

## Western Clarion

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and Current Events.

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VANCOUVER, B. C., JULY 2, 1924.

### ELECTION REFLECTIONS.

THE B. C. Provincial election has resulted in the return of the Liberal government, with a reduced majority. Although the final count of ballots involves the lapse of twenty-one days from the day of election, thus making 11th July the day of the final count, the returns already totalled by the deputies throughout the Province indicate so close polling in several districts that the government may be subject to defeat at any time by a combination of opposition groups. Some interest centres on the absentee vote which may upset some already accepted results, but there is no possibility of this effecting the election of either of the S. P. of C. nominees. However, there remains a measure of hope for Sam Guthrie, ex-M. L. A. for Newcastle. His constituency, a coal mining area, has been treated with "redistribution" and made to include certain areas with a "balancing" vote, which has succeeded in unseating Guthrie, a fact which we regret. But, as already indicated, there is some hope of righting matters yet through the absentee vote which is still to be totalled. By the way, since after elections it is the habit of the press to comment upon the features of the election act and to suggest alterations, The Province (Vancouver) has not missed a chance to air its opinion that the absentee vote might be tinkered with. The Province suggests that instead of absentee ballots being consigned to the possibly interested care of a politically appointed returning officer, all hands would be better served if the ballots were given over to the care of a County Court judge. It being, evidently, the opinion of The Province that the Bench is beyond political suspicion, we would lend our support to the suggestion. But a County Court judge is not important enough. Go right up the judicial ladder and place the ballots in care of the Court of Appeal, in the hands of, say, Mr. Justice M. A. MacDonald!

The Nanaimo vote was somewhat of a surprise to us and, of course, a disappointment. We had expected the return of W. A. Pritchard there, which expectation appeared justified by the Nanaimo City poll in Nanaimo Riding last Federal election and by the general interest displayed by everyone there during the election period just passed. But we were five hundred votes short and the Minister of Mines retains the seat. A great many people left the matter of registration until too late or until the day of revision of the lists when there was room for negligence on the part of the electoral officers. Some suspect, no doubt, the secrecy of the ballot and its possibility of reacting on themselves in the fashion of the blacklist, that dread disease of industrial areas. But there were enough voters, and coal miners at that, on the list to have elected Pritchard. They elected Sloan instead. Pritchard's election meant that the mines would close down (they run half time now in "good" times), business would slacken up, strikes would take the place of unemployment, the city's credit would be imperilled and all would be misery. The miners should know better; they have had enough experience of electioneering bluster. Watch out in future.

In Vancouver there were twenty-seven candidates for six seats: Six Liberals, six Conservatives,

five Labor, six Provincial Party, one Socialist and three independents. The return showed four Liberals and two Provincials. The highest individual vote polled was 11,085 and the lowest polled, for an elected candidate, was 9,014. Labor's highest individual poll was 6,263, being nineteenth from the top, and its lowest was 5,552, being twenty-third from the top. J. D. Harrington was twenty-fourth with 3,232. This represents a slight gain in Harrington's vote over the election of 1920 and a slight reduction in the highest labor vote. It has been suggested that had Harrington's name been grouped with the Labor candidates' names on the ballot his vote would have doubled. That, of course, is conjecture, but it is evident that a ballot paper and balloting procedure generally has an air of mystery and a confusing tendency to the mass of the people. A great many people came away wondering if they had really, in the hustle and bustle of it, voted as they intended, and wondering why they couldn't find Harrington's name. Part of this was caused by the C. L. P. having mailed postcards to all union members throughout the city, post cards which contained the names of five candidates and left out Harrington who, singularly enough, was their first candidate endorsed. Another peculiar feature was a short letter which appeared in the Labor Statesman, June 20th and in the B. C. Federationist, June 19th. The Federationist had it blocked off and displayed prominently on the front page, God knows why. We reproduce it here:—

### Don't Split Your Vote.

Editor B. C. Federationist: In connection with the coming provincial election there is one thing I would like to suggest, and that is, I think you should preach in season and out of season to your auditors and readers that when they vote for Labor men they should vote for Labor men only, and not distribute any votes they may not feel inclined to give to any of the Labor candidates, to candidates of the other parties. For example: I may vote for five of your men and, for some reason or other, decline to give my vote to the sixth. In a case such as this I would suggest that you impress on your friends to waste the sixth vote, rather than give it to anyone else, otherwise it will count against the Labor ticket, and cancel one of the five votes cast. Labor will absolutely need every single vote it can dig up. Don't split your vote.

H. G. H.

Vancouver, B. C.,  
June 18, 1924.

