

gateway features

SOCIAL CREDIT-DEFINED AND DEFENDED

Premier E. C. Manning spoke to a crowd of about 150, Tuesday evening in West Lounge, on "What is Social Credit?" Following a public question period, Gateway Features interviewed Mr. Manning. Here are some of our impressions from his address, the question period, and the interview.

SOME IMPRESSIONS . . .

By LeBaron

"There is nothing wrong with our productive capacity; we have huge industrial inventories; yet few of us have as many automobiles as we'd like to drive. Purchasing power doesn't keep up with production—even with credit buying . . ."

Premier Manning lays heavy stress on financing consumption, which of course is a central tenet of Social Credit philosophy. He is not advocating "printing press money," but "expansion of national credit to equate buying power with present production."

We asked Mr. Manning if any increase in credit wouldn't intensify the inflationary condition which already exists in our economy, and he said "not necessarily." It would in part depend, he said, on which sectors of the economy received the boost. Emphasis would have to be on consumption rather than production.

"We don't have inflation in the orthodox sense," Manning maintains "not in the sense of too many dollars chasing too few goods. What we do have is an unduly high, and still rising, price level. But the causes of this condition are pyramiding debt and taxation, along with a trend toward collectivism. And when government comes in as a middleman the cost is always higher."

Incidentally, this increase in purchasing credit would not, in most cases, come in the form of an "across-the-board consumer dividend," rather it would probably be channelled into particular areas where need is greatest.

With the basic premise that economics is the core of politics there will likely be little quarrel. I can quite easily agree with the Social Credit doctrine that "anything physi-

problem will continue to hold a central place in practical politics, and to the extent that Social Creditors realize this, they are on the right track. To the extent that they come up with new and reasonable suggestions, they deserve to be heard.

In his public address Mr. Manning declined to go into the intricacies of "why" we don't have all the purchasing power we might like. He suggested that we are probably more interested in the cold facts of "what is" than in theories of "why".

I suspect he is right! And I think it is a rather sad commentary on the level of our interest and depth as university people. I think we should be interested in why things are as they are, in order to prevent and not merely remedy. It seems likely that the level of public comprehension of economic affairs will have to be raised before we see any great change for the better in standards of living. And to the extent that Social Crediters can stir such inquiry, I bless them.

Mr. Manning pictures Social Credit as the staunchest defender of private enterprise in Canadian politics. We asked him if he agrees with Mr. Pearson's statement that "we all believe in planning—in a mixed economy including both public and private sectors." Mr. Manning agrees, but insists that the idea of degree is important.

"Of all the political groups Social Credit places least emphasis on planning," he said. "I believe that a planned economy tends toward regimentation."

"The more you decentralize government, the closer you will get to what the people want." Mr. Manning would increase the emphasis on government at local and regional levels.

Basically it looks like Social Creditors want just what other practical politicians want, that is, in noble-sounding terms, to serve their country and the people. But of course there are varying ideas of what "best serves." Social Credit faces that rather awesome task of convincing the electors that their ways are the right ways, and in particular that their monetary theory will give us the results we want.

I say it's a big task because there is something about Social Credit theory which remains persistently mysterious to the average man. He can understand "good government" but he seems to have a hard time with A + B. This may not have been true in the glorious days of Aberhart, but it is true now—even confirmed Socreds make an often disappointing showing when it comes to definitive explanations.

"Why, in spite of Social Credit's popularity in Alberta, has there been so little success over the last 25 years, in clarifying the public impression of their monetary theories?" This was a question from the audience, and it seems a fair summation of the problem Social Credit faces. Why does Social Credit still seem something fuzzy? Speaking more generally, what will it take to crystallize public thinking, and for that matter political thinking, on real solutions to our economic problems?

We quote Mr. Manning: "There is no simple answer." Amen!



QUAECUMQUE VERA

By Penny Meisner

Colorful and controversial are the *mots justes* for the speech delivered by Premier Manning Tuesday evening. He succeeded in clarifying our concepts of "What is Social Credit," to as great an extent as the complex question would allow. However, in the process of clarification he made several interesting comments.

Critics of Social Credit are, according to Mr. Manning, "biased," "bound by old concepts," and "employ misrepresentation" in their arguments. He compared these persons to those who violently opposed the great medical and scientific discoveries of the Renaissance.

Mr. Manning also directed some rather startling comments at parliament. There is no real representation of the electorate in parliament, he insisted, but rather "a group of experts at the top directing policy for the whole country." He feels that a decentralized government, preferably at the municipal level, would be vastly superior. The words "parliament" and "state" were used

interchangeably. The terms "fascism" and "regimented society" were used with reference to a federally centered government.

When asked for the Social Credit stand on "free enterprise vs. planned economy" as stated by national party leaders, Mr. Manning said that in his opinion "planned" and "regimented" are synonymous.

Mr. Manning outlined the four basic philosophies of his party as follows: 1. that the individual citizen is the most important unit in society; 2. that the proper function of a government is to secure for the people the results they want; 3. that the goal of a democratic society is security with freedom; and 4. that whatever is physically possible and morally right should be and must be done to insure the proper function of the medium of exchange.

In my opinion the first three philosophies are certainly those which any thinking individual would maintain, regardless of political affiliation.

There would appear to be an inconsistency between the second philosophy and the Socreds' distrust of responsible government in regard to government controlled power operations. Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia have now provincially owned and operated power installations. There was a plebiscite taken twelve years ago in Alberta—the results of which were approximately 52 per cent against and 48 per cent for. No plebiscite has been held since that time. "There is no demand for one."

Mr. Manning closed with a brief history of the Social Credit party prior to their 26-year-reign in Alberta. Originally intended as an "educational program," the new movement adopted party status in 1935 as "a vehicle to put this new theory into action."

There may be little doubt that few personages who have visited our campus have been more dynamic or commanding orators. Few also, who have been more audacious.



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