

Editorial Page of the Canadian Labor Press

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A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER.

LABOR WILLING TO CO-OPERATE.

RIGHT Honorable Arthur Meighen, P.C., Prime Minister of Canada, in a recent article in Maclean's, puts the quietus on the arguments advanced by many of the opponents of the trades union movement when he says:

"But when all is said and done, when all the facts are considered, the truth stands out that there is not a country on the face of the earth today which is freer from unrest and turmoil than is this Dominion."

"For this favorable condition we in Canada owe much to the fair-mindedness and sanity of Canadian labor. Indeed, it has been the experience of the Government that labor has been just as reasonable, just as sane and just as patriotic as any other section of the country. It has been willing to co-operate, and its co-operation has been of the utmost value in solving problems that have been extremely complex."

During the recent meeting of the Canadian Lumbermen's Association strong language was used by some of the members concerning labor. Some of the speakers claimed that labor was disloyal. They didn't say just that, but they inferred that workers, railwaymen in particular, were getting too high wages and not doing enough work.

Mr. Francis McCrear, M.P. for Sherbrooke, claimed that labor had taken advantage of the times with the result that there was a tendency to work less and further shorten the hours. He suggested that a resolution be adopted urging that railway employes, miners and others should do more work for the money they were receiving. This was not done, but a committee was formed to draft a resolution. The committee, after careful thought, brought in the following resolution which was adopted unanimously:

"Resolved that the Government be urged to be careful in encouraging any legislation shortening hours of labor, in view of the necessity of greater production, and we urge that Capital and Labor unite to this end."

Labor is at all times ready to co-operate with capital in any proposal concerning the welfare of industry or Canada. The Prime Minister makes it quite clear when he stated that Labor has been willing to co-operate and its co-operation "has been of the utmost value in solving problems that have been extremely complex."

At the last session of the Canadian Parliament a sum of money was set aside for the holding of a second National Industrial Conference. To this proposal Labor, through its official organization, the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, willingly agreed, and had hoped that many of the industrial problems would have been discussed at this conference. However, Canadian manufacturers could see no object in the holding of a second conference, and the net result has been that no conference has yet been held. The Canadian Lumbermen's Association in its resolution calls upon Labor and Capital to unite to increase production. Labor is only too willing to do just that, but at the present time in many industries the workers are deprived of the right to produce by the owners of some of our industries shutting down their factories.

At the Canadian Lumbermen's Association Convention the proposed amendments to the Ontario Workmen's Compensation Act were attacked as being extreme. Again, why not follow the example of the Canadian Government. Co-operate with Labor and secure the maximum results. In the Province of Quebec efforts are being made to have a new Workmen's Compensation Act enacted, and the Montreal Branch of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association unanimously agreed to co-operate with Labor towards that end, and appointed a committee to act with the Quebec Executive of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen stated rightly: "Labor is just as reasonable, just as sane and just as patriotic as any other section of the community."

ADVISORY COUNCILS NECESSARY.

ONE of the Ottawa dailies points to the figures issued by the Employment Bureau as the total of the unemployed in Canada. At the present time we might tell this newspaper there is no means of ascertaining the extent of the unemployed. Labor demands that local advisory committees to the Government Employment offices be established at once. In this way a better conception of the situation will be gleaned and information as to the absorption of the unemployed suggested by a council composed jointly of employers and workers.

GET ON WITH THE WORK.

HON. S. C. Mewburn, formerly Minister of Militia, spoke not unlike a Labor man recently when he stated that the Government policy of not spending money for economy's sake was wrong. General Mewburn thought the Government should get under way all necessary public works. So say all of us.

Our Plans for Canada

By the Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, P. C., Premier of Canada.

Believing that every Canadian citizen should know the policy of the various political parties the Canadian Labor Press reproduces from Maclean's, Canada's leading national magazine, the policy of the present Government as outlined by the leader of the Liberal and Conservative Party, Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, P. C. The leaders of the two other political groups have also sent their story to Maclean's, and the C. L. P. hopes to reproduce these at an early date.

Before discussing the situation today it is well that a word be said on the genesis of the Government on whose behalf I write. That Government is the successor of, indeed, in point of policy and principle, it is the continuation of the Administration which the decisive will of our country placed in office three years ago. The mandate given on that historic occasion embodied three cardinal commands: (1) the marshalling of the nation's maximum effort in the winning of the war; (2) the care of problems, and chiefly soldier problems, in the period of restoration, and (3)—and this is frequently forgotten—the transition into action of certain definite, concrete propositions of reform in the manifesto of the then administration.