We have given that letter a good many interpretations and can't finally agree with any of them. Probably quite innocent but unpardonable stupidity on the part of the management, or acting management of those papers, in sending that out on election day when all chance of argument was gone. But, as is said often, we live and learn.

Taken as a whole the Labor candidates appear to be representative of the trade union and labor movement generally in western Canada. If they have a fault at all it lies in insufficient understanding of the forces and conditioning circumstances below the surface appearances of social life. As McInnes, one of the C. L. P. five, very well pointed out, working class misery is not the outcome of improperly administered ameliorative measures; the case should be set the other way around. That being done, there is room for exposure of the purposes to which palliative measures are put by the political fraternity, the necessity for their adoption, the methods employed to emasculate them once the victory is won—at the same time maintaining their advertizing value for the party which first fathers the deceit—and so on.

It is apparent that live political issues, employed to ensure election by the rival political parties, are not thought out by the mass. Its thinking is sub-let on matters of that kind. The governing factors, resting on the course of the economic development of the west, are personal interests unintelligently conceived, and swayed by stereotyped pictures, the desire to side with the majority. Mass emotion, roused and enlisted to a warped and momentary partisanship is the matrix of democracy patterned by the live-wire politician. Effectively organized, this means victory. Then there are the newspapers. In this election there had

been considerable elbowing for control of political office among the moneyed brotherhood. As a result the newspapers were a little more open than hitherto. The newspaper readers were interested in the contest and newspapers must keep their readers and get more. But newspapers as they are today cannot survive on readers' subscriptions alone so they have to have advertisers. But to get advertisers they must have readers, hence, as in this case they must cater to the mass and they did.

By and large it was an interesting election. But when it was over, through habit no doubt, those workers who had a job went at it as usual and who knows but that they are nearer political wakefulness than would appear, even to themselves!

### HERE AND NOW.

Emerging, as we are, from the many mass gatherings of a political campaign, we should be able to show ourselves well apprenticed to the art of advertising our virtues and capabilities. Some of those fellows on the stump—the hustings they call it—have no mean opinion of themselves and they never laugh in the face of a mirror.

Well, it's a sham article that needs boosting over much and about here we'll drop anchor—as the admiral said when he decided to look around. And so, we never boost this journal. But we do try to boost the cash totals. By the following it will be seen that they need it:

FOLLOWING \$1 each: J. Chrystal, C. F. Schroeder, V. R. Midgley, R. S. Twist, A. J. Beeny, Walter Wilson, W. Jardine, J. Mitchell, G. Elliot, P. Mytton, Isaac Benson, H. J. Whitechurch, M. Lightstone, C. Lester, A. Tree, Jim Quinn, C. Bowie, E. Johnson, E. Pryce.  
J. Johnson \$2.00; H. M. Thomas \$2.00; W. J. Churchill \$3.00.

Above, Clarion subs. received from 13 to 26 June, inclusive, total \$26.

### CLARION MAINTENANCE FUND.

Following \$1 each: Harry Grand, J. A. Moore, Isaac Benson, Dan Pollitt, Jim Quinn.

Walter Wilson \$2.00; St. John Comrades (per S. E. White) \$5.50; From Building Fund Committee, (per J. Lott and donated by several subscribers), \$50.50.

Above, C. M. F. receipts from 13 to 26 June, inclusive, total \$63.

### "BUSINESS IS BAD."

During the last 12 months industrial activity has been declining, jobs getting scarcer, unemployment increasing and the purchasing power of the public decreasing. Facts which are implicit in Burton's keynote but which he did not mention may be summed up as follows:

Employment decreases in April compared with 12 months ago—steam railroad shops 19.7%, agricultural implements 18.2, foundries and machine shops 18, men's clothing 16.5, auto tires 15.9, cotton goods 14.7, wagons 13.7, leather 13.1, shipbuilding 12.4, shirts and collars 12.2, sugar refining 11.8, woollen goods 11.6, stoves 11.4, millinery and lace goods 10.8 and boots and shoes 10.3%.

New York state employment report for May shows employment in manufacturing industry 11% below May 1923 with 100,000 employees laid off during the last two months.

Production in the basic industries, according to the federal reserve index, is down 10% compared with a year ago. Unfilled orders, which represent demand for production, have fallen off 43% since a year ago. The U. S. Steel corporation reported for May 31 unfilled orders for 3,628,098 tons compared with 6,918,315 a year ago. This year's report is the lowest since 1914. Production of iron has just experienced the sharpest drop in history and the entire industry is operating at less than 50% capacity.  
The World (Oakland)