and a half million dollars has this city lent to railway companies and not one cent have they returned in principal or interest. How much more are manual laborers entitled to a little help. Now, brothers, what are you going to do about it? Many Socialists and union men say some hard things about war and soldiers and there is a good deal of truth in what they say. Yet some of our best friends among the political economists, tracing back the origin of American millionaires find that they originated in the war between the North and South, 1861-65. Charles H. Spahr says "that the way the rich of the North rallied to the defence of the Union was glorious heroism, but the way the financiers took advantage of the nation's extremities to make fortunes for themselves was rank treason."

Many of those militiamen, despised by many Socialists and union men, have marched and fought for days on half rations with a "lodging on the cold ground," fighting for the national weal, but precious little of their own; but I have known many manual toilers who, rather than go on half rations, yea, rather than go without their theatre, beer and tobacco, their piano and a well-furnished parlor, would remain the slave of a landlord all their lives. Believe me, my brothers, that the manual toiler who, even by the soldiers self denial if necessary, emancipates himself from the yoke of the landlord and becomes a freeholder, yet remaining loyal to the cause of labor, does more for his country than he who fights on the battlefield.

But if I have to choose between the sleek, contented landlord's serf and the brave militiaman, I would choose the soldier every time. Now mind I don't say that a [illegible] would not have a par[illegible] cons, but I say all hon[illegible] will go [illegible] for his [illegible] I pity the [illegible] the present [illegible] enjoy their pa[illegible] country but big city conditions [illegible] advancing in Toronto. A labor market glutted by the swelling tide of emigration will be an increasingly difficult problem for us to deal with for, remember, the better off we get the higher our wages and the shorter our hours, the more attracting will emigrants have to come here. On our present sinking, drifting policy, higher dues and heavier levies we shall have to pay to keep what we have won, and when in tenement buildings we have to pay $12 a month for three rooms, get our coal by the quarter ton and raise it three stories high, good bye to the workingman's parlor. Put a manual toiler on a property of his own and he can put in his spare time improving his estate, get in his fuel when it is cheap and his self respect and independence will vastly increase. Do not say "never bother, it will work out alright." Thirty years ago the workingmen of England had nothing to say when Gladstone ceded the Transvaal to the Boers. I was working in London at the time and heard the talk "It's no business of ours, the country is no good, give us another pint of half and half," and the music halls, "sing-songs" and "free and easies" were crowded, but thirty years after manual labor had to supply most of the blood that was shed. Manual labor has to pay most of the taxes, and to-day manual labor is staggering under the stagnation of trade caused by that South African war, and the manual laborer in the Transvaal, jostled by the Chinese coolie, is little better off.

Think, my brothers, think! and then, for the sake of God and humanity get up in your own unions and speak brave words of truth and wisdom. Let us as Canadian trades unionists heartily adopt the New Zealand ideal:

1. No government recognition or assistance to any individual unless he belongs to some and-nationalistic society or union for the financial benefit and moral uplift of struggling humanity.

2. Financial encouragement from the government for the development of good citizenship among manual toilers.

3. This encouragement to be given only to those applicants who are endorsed by their unions or benefit societies, and by the merchants with whom they deal.

4. These societies and unions to co-operate, with their members to help those who get a loan to attain to complete possession of their freehold.

Listen to Robbie Burns:

"O Scotia, my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health and peace and sweet content!
And O, may heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then however crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle."

J. H. B.

MR. KENNEDY HITS BACK

Reiteration of Statements made in British Statement

In the issue of our Labor paper for Sept. 9th appears an article written by one who signs himself as "Looker On," in which he calls in question the truthfulness of some statements contained in my view of "Trade Unionism in Canada," which was published in the fifth annual report of the General Federation of Trade Unions of Great Britain, June, 1904.