How were those mandates carried out? Was the full strength of the nation concentrated behind the army in France? Have our soldiers been re-established into civil life? Did we carry out our programme of reform? The answer to the first question is found in the fact, which no man can challenge, that when the war ended on November 11, 1918, Canada had the finest fighting unit of the entire Allied front. After a series of expeditions after a chain of exploits which added lustre to British arms—after had ended the last glorious day of the Canadian Corps stood as the spearhead of the Allied force, dauntless, invincible, far into the heart of the Prussian lines. It would be presumptuous, it would be wrong, for any member of the Government to seek to take first credit for that tremendous fact because the credit is to the splendid men of the line. At the same time it is but fairness to concede that the Army could not have been as invincible as it was, its morale sustained as it was, unless the fighting spirit of the nation was reflected in the Government that represented it.

In carrying out the problems of restoration, problems inseparable from war, great difficulties were encountered. They were encountered by the fact that war ardor had cooled, that there was wanting a sense of peril and the union that sense of peril engenders, and that, in consequence, there were cross-currents of criticism and opinion, criticism that sometimes, perhaps, was just, but that most often was cruel and unjust.

Sincerity, Vigor, Honesty, Success. In the face of it all the Government proceeded to its task. It carried on, knowing that the solution of reconstruction problems was its sacred pledge to the people; and it carried on with no other regard than to the welfare of the nation. Our soldiers were brought back; re-establishment plans were devised and executed; problems of transportation, trade and finance were studied, and reform policies enunciated in 1917 were carried to fruition. We make no claim that these vast portentous tasks were consummated without error and injustice. All of us are fallible, and it would have been more than human had such unprecedented achievements been brought about often in desperate haste and without chart or experience to guide us, without error. But this I do claim, that they were pursued with sincerity, with vigor, with honesty and with a high measure of success.

It is not necessary to emphasize this point. It is unnecessary because—and I ask my readers to note the significance of the fact—even by its bitterest opponents the Government's war and reconstruction records are not assailed. Thus a Toronto newspaper, which opposes us with conspicuous strength, admitted not long ago that the Government in war and after was without a parallel in constructive reform; and in a speech which he delivered in Winnipeg a few weeks ago, the leader of the Agrarian party, paid tribute to what has been achieved in re-establishing returned men.

Today we are two years from the war. It is short time in these crowded years, yet we find most of the duties that grew from the conflict either executed or well on the way to execution; and our places are turned to the future. It will be a future of hard tasks, not unattended by peril; but having a conviction that whatever may be encountered cannot be more formidable than the difficulties triumphantly overcome since 1914, we can face it without fear. On the facts of our recent past we prepare for and build the future.

Our Place in the Empire.

Our present position, both at home and abroad, gives no cause for alarm. Our place in the family of nations is what at the present time we would want it to be. It is compatible with the measure of our development as a British Dominion. It means the aspirations of all who love the Empire, and it is the world's best hope. It accords with the desire of the overwhelming majority of the Canadian people. We have the rights of a full statured Dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations—and that is the best lot of which we know. We have a distinct voice in the League of Nations, a voice comparing with our individuality as a self-governing people, and at the recent gathering at Geneva our representatives played a part which did credit to the name of Canada.

Finally, and, perhaps, most important of all, Canada's share in making happier the relations of the British Empire to the rest of the world, more especially as they concern our great Anglo-Saxon-Celtic neighbors to the south, are becoming more clearly recognized and defined. Our chief task now—and it is a task which challenges the best of

our Canadian hearts—is to achieve the greatest measure of unity at home. Fifty-three years ago our fathers met and came to agreements as to the rights of the two races, and of their language, and by that agreement, which is the corner-stone of our constitution, we must stand. By it in a spirit of liberty, tolerance and good will, we must abide. The long ordeal of the war produced unaturally and unfortunately not good results, but rather the contrary, in the co-operation of the two races.

Our One Great Domestic Issue—the Tariff.

And now I come to what we are told is the one great issue of our domestic politics—the issue of the tariff. Why is it the issue? It is the issue, I think, because the enemies of the Government cannot oppose us on any other. Many of them support us every bit as heartily as we support them, and yet they are not satisfied with our policy almost without reserve. It is indeed worth while to reflect that against a Government which has so long done so well, the hazards and discharged all the responsibilities of a great war, the issue raised does not concern it, but that it is the issue upon which the Government is re-elected for the special purpose. That, however, is the issue raised, and on that issue we have taken up the gauntlet of battle thrown down. We declare where we stand. All that we ask is that those opposed to us be actually frank, and that they can decide without confusion or complication and therefore with finality.

Our position on the tariff is clear. We take up the issue of the tariff in the name of the protective principle. To those who, like Mr. Crear, demand the abandonment of the protective principle, we answer, "No." We have no objection to our judgment—and it has been the judgment of Canadian statesmen and public since 1815—the protective principle is necessary to this country. The world where its abandonment would be followed by disaster more swift or sure. The reason for this is clear. We have no industry in a nation which has followed protective principles for 131 years, a nation with the most powerful and highly organized industrial units in the world. We have a population of 10 million, and a market of less than 10 million. Our own manufacturers, less richly powered, have organized and equipped themselves to meet a market of less than 10 million. They could compete under free trade conditions with those gigantic powers, but they could not do so if they were to be subjected to the tariff of the world.

