

becomes comparatively moderate when clothed with authority. City and country have indeed been brought closer together by reason of Ontario's experience, for the farmers' party has learnt that governments in the past have framed their policies within the comparatively narrow limits of choice at their disposal, and must continue to do so in the present, and the urban citizens find in the work of the new administration little which differs from their own views.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE RATES GOING UP

GENERAL recognition of the financial plight of street railways, due to higher costs of material and labor, has resulted in street car fares in nearly 500 cities on this continent being increased from one to five times. The common five cent fare is now a thing of the past, for where this is the maximum allowed it is found impossible to provide an adequate service. The latest tabulation of street railway fares on this continent shows that 60 cities have a 10 cent fare; three have a nine cent fare; 21 have an eight cent fare; 120 have a seven cent fare; and 225 have a six cent fare. There are also 26 cities which have a seven cent fare with an additional cent for a transfer; five cities have seven cent zones, and 10 cities have six cent zones, with additional two cents for transfers.

In Canada the first bitter wave of opposition encountered by the street railways has been overcome. One of the most important factors in developing a more liberal attitude towards them has been the experience of the western cities which own and operate their own street railways, and which have found it necessary to charge higher fares. The commissioners in Calgary have, in fact, just recommended a 10 cent fare, which is double the present fare, with four tickets for a quarter, to meet the increased costs. Montreal also, which recently adopted the service at cost principle, has reached the eight cent stage, and the new expenses faced this year may necessitate a 10 cent fare. Meanwhile the companies operating under franchises which limit the fares which may be charged are ground between the upper millstone of a stolid public opinion and the nether millstone of labor difficulties. The Toronto Railway Co., the franchise of which expires in 1921, may have to meet additional costs this year by charging them to capital account. London, Ont., has not succeeded in obtaining permission to charge even a five cent cash fare. The Ottawa Electric Railway and the B.C. Electric have obtained small increases.

In its "Public Service News," of June 1st, the Winnipeg Electric Railway Co. points out some of the special burdens placed on street railways companies. "In these days when street railway fares all over the continent are being increased in order to meet the rising costs of operation," it says, "and when the future of all street railways is a perilous one, it becomes a really serious question as to whether it is fair to the car rider to tax him indirectly in this manner and make him contribute to the relief of the non-car-rider. It would seem to be a fundamental principle of economic justice, particularly in these days, that the street car rider should not be called upon to pay anything more than the actual costs incurred in giving the service he receives, including a fair return on the money which makes such service possible. To make the car rider pay 'excess taxation' is unjust.

"We do not seek to escape the taxes which are imposed on ordinary business concerns doing business in the city. We are willing to pay our just share towards the cost of civic administration. But the greatest portion of the taxes which we pay to the city to-day with fares from the street car riders are taxes which are not applicable to other businesses, and which are a direct charge on the car riders. These charges are contributing to the necessity for higher fares. When fares must be increased so much that traffic decreases, then it becomes necessary, in the interests of the community to eliminate every possible tax against the public utility to keep fares at a level that makes operation possible."

#### THE "PROGRESSIVE" PARTY AND ITS PLATFORM

SOCIALIZATION of the Canadian grain trade and of the banking system is one of the objects of the so-called "progressive" party in parliament, said H. H. Stevens, M.P., in addressing the Progressive Club in Montreal on June 12. The movement had powerful political support in the grain growers and the Canadian Council of Agriculture, and should be carefully watched and combatted, he said, as it was a dangerous doctrine. The first idea was the socialization of the grain industry of Canada, that the government should market all the grains, a step from which even Hon. Mr. Crerar shrank, but which the Council of Agriculture had approved. The plans called for all marketing by the government as a permanent policy and absolutely no private dealing in grains. This system was wanted as a foundation on which to socialize the grain industry so that in addition to government marketing and control of grain the government would also take over the terminal elevators, the storage elevators and the 4,000 to 5,000 line elevators in the districts of the west. "They intend to propose that the government of Canada shall take over the C.P.R. They intend to propose, in addition, that the government shall take over the banking system, or at least establish a state bank. These things have been favored by a large number of the members of the Council of Agriculture. Mr. Crerar, in justice to him, is not enamored of these proposals, but his fate as a political leader depends on working with the Council of Agriculture."

Mr. Stevens said that while there was some difference of opinion as to taking over the Grand Trunk lines, it had to be admitted that something of a drastic character had to be done, but there was no conceivable reason for any government taking over the C.P.R., no conceivable excuse whatever, and he felt that he spoke for those who sat in parliament with him, except the so-called "progressives," that there was no possibility of such a thing. In the matter of state banks, he said that many irresponsible people want such an institution. He did not wish to say that our present banking system was perfect, perhaps there were weaknesses, and he believed that as regards export trade there was a weakness, but the Bank Act was revised every 10 years, would be revised in 1922, and any necessary changes could be made. He would hesitate at any time in the near future to substitute a state bank for our present banking system. Perhaps when the revision of the Bank Act came it might be found that banks were making too much money for quasi-public institutions, and that the government should take more from them in taxes, but that was no reason for launching into a North Dakota banking system. The people of Canada should take heed before the propaganda of the grain growers took too deep root.

Vilhjalmur Stefansson has obtained from the Dominion government a 30-year lease of the southern part of Baffin's Land, and has secured capital for the establishment of a reindeer breeding industry there. For centuries the far north has taken toll of human life and property; it is time that economic payment, at least, be made.

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Thirteen thousand disabled soldiers, who have received vocational training from the department of soldiers' civil re-establishment, are now seeking employment, and an appeal is being made to employers to make room for them if possible. Considering the millions of dollars that have been spent on this training, the present scarcity of labor, and the fact that most of these men are already in receipt of pensions and can therefore afford to sacrifice wages in order to secure a start in a new occupation, should make their problem of employment an easy one.