"Looker On," in his opening remarks, delivers himself as follows:—"While the culpable intention and general tenor of the article referred to are commendable, it is more than questionable if some of the assertions and assumptions of Mr. Kennedy are well founded, or that they really serve the purposes that gentleman had in view when writing. Accuracy, rather than mere assumption, is certainly best in all cases, and more especially is this so when dealing with debatable subjects. The truth is always levelheadable; it requires no prepping through exaggeration or misstatement."

I entirely agree with "Looker On" that truth is invulnerable, and requires no exaggeration or misstatement. But, for the benefit of my would-be critic, allow me to say that "truth" may be belittled by plausible utterances, in an effort to tone down our just criticism of dishonest governments. The belittling tactics have been resorted to in the past, and while some skill has been observed by those who are even cited as trade unionists of some years' standing, in covering up their real intentions, the fact remains that there are lukewarm advocates, who fear to declare themselves too strongly, when the Government or any of its officers deserve our unlimited denouncement. More than this, they actually pose as our guardian angel, in offering what they are pleased to call practical advice.

"Looker On" proceeds to declare that no reason exists "for the indiscriminate impugning of the motives of Parliament or the Legislatures," who are responsible for the creating of proper laws and their enforcement. . . Not only this, but a spirit of fair play should always govern criticism of the matters and work of those entrusted with the duty of impartially and diligently administering the laws that exist.

The paragraph in the annual report which has caused my very friendly critic so much worry, reads as follows:—"The Dominion Government and the several Provincial Legislatures have generally promised our 'deputations' that the matters presented would receive their 'careful consideration.' The careful consideration expression has been used frequently, without any good results following, and this sort of treatment has at last aroused a cry of protest. Many so-called Labor laws have been enacted, especially in the Province of Ontario, that while they contain some points which interest the workers, the fact is becoming quite apparent that when an endeavor was made to put the same into operation it was found that many defects existed, and the officers appointed by the Government proved to be duly convenient ornaments to the 'Act,' and the 'Act' itself became only a record on paper, rather than a blessing to the workers. We are being impressed that these so-called Labor measures were only framed for the purpose of being non-effective, and to some extent, at least, lull the feeling of unrest among us."

"Looker On" is much put out by my daring to speak of our Parliaments in such rebellious language. He would have us be very careful what we say about our Legislatures, no matter what devilish tricks they have played up, by fawning on the lobbyists of the capitalists who have advised our most honorable legislators (?) to brush Labor aside. Such an expression savors more of the royalistic than the democratic gospel.

"Looker On" is certainly playing the role of the indignant employer when he speaks of "a spirit of fair play should govern criticism of the matters and work of those entrusted with the duty of impartially and diligently administering the laws that exist." How dare "Looker On," or any other man who pretends to recognize the just claims of Labor, suggest to us "a spirit of fair play" when criticizing our legislators, who have deliberately sacrificed the interests of the "workers" to corporate greed year after year.

I admire the nerve of my would-be critic, advising us to be careful in criticism "of the matters and work of those entrusted with the duty of impartially and diligently administering the laws that exist." Where are the Labor laws that are impartially and diligently administered? "Looker On," no doubt, has dealt so much in simple platitude on this subject that he really believes what he says.

I take it for granted that my critic, who is so anxious about the reverence which should be shown to the capitalist governments, is a trade unionist. I would, therefore, challenge him to appear before the "Toronto District Labor Council" and utter his sentiments of labor laws being "impartially and diligently administered," and the response of the Council would be in even stronger language than I have used in the article which he criticizes.

I assert that the "Alien Labor Law" and the "Ontario Factories Act" have never been even fairly administered, and even the Department of Labor at Ottawa has been found fault with by organized labor. Will my most friendly critic deny the truth of this statement, and sign his name, so that the District Labor Council may express its appreciation?

My critic imagines that, because the governments have appointed officers in some cases from the ranks of organized labor, to operate the above mentioned labor laws, that trade unionists must refrain from criticizing the administrative efficiency of said laws, as any such criticism denotes a lack of confidence (on our part) in the honesty of our brothers who have received the appointments, and which he is pleased to designate as the stabbing and maligning of our friends in a cowardly manner.