Still more manifest is it that with a protective tariff wall standing against the entrance of our goods to the United States, and every other market, it is not of our elevation, the discarding of the protective principle on the part of Canada is a proposal scarcely admitting of debate. No responsible person can deny that the most subject the industrial fabric of the Dominion to a menace of that kind, none will ever do it unless we vote in favor of it. We have no doubt as to our practical fidelity to our country.

This does not mean that we stand for a tariff of 100 per cent. It means "No" to those who urge the abandonment of the protective principle, so likewise do we reply to those who demand a high tariff, that the exclusion of outside competition. We cannot have a high tariff in this country. The western provinces, which have to export their products to the east, and the east, which has to import its goods from the west, are both equally dependent on the tariff of the Dominion. It will right itself as time goes on and home production increases, but while it exists it is a strong reason why the tariff of the country must be kept as low as it can be kept with safety while serving the purpose of a national tariff. We must serve if we are going to prosper industrially or even exist as a substantial industrial factor among the nations of the world.

Consequently, the revision that we have under way, and which we propose bringing to Parliament this session, for its purpose is to bring the tariff of the Dominion to a level which is necessary to retain well-conducted industries in this country, and make it possible for them to grow and prosper in product with the growth of Canada, and not such as to make it pay them to go elsewhere or just a few miles south and establish their works in the States.

We do not propose going any higher on any single line of articles, and as soon as any man in Parliament or out of it can show us that on any schedule there is a higher protective duty than is necessary to serve the purpose of a national tariff, that schedule shall be revised. I ask my readers if such a policy warrants the accusation of free-trading, or if it is a policy of high protectionism?

The truth is that the tariff which we propose is the lowest that the country has had since 1874. Sir Wilfrid Laurier entered office in 1896, and the duties on dutiable goods averaged in the first fiscal year (1897-98) 22.2 per cent. When he left office, fifteen years later, they averaged 26 per cent. Today, under this so-called protective Government, they are running approximately 22.2 per cent. The Government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier required, even towards its close, an annual revenue of only 100 millions of dollars. The Government of today, because of war obligations and war consequences, requires 310 millions or more. Yet those who, desiring themselves as supporters of a tariff for reticence only, supported a 25 per cent. tariff under

CANADA'S PRIME MINISTER.



Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, P.C.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier to raise a revenue of 100 million today demands as high protectionists and as the revenue of 350 millions, maintains friends of Big Business a Government which, although requiring a tariff of 22.2 per cent. Nor is it easy to grasp the mental processes of those who cry that we are shutting out imports: one wonders if they ever read the trade figures of the country. For the truth is that we are importing today at a prodigious rate, at three times the highest rate we imported when Sir Wilfrid Laurier's Government was in office. This year we shall buy from the United States alone more goods than we bought two years ago from all the rest of the world combined. Indeed we are buying so much from our American neighbors that after we have sold them all the goods they will buy from us we will have this year a balance of 500 or 600 millions to pay them in United States dollars. All of which explains why American dollars are so difficult to buy.

Those who talk lightly and glibly about slashing down the tariff—they say they will do so without inquiry—appear to think that the way to get goods from the United States and more from ourselves is to make it easier to buy more from the United States and pay them more money in return. Mr. Crear tells us that we have to buy goods in order to sell; and that is true. But we do not have to buy goods in order to sell. The Government which he might form protection would be removed only by "easy means."

Is Mr. Crear Right? What if protection is unsound, if it is robbery, why not get rid of it at once? One cannot reconcile two such conflicting ideas without doing violence to logic, and the only conclusion to be drawn is that the whole movement carries the trade banner, the banner of free trade, and that the explanation of Mr. Crear's inconsistency in platform and words is that with other Agrarian leaders he has been misled by a hedge on his demand for free trade.

The fact, however, is that in dozens of speeches carefully prepared, the leader of the Farmers' Party has shown to the satisfaction of his adherents and to the satisfaction of his party to free trade. The whole movement carries the trade banner, the banner of free trade, and that the explanation of Mr. Crear's inconsistency in platform and words is that with other Agrarian leaders he has been misled by a hedge on his demand for free trade.

As for Mr. King, he has given expression to so many conflicting fiscal views that it is impossible to discern where he stands. He can be quoted on almost every conceivable side of the tariff issue; and my only conclusion is that he stands for a wrong principle, but that he stands for no principle at all. Rather than be left in confusion with that disorganizing failure, he has been exhausting the capacity of change.

