

The Fenelon Falls Gazette.

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No. 12

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R. M. Hamilton, Mgr. Fenelon Falls Branch

"Liberty" in Britain.

Because a workman's paper appealed to soldiers, three weeks ago, not to do the dirty work of the capitalists by shooting down or bludgeoning the working people who are forced by starvation wages and slavish conditions into "striking" from time to time for better terms, the Government have arrested the editor and printer of that paper, for a week refused them bail, ransacked their premises, and are prosecuting them for treason felony.

What does this mean?

It means that the salaried persons who form "the Government," and who are there to do the bidding and serve the brutally selfish interests of the financiers and big employers who run this country for their own profit, at the loss of the rest of the community (including policemen and soldiers)—it means that these gentry-in-office are afraid that some instalment of common justice may be won by their protesting slaves unless soldiers and police can be counted on, at any moment, to baton and butcher the slaves into silence and submission in their wretched poverty.

It means that this country, which we were taught at school to believe was "the land of freedom," is now being worse than Russianised and Germanised by the parasites and placemen who ride upon the backs of the working folks, and get rich by their penury. It means that the governing classes are so afraid of the people being told the plain truth about these things that they are trying to suppress the liberty of utterance in England; to make an end of freedom of speech and of pen, except when that freedom is used against the workers.

Now, freedom to criticise the laws and the law-makers, and to express opinions upon all the public questions of the day—such freedom of utterance is the very keystone of all freedom of any kind. Without that freedom there can be no freedom. Every liberty depends upon that one. No self-respecting Briton can stand by and see that fundamental liberty trampled upon or interfered with. Every one of us possessed of the least remains of our national honor must resist such a blow to our traditions and to our elementary rights, at all costs and by every means in our power. Moreover, those of the misgoverning clique who would suppress the free expression of opinion, or the liberty of appeal to any section of the nation not to deliberately commit brutality and murder, are themselves the most dangerous enemies of decent society. For the suppression of frank and open utterance upon every question of public polity means driving earnest men and women to secret and underground methods of organisation and action.

There is, in other words, no more

mischievous and suicidal policy of misgoverning than that of "sitting on the safety valve." If, for the sake of the mean and grasping £. s. d. interests of the rich, we are not to be allowed to appeal to our fellow-citizens—and our soldiers and our police we, of course, claim as our fellow-citizens—not to butcher and bash their own kin and their own class, when these dare to insist that the laborer is worthy of his hire and must have a voice in fixing the terms of that hire—if we are not to be allowed to issue such an appeal as that, what right of any sort under heaven remains to us? It will not do. There are still too many people in this island profoundly concerned to defend what slender rights and liberties yet remain to the common people, for this new bulldozing experiment of the present reactionary jacks-in-office to succeed even temporarily.

Meanwhile, I, for one, endorse and emphasize every word of the appeals which have been made to the common humanity and self-respect of our soldiers. I urge the police to refuse to be diverted from their proper function of guardians of the peace into strike breakers and ipso facto blacklegs of the trade unionists. In any case, it should be clear to policemen that better pay and conditions for the strikers mean better pay and conditions for the police as well. The stabbing or shooting of unarmed men and women is not work for soldiers. The proper function of the army is the defence of the country against aggression, not the backing of avaricious capitalists in their disputes with sweated labor.

Moreover, you, soldiers and policemen, are the sons of the working class, and you know only too well how hard is that unjust suffering of your class, which drives it into the organized passive resistance of strikes against its dwindling rations, or for a less squalid and grinding existence than that to which the wage-workers are at present doomed.—Leonard Hall, in "Justice."

Ripe For Socialism.

At the annual convention of the Saskatoon Grain Growers' Association, held at Regina, the secretary, F. W. Green, made the statement that many of the delegates had been unable to attend. "Many," he said, "have not enough money to buy the necessaries of life, let alone spending it to attend the convention. They have thousands of bushels of wheat which they are not able to sell or to raise money on." How is that for bloated prosperity for the farmers? They are in the position of workers peddling labor, and unable to find a buyer. They have congealed their labor power in wheat, and there is no market for their labor product. The farmer is dead ripe for Socialism.—Cotton's Weekly.

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