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EDITORIAL

“CHEAPNESS” VIA CAPITALIST MUNICIPALIZATION.

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OF Glasgow plans, State railways, “Socialist” office holders in “bourgeois” or capitalist Governments, and all such “first steps in Socialism,” the class-conscious wage worker now knows enough to instantly gauge and classify their advocates. He knows that under capitalism any industry monopolized by the government must be conducted on capitalist “principles,” for the benefit of the capitalist class. He knows that the so-called Socialist who “participates” in a capitalist government becomes necessarily an agent of the capitalist class and therefore a traitor to Socialism. Lastly he knows that the true Socialist who may be “elected” to an office of any sort by his fellow men of the working class, is not sent there to participate in capitalist government, but to oppose it with all his might and in all possible ways, whether in so doing he succeeds or not in forcing his opponents to make concessions and to devise palliatives. He knows all that and much more. Here is, however, another brick of facts and figures which may prove handy to the militant in his daily fight against all manner of bunco-steerers, the counterfeit Socialists especially.

In France, the manufacture of matches is a government monopoly, employing 676 men and 1,444 women in seven factories, with a capital of 6,248,000 francs (or, in round figures, about \$1,240,000).

The average wages of the men are fifty-three centimes per hour, or one dollar and six cents per day of ten hours; those of the women are thirty-five centimes per hour, or seventy cents a day.

The net profits in 1898, on sales amounting to 30,000,000 francs (\$6,000,000), were 21,602,000 francs (\$5,320,000), or 430 PER CENT ON THE CAPITAL EMPLOYED.

Again, in France, the manufacture of tobacco is a government monopoly, whose products must be retailed at a stated price, by persons officially appointed as tobacconists. There are employed in the twenty factories 1,446 men and 13,674

women, with a total capital of 129,072,000 francs (or, in round figures, \$25,814,000).

The average wages of the men are fifty centimes (ten cents), per hour, or one dollar a day of ten hours; those of the women are 32 centimes an hour, or sixty-four cents a day.

The net profits in 1898, on sales amounting to 404,602,000 francs (\$80,920,000), were 325,597,000 francs (\$65,120,000), OR 252 PER CENT ON THE CAPITAL EMPLOYED.

Taken together, these two industries, employing 17,240 persons of both sexes with an aggregate capital of about \$27,000,000, yielded to the French capitalist government a net profit during the year, of \$86,722,000 OR 320 PER CENT ON THE CAPITAL EMPLOYED,—and profits spell “fleecings from the Working Class.”

Yet, when the delegates of these workers called upon the so-called “Socialist Minister,” Millerand, who, “in order to save the (capitalist) republic,” had accepted the portfolio of Commerce in the Waldeck-Rousseau-Gallifet Cabinet, he replied that “the necessities of the budget did not warrant him in acceding to their demand for an increase of wages!”

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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