CANADIANA

HOMO SAPIENS

Three Toronto city controllers one November evening walked out of the annual banquet of a Native Sons of Canada group, where they were to have been head table guests. The walkout occurred after they had argued for half an hour to no effect the refusal of their hosts to play "God Save the Queen" when "the toast to the Queen was proposed."

In vain did the entertainment committee chairman assure the controllers that "God Save the Queen" would be played at the end of the dance. "We play 'O Canada' in toasting the Queen." In vain did the Assembly President explain that they had a letter from the Prime Minister's office "saying 'God Save the Queen' is a prayer to Her Majesty." The controllers were firm: " 'God Save the Queen' should be played along with 'O Canada' when the toast to the Queen is proposed."

Yes, it hapened in 1958!

How To Get Knee Britches

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): On behalf of the C. C.F., Mr. Speaker, I wish to associate myself with the announcement that has been made and the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, by saying we are exceedingly pleased that Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Philip will be visiting our country this summer and will be present at the ceremonies opening the St. Lawrence seaway. We know that Canadians from coast to coast will welcome this announcement. We are pleased that, so far as may be possible, Her Majesty's subjects will be given every opportunity to participate in the celebrations that are contemplated. We hope that the health and convenience of Her Majesty may be kept in mind so that the function will not be too tiring for her. — "House of Commons Debates," Jan. 1959.

J. M.

The Rights Of Labor

Mr. Ian F. McRae, who is president of the Canadian Manufacturer's Association, as reported in the Daily Colonist, 17/4/59, thinks very little "of labor's so-called right to enjoy the gains of improved productivity." And he is so right. The right is much more "so-called" than actual. And he added:

"The facts are that labor is responsible for very little of whatever increased productivity does take place. It is essentially the fruit of better management, more costly and efficient equipment, and the courage of those who risk capital to equip the economy with better plants."

He is so wrong. His "facts" might look good in the dark where the absence of scientific light would make their outline difficult to discern. It requires only a modicum of knowledge to realize that management requires the expenditure of human energy. Human energy applied to the resources of the earth results in the production of useful things for human consumption. We might be able to do some tall juggling, but try as we may, we will never prove that management is not a part of production and production would have an awful time taking place without labor.

Drop in on the scene of management some time (if you're not too busy being exploited) and you'll see a beehive of activity, but capitalists? They wouldn't be caught within ten miles of anything so forbidding as a factory or farm. They are too busy watching roulette wheels on the Riviera or hunting lions on safari in Africa.

We are sorry that the worker can't go to France or Africa to watch the much needed capitalists in action but suggest that he keep his eyes open on the job in case he spots one hanging around the scene of working class robbery. Robert Ripley's firm might be mighty interested in this rare phenomenon.

It is true that greater productivity greatly stems from "more costly and more efficient equipment" but like all other wealth this equipment started off as raw materials, machinery and labor. The raw materials were merely transformed into the finished commodity, no new values added. Part of the value of the machinery was transferred to the finished commodity through wear and tear; again no new values. The only source of new values was human energy or labor. The workers were "paid" for only a small fraction of this, just enough to maintain them as slaves. The rest was legally heisted.

We are not too concerned about the "courage" of those who "risk capital to equip the economy with better plants." The capital was stolen in the first place; that's the only way wealth can exist as capital. It must exploit to grow and must grow (risk!) to exist. We are more anxious about the workers who have to sacrifice life for servitude to capital. We would like to see them understand the causes and attain emancipation.

Statistics published on relative wages show that any right labor has to "enjoy the gains of improved productivity" are very hazy indeed.

The relative wage is the wage in comparison to the total values produced. Sometimes during periods of "prosperity," when demand for labor-power exceeds supply and union activity is high, relative wages hold their own or even increase. But usually, with the increased development of the means of production or capital accumulation, relative wages fall. U. S. workers took a reduction in relative wages of 30% from 1899 to 1929.

Where productivity increases rapidly from a low industrialized state to a higher technology real wages will rise but not fast enough to prevent a fall in the relative variety. In his opening address to the 21st congress of the Soviet Communist party, Premier Khrushchev stated that gross industrial production would increase by 80% in the next 7 years; consumer goods by 62-65% and agricultural production by 70%. And the real income of the workers? An increase of 40%. (The Daily Colonist).

The relative position of American workers did not change much from 1929 till 1946, although productivity increased. (Labor Research Association report, The Western Socialist, Oct. 1947).

Wage levels are determined by two factors; cost of production of labor-power and the historical development of the area in question. Part of this development is the class struggle. Like two dogs fighting over a bone, the dog who brings the bones home wouldn't have to take a smaller share as the bones increase if he had a better understanding of the shell-game being played by the boss of the kennels. If union executives didn't spend so much time scabbing on the political front in their idolatrous support of capitalism, unions might be a little more effective.

But just when "good times" have settled in and a slight increase has been registered in the workers' pitiful personal possessions, cut-throat competition gets serious again, economy moves are made, a large unemployed army appears on the scene and down go those wages again. Those laws of capitalism make a mess of the best laid plans of mice and men. Mr. McRae would like to see the workers with no right to enjoy the gains of increased productivity. As it is the workers have few rights of any kind while producing all the wealth.

And the worsening social conditions that seem to accompany modern society make it more imperative than ever that the ridiculous economic relationship of master and slave in a highly productive environment where enough can be produced for all be ended as quickly as possible.

J. G. JENKINS

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