

# The Western Clarion

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## THE RISKS OF CAPITAL.

Nanaimo is a coal town. There is practically no other industry there outside of the mines of the Western Fuel Company. The entire town relies upon the men who work in these mines. Besides this there are others who live upon the Nanaimo mines. Just who they are or where they live the miners themselves do not know. Outside of perhaps the president of the concern and one or two more they probably never saw any of them. They are, however, the owners of the mines, the shareholders of the Western Fuel Company.

Every one at all familiar with capitalist undertakings will remember that the shareholder, the owner, the capitalist, is the fellow who "risky" his capital in industrial enterprises. Of course, if he did not do so there would be no industries. At least we are told so by those who ought to know. The risk taken by the capitalist in investing his money in an industrial enterprise is something awful to contemplate. Although he may lose it all he boldly makes his investments with a display of nerve that cannot but excite the admiration of the beholder. The owners of the mines at Nanaimo afford a typical case in point. Not only have they invested their capital in these properties but the most of them have probably never been nearer the place than London, New York, or San Francisco. Their reckless indifference to the "risks" assumed by them in making their investments is quite remarkable.

The Nanaimo mines have been operated for many years and the capitalists who have so recklessly assumed the risks of ownership have reaped vast profits as a reward for their "thrift and industry" and the risk taken. Not one of these owners so far as we have been able to learn has yet lost his life as a result of the risk taken. This may be due largely to the fact that they have not come into close contact with the mine itself, as the following will show:

In the city of Nanaimo there are two cemeteries. One is a public cemetery and the other belongs to the Catholic church. Within these enclosures a multitude of marble slabs bear mute testimony to the fact that underneath lie the mortal remains of human beings. Many graves are unmarked save by the usual mound of earth.

From Comrade Parker Williams, M.P.P., of Ladysmith, we learn that the marble slabs in these cities of the dead bear eloquent testimony to the safety that surrounds the workmen in the mines while the capitalist is forced to assume the awful "risks" incident to the investment of his capital therein.

In the public cemetery the tombstone inscriptions show that 45 per cent. of the males over 16 years of age met a violent death in or about the mines. Those in the Catholic cemetery show that 74 per cent. met their death in a similar manner. An appalling as these figures are they do not tell the whole story. It is safe to assume that in the hundreds of unmarked graves lie the remains of an even larger percentage of human beings who met death in a similar manner, men without relatives or friends to rear the marble slab to mark their last resting place and record the manner of their death. Within these cities of the dead are to be found no record of the many who mangled and bruised in the mines have perchance suffered months or years of agony only to succumb

to their injuries at last and go to their long sleep as a still further sacrifice upon the altar of capitalist production for profit.

In the face of this awful human slaughter the blood-sucking capitalists of the Nanaimo mines, like their blood-thirsty brethren elsewhere, have persistently fought against every measure intended to safeguard the men against the danger to life and limb that has written such a scathing condemnation of capitalism and its murderous system of production upon the tombstones of Nanaimo. Their profits must not be reduced no matter what the cost may be in the flesh and blood of labor. Better for these capitalist leeches that scores of workers be slaughtered in the operation of their industries than that a dollar be taken from their profits for the purpose of safeguarding the workers' lives.

Capital assumes no risks. An individual capitalist or concern may fail to realize upon an investment and go broke. To start with, their capital is plunder already taken from labor and the purpose of its investment is to obtain more plunder from the same source. The only risk to life or limb that they assume is that of dying of gout in consequence of high living or breaking their necks by falling down stairs while drunk. And these are risks not at all incidental to the operation of industry.

It is the workmen alone who assume the risks attendant upon the carrying on of the industries of the world. That such is the case is amply evidenced by the fact that it is workmen alone who are bruised and killed in their operation. The tombstones at Nanaimo bear eloquent testimony to this fact. Not one of them marks the grave of an owner, who as such, met his death by violent means in or about the mines.

All talk about the "risks of capital" is rank humbug.

## ITS LAST SUBTERFUGE.

The modern State is essentially the instrument of the capitalist class. It is the sole means upon which that class must depend to insure the perpetuity of its social system of property and thereby prolong its economic reign over the working class. It is unfortunate for the capitalist class of the more politically advanced countries of the earth that their economic slaves, the workers, possess the legal right to not only change the personnel of government but to also change its policy in regard to the form of property that shall receive protection at its hands. To add to the grievousness of this (large numbers of the workers are becoming alive to the fact that a most radical transformation in the form of ownership and the purpose of operation of the means of wealth production, is imperatively necessary if the working class is to escape from the galling yoke of wage-bondage that now presses so heavily upon them. They are rapidly realizing that, in as much as the State is the instrument by means of which the present ruling class defends its system of property and enforces its decrees against the workers, if the latter are to obtain relief it can only come as a consequence of their having seized possession of the State and used its powers to effect their purpose. As they become more thoroughly imbued with the idea of using their legal rights for the purpose of obtaining control of the State it becomes more and more necessary that the ruling class resort to subterfuge to prevent it. Subterfuge is necessary because of the overwhelming number of the workers as compared with the capitalists.

Until quite recent times the most clumsy artifices and subterfuges proved effective. Some such silly issues as protection or free trade, gold money or silver, and other childish nonsense was quite sufficient to enable the ruling class to lead the untutored working savage into the political shambles of capitalism and rivet the chains of economic bondage upon his limbs for another term. By far too many of the workers are now becoming politically and economically wise to admit of these old gags being longer relied upon. Some more cunning and seductive subterfuge must be concocted or the jig will be up with the rule of capital. A new "Richmond" is in the field with a program so openly revolutionary and uncompromising as to strike terror to the stoutest capitalist heart. The Socialist movement is growing in a manner that threatens the life of capitalism unless some means can be devised to turn the workers' attention in other directions.

It is by no accident that efforts are being put forth in Canada at the present time to launch a Labor Party. This is the only subterfuge that could suggest itself, under the