

The Genuine Feeling

There is, in the midst of all of the strife of today, a genuine Canadian high national and moral feeling, characteristic of our people, and true of ninety per cent. of our citizens, but it does not find full vent in expression amidst the stridency of the hour. That feeling is the strong, virile, deep-rooted desire for peace and justice. Did it not slumber in the hearts of the people, were it not a characteristic of Canadians, we might well despair for the future of our nation, the teachings of our nation, and the generations which shall succeed us in government.

Great men have enunciated great principles which must govern men in their individual and national conduct. Lincoln gave to the world the foundation principle in government—government of the people, by the people, for the people. Rudely, and sometimes almost aimlessly, as we have endeavored, in our national life, to reach the high standard, it is in the hearts of Canadian people to enthrone JUSTICE, which is another less definite way, perhaps, of stating the goal and the truth which Lincoln had in mind.

There are no short cuts to democracy.

The great honest people — the masses of Canadians—must follow along the beaten paths leading to sound reform, and bring in the better day by sound reasoning, by sound discussion, and by honest balloting.

Remember this, that in the hours of trial and the days of anger, and periods of lawlessness, the true voice of the nation is not always heard clear and resonant through the din of strife.

In the vast and overwhelming majority of homes in Winnipeg today, the fireside talk of fathers, mothers and children is of and for peace and justice.

If it were possible to present in striking array the people who are for State rule, instead of mob rule, we should find lined up on the side of order, and law as represented by our duly elected rulers, the vast and overwhelming majority of our citizens, non-strikers and strikers.

Strikers! Yes, thousands of strikers.

Of the men and women who are on strike, only a comparatively few of them are in heart sympathy with the lawless declarations and the anarchistic acts of the handful of men who, in wildness of thought, anger of their hearts, and irresponsibility of judgment, have undertaken the impossible—the overthrow of sane and just methods of rule.

Let us repeat that which we have said in previous articles on the strike. We know that in our political life, the people, by their inertness and their reprehensible thoughtlessness, have sometimes allowed little partisan groups to govern. It is a fact

that sometimes just one bad man—take one notorious figure in our Dominion history of ten years ago—has been more powerful than the hundreds of thousands and millions. He had his hand on the party throttle, and transferred, in time, that same hand to the throttle of the machinery of government. And with the natural result that misgovernment followed.

Labor, in its rising power and greater organization—all good in its way, because Labor has not always participated according to its due—has been unmindful of the need of sane leadership. Let us put it in the words of one of the strikers: "If I had only known the designs of that Soviet bunch, I would have attended the union meetings, but I didn't. And see where the extreme Socialistic bunch has brought us." But this union man went out on a sympathetic strike. He did so, not because he willed, but because the present "machinery"—which is not just—ordered him. And here, in a word, we have the plight of the vast majority of strikers. They hate the Soviet doctrine, they hate the lawlessness of their wild-eyed rulers, but there they are.

And how are they to come back?

That is the question. It is hard to make a safe port in a storm. Given a few hours of calm, and all might be well. The unsafe pilots might be cast adrift, and the ship of Labor would be safe, and there would be a way into the safe harbor where the compass is true, and the national rules of navigation may be re-studied with profit and with safety to everybody.

The public has welcomed the entry into the dispute, not only of wise men in our immediate circle of government and business, but of the leaders of those old and tested labor organizations, such as the railway engineers and conductors. These latter have not fallen for the "sovietism" or the anarchism of the "Strike Committee." They have a vision of the future. They know that lawlessness leads only to destruction. And who will suffer most under lawlessness? Surely the wage-earners, the men and women struggling bravely and honestly, sometimes against terrible and unjust odds, to provide for themselves and their children, and to make the latter even worthier citizens than themselves of a national heritage which belongs to the poor just as much as to the rich.

Is it possible to have the calm, which shall precede the voyage to a safe harbor? We all hope so; at least, every good citizen hopes so.

It is not alone a question of enforcing law. The might and justice is at hand to enforce, by mighty and just means, the laws of Canada. Have no fear on that score. The law will be exercised to the limit, if no other alternative presents itself.

We want better than law; we need a better understanding; feelings of hatred must be dissipated; cursed class distinction of the kind where one man thinks himself the born superior of his neighbor must be removed; and the toilers must get away from many of their foolish prejudices.

Law can settle some things. The law can and must compel men and women to behave themselves and conform to the statutes in which they themselves, by their votes, had a hand in the framing, but we need more than law. A higher and a better relationship must, for instance, be established between the so-called "north end" and the "south end," between Weston and the Crescent.

Let us hope that the conferences between the ministers of our Local government, and the employers and employees, will result in some fair solution of the present strife.

It is, at the same time, the bounden duty of every man calling himself a Canadian to frown upon any and all lawless acts, to denounce in unmeasured terms the handful of "soviets" who have menaced the future of Canada and even the lives of our citizens. The authority of the State is a first and foremost consideration. Let that authority lose its power and prestige, and the bars are down. Those anarchistic leaders would then have the rule of ruin, riot and rapine, which is the only and the logical goal of their misguided preaching and teaching—and, worse still, their practising, as we have seen it up to the present. The power and the righteousness of the State must prevail.