If my violent critic thinks that by the appointment of some trade union members to operate said labor laws, that the rank and file of organized labor are to be muzzled into meekly accepting with slavish gratitude the small measure of benefits, which the Government takes good care shall be the result of the labor legislation, and not utter justifiable criticism, for fear of being charged with the cowardly stabbing of our brothers who have been appointed to administer the said labor laws, then his intelligent opinion of the servility of organized labor is astounding.

I repeat again that the officers of the Ontario Factories Act and the Alien Labor Law of the Dominion are only convenient ornaments of the above "Acts," not because those officers are not honest men and women (in fact, they are, as "individuals," above reproach), but the governments to whom they are accountable make it almost impossible to have the spirit and letter of the said "Acts" enforced, hence my contention (and I am by no means alone), that to a great extent the said labor laws are only used to "bolster up" the Government in the eyes of organized labor, and, therefore, the laws, and incidentally the officers thereof, prove of little value to us.

If, as has been urged by our Council, the Ontario Factories Act was only administered by the "Bureau of Labor," instead of by the Department of Agriculture, then we could expect more beneficial results to follow.

The bitterness of "Looker On" becomes more manifest and explosive the greater part of his criticism when he says: "It is a hard task for Mr. Kennedy to fit the cloven hoof of his socialistic sentiments to the moderate and practical shoe of trade unionism."

Really, Mr. Critic, you are bestowing an honor when you charge me with holding Socialistic sentiments, but I suppose you would just as readily have said "anarchistic" or "capitalistic" sentiments, as they all three mean the same to such a broad and intelligent mind.

Allow me to quote from the Declaration of Principles, contained in the constitution of the District Labor Council, which says, in part: "Organization of trade and labor unions is necessary to check the evil outgrowths of the prevailing system. But they must keep pace with the progress of the age and with the march of advanced ideas." What has my admirable critic to say about the above quotation? No doubt the liberal sentiments contained therein are not comprehended by one who sees nothing but the path of trade unionism as known thirty years ago. It requires no great imagination to discern the rapid progress being made by the trade union movement towards the "Socialistic platform," and let me say, for the benefit of "Looker On," that a few minutes' study of the "Declarations" made by the District Labor Council in its constitution would enlighten his understanding as to the modern attitude of our Council.

"Loker On" says that villification and misrepresentation are not usually conducive to success, where requests and prayers have to be resorted to. As to the villification and misrepresentation part, why, I desire to return the advice, and urge "Looker On" to not only consider it, but to bear it in mind at all times. In conclusion, I would say that "article" appearing under my name in the annual report referred to, was read to the Executive Committee of the District Labor Council, and met their approval before appearing in print.

The servile requests and prayers which "Looker On" thinks are necessary when organized labor desires redress at the hands of our legislators, is admitted by those who have the true interests of labor at heart to be degrading in this advanced age of trade unionism, and does not reflect credit on any one who thinks its continuance is necessary. Always at your service.

D. W. KENNEDY.

Sept. 12th, 1904.

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DISTRICT COUNCIL

The regular meeting of the District Council was held on Thursday evening, September 8th.

The discussion of the Butchers' strike occupied considerable of the evening. The matter was brought up through the Typographical Union requesting the Council to direct the Butchers not to boycott the News. The Council further ratified its previous action.

The Building Trades Section reported the proceedings of its special meeting. The recommendation was that the working labor men of the city be assessed the sum of $1.00 per week. They reported that all unions in the building trades were assessed $1.00 per week. The fight is in the interests of all workers, and they are more than willing to put up the necessary money. These two items of business showed their importance by occupying almost the entire time of the delegates, and the debates were spirited and thoroughly interesting, and showed quite clearly that labor is making strides toward closer unity. The assessment of ten cents per week made at a previous meeting was well received, but owing to the length of the strike it was found necessary to raise money to support the men on strike.

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