

Correspondence

LESTOR ON THE PRAIRIE.

Editor, Clarion:—

The city of North Battleford was taken off its feet this week when there blew into its precincts a Socialist propagandist known as Lestor. The papers had announced his coming, the billboards were covered with posters in large letters, "Lestor is coming," and people were asking, who is Lestor? The question was not long to remain unanswered, for on Sunday afternoon he was introduced to a large audience of a mixed nature; there were in the crowd lawyers, doctors, merchants, working men, Socialists of the Marxian School and school masters. Lestor spoke for one hour and the audience were delighted with his presentation of his subject, "World problems as they affect you."

The proof of this was the large crowd who came back in the evening to hear him speak on the subject, "Socialism, the only way to prosperity." Questions were asked by a few of the audience and the consensus of opinion was that more meetings of this nature would be beneficial to the citizens as a whole, and that it is high time that we gave more attention to what the scientific Socialist is trying to teach. The fact that the "Rotary Club" of the city invited Lestor to address them at their weekly luncheon is proof that even the merchant class are beginning to ask for new light on their economic problems, and are beginning to awake and shake themselves to enquire, "What shall we do to be saved." Lestor was at home on this occasion; his choice, racy stories, kept the club in a "Rotary" of laughter and it was a surprise to them to hear a real Marxist tell them in their own language that their problems were to sell their goods.

The tables were spread with "Red" table cloths, red napkins, and red cabbage ornamented the tables. It was a study to watch the faces of the members who seemed to expect a tirade of anathemas against the system, its king, its aristocracy, its religion, its philosophy, its ethics. To watch the expression on the faces of many of them change from one of something akin to fear, to one of wonderment and delight, as Lestor told several racy stories, each one carrying conviction that this system was not one that lent assistance to the ethics of "Rotary" but one that made it difficult even with the best intentions, to be of real service to our fellows. The bias was all in the wrong direction, and the object and aim of scientific Socialism was to act in conscious union with the forces now in operation which would make the bias in the opposite direction.

Monday evening found Lestor in the Church of England club rooms championing Socialism against all comers. This club consists of a mixed membership; to see Lestor's brown coat hanging alongside the surplice of the Rector of the church, one could imagine he saw the brown coat say to the surplice, "What do you know about surplus values?" and one can imagine the surplice replying "All good things around us have come from heaven above."

For forty minutes Lestor presented his case for "Socialism." Then after he had dealt with the question of "Historical Materialism," "The law of value," and the "Class Struggle," the champions of the present system (if such it can be called) Lestor said "The cockney said it was a bloody mess," and one of the opposition inadvertently admitted it could not be called a system at all, as there was no system to it. However, an opposition was organized and six stalwarts for "Capitalism" came forward: three lawyers, an insurance man, a book-keeper and a store manager to champion the cause of their masters, but

"All were too weak for brave Macbeth,
Well he deserves that name,
Disdaining danger, with his brandished steel,
Which reeked with bloody execution,
He carved out his passage, till he reached those slaves

And ne'er shook hands or bade farewell to them,
Till he unseamed them from the nave to the chaps,
And fixed their heads upon our battlements."

He told them they were "Utopians" and every indictment that they had brought against Socialism, must exist in their present form of society, or they would not be able to image it in their minds, any more than it were possible for them to image an angel if they had not first seen a bird and a woman, so the things they had been deploring and fearing must be at present existing in the present form of society which they were trying to defend. So turning every one of their own weapons against themselves and refusing to be drawn into the meshes which they had set for him, he told them that we were anti-nothing, but "Materialists" explaining "Capitalism."

We had a real time and North Battleford will remember for many a long day the day which blew Lestor here.

OBSERVER.

North Battleford, Sask., April 1, 1924.

PRESIDENTIAL ART.

(From "The Nation," N. Y.)

To the Editor:—

Sir: An expert in miniature has just succeeded in engraving a portrait of Warren G. Harding on

the head of a pin. His next task will be that of reproducing the features of Calvin Coolidge on the point.

D. S.

New York, March 15th.

IT IS SIMPLE

ANYTHING we use that is on the market for exchange is a commodity. Therefore a commodity has exchange value. I can't see that any article has any other value whatsoever as a commodity.

Let me use someone's example.

1. A sewing machine is on the market for sale or exchange for any other commodity.

Its value is Exchange Value only.

2. I buy this machine by exchanging any other commodity, gold (or its money form), place it in my home where it is used in the household, sewing. The sewing machine is now a Use Value and no other, as I see it.

3. I buy this machine and place it in my factory along with a hundred others, buy the commodity labor-power to work it making shirts or overalls. It is not now a commodity or a use value. It is Capital. Why not call it Value?

Use-Value as I read English is whatever useful qualities any thing has which satisfies my wants, or fills a social want.

Coal a thousand feet under ground has all the natural qualities; it contains heat, gas and so on, but it is of no use to me there; product of nature there. Bring it above ground and it is still a product of nature but something more. It is now a commodity; it is an exchange value, and when exchanged a Use Value.

What has been added to the coal to give it these qualities? Labor. Then exchange value, use value and value is labor. Social labor. And labor produces all wealth.

"The value of a commodity is the amount of soc-

ially necessary labor required to produce it." (Marx's law).

It follows then that when we exchange something of no use to us for something we wish to use we are exchanging quantities of labor for quantities of labor, the same to day as in the day of primitive barter of savagery or barbarism. It also follows that the basic principle of exchange is not upset by bringing the complex features of capitalist production in the discussion, as rent, interest, profit, supply and demand, scarcity and abundance, marginal utility, gods or sunspots.

Show what is added to a ton of coal to make it of more value or more useful other than labor.

In these many ways ruling classes have controlled the products of labor, they buttress and fortify their position of ownership through those institutions they have found best for their purpose, the press, schools and religion influencing that commodity which consists mainly of brain and, alas, stomach, to a false theory of economics.

What should be labour's objective? Ownership, social ownership, socialism, communism.

CHAS. MACDONALD.

(One time student of George Morgan).

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PLATFORM

Socialist Party of Canada

We, the Socialist Party of Canada affirm our allegiance to, and support of the principles and programme of the revolutionary working class.

Labor, applied to natural resources, produces all wealth. The present economic system is based upon capitalist ownership of the means of production, consequently, all the products of labor belong to the capitalist class. The capitalist is, therefore, master; the worker a slave.

So long as the capitalist class remains in possession of the reins of government all the powers of the State will be used to protect and defend its property rights in the means of wealth production and its control of the product of labor.

The capitalist system gives to the capitalist an ever-swelling stream of profits, and to the worker, an ever increasing measure of misery and degradation.

The interest of the working class lies in setting itself free from capitalist exploitation by the abolition of the wage system, under which this exploitation, at the point of production, is cloaked. To accomplish this necessitates the transformation of capitalist property in the means of wealth production into socially controlled economic forces.

The irrepressible conflict of interest between the capitalist and the worker necessarily expresses itself as a struggle for political supremacy. This is the Class Struggle.

Therefore we call upon all workers to organize under the banner of the Socialist Party of Canada, with the object of conquering the political powers for the purpose of setting up and enforcing the economic programme of the working class, as follows:

- 1—The transformation, as rapidly as possible, of capitalist property in the means of wealth production (natural resources, factories, mills, railroads, etc.) into collective means of production.
- 2—The organization and management of industry by the working class.
- 3—The establishment, as speedily as possible, of production for use instead of production for profit.