Mr. King's Hesitancy, Shuffling, Incoherency.

Whatever may be Mr. King's opinions, or whatever may be his purpose, the cold practical fact is that neither his opinions nor his purpose can be put into effect except by the support of, and under the dictation of, the farmers' political organization, whose tenets I have already defined.

In contrast to this hesitancy, shuffling and incoherency, the Government stands consistently for the protective principle. It believes that any other policy would visit disaster upon our country, and so it stands for the protective principle, prepared to abide by what it brings.

A word, before concluding, about unrest. Undoubtedly Canada is not free from this kind of epidemic; but could it be? But when all is said and done, when all the facts are considered, the truth stands out that there is not a country on the face of the earth today which is freer from unrest and turmoil than is this Dominion. Examine the statistics, and what do they show? For the year 1915, the time lost during strikes in Great Britain was approximately 30 million days. In Canada during the same year the time lost in strikes was 19,000,000 days; and 1915 was in this regard a heavy year for Canada. Proportionally the population the loss in Great Britain was nearly twice what it was in this country. In the State of New York alone, for the year ending June 30, 1920, the time lost in strikes was 19,000,000 days. This is at a rate of more than twice that of Canada. A single strike of miners in Australia, which extended over a period of two years, and which has

just ended, cost the country approximately sixty million dollars, which is stated to be about the total cost of strikes in Canada for the past 19 years.

For this favorable condition we in Canada owe much to the fair-mindedness and sanity of Canadian labor. Indeed, it has been the experience of the Government that labor has been just as reasonable, just as sane and just as patriotic as any other section of the country. It has been willing to co-operate, and its co-operation has been of the utmost value in solving problems that have been extremely complex.

Our Unemployment Problems. Today we are faced by the prevalence of unemployment. This is serious enough. It challenges our best thought and demands our best practical assistance; but I ask those who are inclined, as some appear to be, to attribute what is taking place to the Government, to look at the conditions in other countries. Look at Great Britain! Look at the United States, where unemployment is upon a magnitude unheard of here, and where returned men are being merely promised measures today that have been in operation in Canada for upwards of three years. The fact is that, taken all in all, Canada today is a land of happiness compared with most if not all the rest of the world. It has its problems, its difficulties and its obstacles, but when we expose them in comparison with the troubles of other countries gratitude is all we can rightly feel.

As for the future, I look ahead confident and unafraid. There are some who, surveying the havoc wrought by the Great Tempest, viewing the pity and the terror of some of the nations of the world, are inclined to pessimism and gloom, but I am not one of them. Nothing is going on among the nations abroad that could not be expected after the war of wars in most of those nations the will to work, the passion for restoration and rehabilitation are already being fruitfully exerted. If the long debauch of the Soviets is not yet ended, we know that it must end, because human nature and experience cannot permanently tolerate the conditions of our world, revolutions—these, after all, are but the slowly receding waves of the ocean of disaster. There are no more disappointments and disappointments in the natural sequel of the cataclysm. They are temporary. Labor, order, freedom are permanent instincts and forces of the modern world. With compassion, charity, with hope and not with fear, we can look upon the troubled scenes of Europe and Asia. In our own country we know that we have a nation larger and better than that which we wished it to be—it is not wholly the fulfillment of our prophecy or our hope, but in all the fundamentals, in all the essentials that make a people great, we have a better country. We have broadened our horizon; we are doing more work and bigger things at home and playing a better part among the nations of the world. We have enlarged our population, expanded the capital of our industries, uncovered the resources and strength of the foundations of our trade. The flag of our country is seen on the seven seas, and the name of Canada is known everywhere with good will, respect and pride.

The Canadian people, inspired by the heroism of their soldiers, are a more courageous people than they were in any other part of the world, which has helped us overcome many obstacles of nature, the demonstrated soundness of our national constitution and of our economic structure, these have been reinforced by the memory of Canada's greatest achievement, and of the assured invincibility of our race. And although the heroic ardor of the war may have cooled, our people, I believe, are still resolute to fulfil the task of peace and reconstruction, to maintain and promote justice and freedom and progress, to play in the affairs of mankind the part which befits the youngest and most virile of the democracies of the world.

In fulfilment of those tasks mistakes will be made and misadventures occur; passions, prejudices and national hatreds will be kindled; our vision and weaken our resolve, but if we stand true to the doctrines and institutions which exhort us to march steadily in the paths which have brought us where we stand, march onward, in improvement and real reform, and not backward or merely traversing for the sake of change, I believe that we shall rear upon enduring foundations a nation which no storm can shake and no enemy destroy.

Junior Office Boy: "Wot'll yer do now the how 'as raised yer salary to a quid a week?" Senior Office Boy: "Well, I ain't fully decided, 'cept that I'll take up wot I see."—Sea Pie.

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