

The Fenelon Falls Gazette.

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FENELON FALLS, ONTARIO, FRIDAY, MAR. 14, 1913.

No. 1

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Disreputable Labor.

There is abroad at the present time among the lower orders a reprehensible spirit, which is generally alluded to as labor unrest. From Hodge, in his damp and dilapidated, but nevertheless picturesque, cottage, rearing his brood on three dollars and a half a week, to the miner, the autocrat of labor, who by eight hours labor a day under conditions which might have inspired Dante to add an extra circle to his inferno, and at the ever-present risk of his life, earns as much as would pay the annual subscription to a golf club, labor is moving in unrest. Labor, to put it bluntly, is becoming a bit of a nuisance. The comfortable man is being irritated and annoyed, and something has got to be done. The community—those persons with incomes of three or four thousand dollars a year—demand that labor unrest shall be put an end to. I cannot help being reminded of the story of King Canute and his courtiers and the Atlantic Ocean. The comfortable man demands that he shall be protected against labor combining for its own ends. It is rather pathetic, this sudden demand of the comfortable classes for an age of rest and security. The world is to be made into a safe place for the comfortable man. The wage earner must be content to submit to the fluctuations of the labor market, but the comfortable man's gilt-edged securities are to be made a fixed quantity. I want to know what is the meaning of this sudden demand on the part of those who used to talk so bravely about the battle to the strong, the survival of the fittest, God helps those who help themselves, and so on. But, unfortunately, the laboring man is beginning to help himself, and so that law is not so popular as it used to be. We used to hear a good deal about might being right, but the comfortable man of to-day seems to have a sudden revulsion of feeling in favor of the Sermon on the Mount. I am very much afraid those estimable persons who are demanding that labor shall cease from troubling and that the world shall become a nice comfortable place where the comfortable man rest, are in for a bitter disappointment. Labor has got to be considered as well as capital. I myself regard labor unrest as the healthiest sign of the times. If the laboring classes showed no sign of discontent with their present conditions it would mean that human vitality is flowing to its end. I am not afraid of labor, at whose moderation I marvel. Social revolution has got to come, and it is the duty of every man with brains in his head to help to prepare the way for it, that it may come upon us, when it does come,

not armed with anger and hatred and envy and unreason, but promise in its hand.—Jerome K. Jerome.

The Middleman.

"From the producer to the consumer." That is a phrase which is frequently seen in the dopesheets of Canada. We are told that the middleman is unnecessary, that he but adds to the cost of commodities to the ultimate consumer without rendering any service. The commission which examined into the high cost of living in Toronto in their report declared that the multiplication of retail stores was one of the causes for advancing prices. Pressure, irresistible pressure, is being brought upon the politicians at Ottawa to introduce a parcels post system, whereby chickens, eggs and other farm products may be shipped directly from the farm to the city consumer.

At Sarnia, Mimico, West Toronto, North Bay and a number of other Ontario points the National Railway Association has established branches for selling goods without profit, to railway workers. From New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba, country merchants have been feeling the competition of the mail order houses. They have met in their little assemblies and have demanded legislation against these inroads into their territory. They put up the plea that they pay local taxes, which mail order houses do not. The legislation has not been forthcoming. The middleman has no friends.

The employers of Canadian slaves want to have the living of the slaves cost as little as possible, in order that wages may be as low as possible. Hence the high cost of living is not to their liking. It is true that the canners combine, water the stock, boost the price of canned goods, and raise the cost of living. It is true the land shark and rent lord boost the price of land and rent and send the cost of living higher. It is true the mine-owners boost the price of coal and send up the cost of living. It is true the meat trust sends up the price of beef. But you know, this is all legitimate profit, and profit is sacred. But the cost of living soars, and wages must be raised much higher. This is the terrible calamity which the profit lords do not wish to face. Hence their remedy, abolish the middleman. Slug him out of the ring. Start co-operative stores and parcels post, and bring producers of food stuffs into direct relation with the slave. When the middleman is reduced to the rank of a worker, and has had a dose, more or less severe, of the terribly galling nature of wage slavery, he will become a Socialist, and will be raising his voice lustily for the abolition of the capitalist labor skinner.—Cotton's Weekly.

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