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LONDON, SATURDAY, DEC. 15, 1928

THE FARMERS AND POLITICAL ACTION

In answer to charges that organized labor in America lagged far and away behind the labor movements of Europe, Samuel Gompers, long head of the American Federation of Labor, pointed out the essential difference of aim and of method between American and European labor movements. The charges made by radical European leaders were reiterated and endorsed by the "Liberal" American press, that is those ably conducted Neagan publications that see "progress" and "liberty" only in revolutionary movements—even in Russian Bolshevism, and "reaction" and "capitalism" in everything else—even in American organized labor.

There is just one salient point in Mr. Gompers' comprehensive reply that is pertinent to our subject. It is this: The aim of organized labor both in America and in Europe may be stated broadly to be the betterment of the living conditions of the workers. But it is only stated thus broadly that the aim, the ultimate aim, can be said to be the same. Organized labor in Europe seeks first political control so that it may attain its object through revolutionary changes brought about by government action. While in America organized labor has consistently refused to form a political labor party, looks not at all or only incidentally and in minor matters to political action to achieve their aim. Their method is to make each industry responsible for labor's share in the products. In any and every industry labor is an essential and indispensable element in production. The method of organized labor in America is to deal directly with the management of each particular industry insisting as a right on such remuneration for the workers as will secure decent living conditions for themselves and their families.

The American method might appropriately be called that of direct action. It is significant that the term "direct action" in England has been used to designate quite another thing altogether. There it was applied to the threatened nation-wide strike that would paralyze the very life of the nation and was to be employed to force the Government to accede to the workers' demands. So ingrained is the idea that it is only through political action that they can attain their economic ends. It is called "direct action" because the pressure was to be brought directly on the government and not through labor representation in Parliament.

The radical difference between the European and the American method is obvious as soon as it is stated.

The claim of Mr. Gompers that nowhere in Europe has the success of organized labor in attaining its aim been comparable with that in America, will be conceded even by the "liberal" sympathizers with European revolutionaries.

This controversy has been recalled because of its bearing on a question of great interest to Ontario farmers. Its application will be obvious to the average intelligence. Mr. Morrison, the Secretary of the United Farmers, in a recent speech as reported by the Farmers' Sun, said:

"The political future of the U.F.O. was an open question which must be

decided by the annual convention. There never had been any machinery for political action provided, the change would have to be made by the convention. The convention was the only authority, not the head office in Toronto."

Mr. Morrison admitted that the Farmers' movement had suffered a slump so far as membership is concerned. Evidently many farmers are losing faith in their organization. This is to be regretted for, as Mr. Morrison declared:

"Up to the present, in spite of mistakes, the Farmer Movement had been well worth while. It had put the farmer on the map as he never was before; it had turned them into an articulate, self-assertive industry like other industries. It had put the farmer in a place where he could feel that he didn't have to humble himself to anyone."

Mr. Morrison admits that mistakes were made. One mistake, and the one that probably accounts for the present falling off in membership, is, we think, the exaggerated hope of betterment of farming conditions through political action. That hope deferred or abandoned has made the heart sick. Now whatever be the decision of the annual U. F. O. convention with regard to political action—and political influence exercised one way or another is the right and duty of farmers—we may express the hope that the farmers will come to the conclusion that the organization apart altogether from politics is well worth while. We should be sorry to see it fall through; and we should be very sorry if our Catholic farmers were to lose interest in it. The political phase of the movement we consider the least important; certainly it has little claim on Catholic support. But as an organization of self-help, self-education, yes and quite properly of self-interest and of legitimate self-esteem the United Farmers can be of immeasurable benefit to the farming population, Catholic quite as much as non-Catholic.

Self-help not through political action, or not through political action exclusively or chiefly, should be, in the widest sense of that term, the guiding principle and the motive of the organization's every activity, the reason for its existence.

There is entirely too much self-depreciation amongst farmers. There are boys and girls who have had the good fortune to be born on a farm, and who from childhood have been accustomed to hear their parents belittle the profession of agriculture; complain of its hardships, its drudgery; envy the supposed happier lot of the city dweller; and so on through the whole whining litany. There may be unfair handicaps, as Mr. Morrison asserts, that account in some measure for the desertion of the farm for the city, but the lack of self-respect, the lack of appreciation of the dignity and independence, yes and the exceptional opportunities of the farmer's life on the part of too many farmers themselves would be enough to account for so many farm-born young men leaving their heritage and stepping down into the comparatively sordid and servile struggle for existence in the towns and cities. It is hardly necessary to say that we do not for a moment hold that all farmers' sons should be farmers any more than that all doctors' sons should be doctors, or all shoe-makers' sons shoemakers. No, the town, the city, needs the invigorating influx of fresh blood from the country; but that does not apply to those who of their own will lower their independent status as farmers to the precarious and insecure status of the workers for others in towns and cities.

Dr. Edwin V. O'Hara in the current Catholic World has an article which we commend to the earnest perusal of our readers. In the meantime the following excerpts may serve a useful purpose as subjects of meditation for some of our readers, young and old:

"To say that the farm is a home, as well as a business, is to make an important, but yet only superficial, statement. The real significance of the farm for civilization does not consist in its having a parcel of land set aside for human habitation; cities have that. It consists in the fact that the industry of agriculture is essentially of a character to provide the natural environment for wholesome, vigorous, and prolific family life."

"The vast majority of farmers are their own employers, and consequently develop the qualities of successful employers; namely, initiative, foresight, and independence of spirit. There is no other large industry in which a man has an equal opportunity of becoming the head of an independent business."

"Again," Professor Carver is quoted as saying, "those who have little initiative—those to whom the question of what to do next is always a painful one—will always prefer industries where questions of this kind are solved for them by bosses, foremen and superintendents."

"But," Dr. O'Hara adds, "men of courage, self-reliance, resourcefulness, will always find a special attraction in an occupation which allows them to be self-employed."

"The Catholic Church has always encouraged private ownership of property as a source of security to the family and of stability to the nation. The great Encyclicals of Leo XIII. expatiate on its importance. It is unnecessary here to detail the advantages which arise from private ownership of property; the sense of responsibility, of thrift, of independence, are all fostered by it."

Mr. Morrison says that "the Farmer Movement has put the farmer on the map as he never was before; it had turned them into an articulate, self-assertive industry like other industries. It had put the farmer in a place where he could feel that he didn't have to humble himself to anyone."

There is the right ring to that. If the United Farmers organization succeed in instilling into its members, especially the younger ones, self-respect, appreciation of the dignity of their calling, positive pride in their work, it will have done more for farmers than if it governed Ontario politically for a generation.

For in the matter of self-help, even in the narrower sense in which the term is unfortunately often used, this spirit, this attitude of mind is a necessary condition precedent.

Other considerations, many of them, point the same moral. At another time we shall discuss other phases of the question. In the meantime we urge our rural readers to interest themselves in their organization to make it the power for good that it ought to be in the rural life of Canada.

WHAT IS EDUCATION

Many will remember when "education" was accepted as a term whose meaning was obvious, self-evident, needing no explanation or definition. We boasted of our progress in "education," of our system of "education," of the spread of "education," until it had become universal. And our statistics on the subject were considered comprehensive and satisfactory when they divided the world into those who could read and write and those who could not; the literate and the illiterate which we blindly assumed to be synonymous with educated and uneducated. And then paradoxically we added subject after subject to the curriculum and fondly believed that we were making tremendous progress in education by widening the scope of the knowledge acquired in school. We did indeed widen but we did not deepen; and now we are beginning to realize that the mere acquisition of knowledge is not education at all, or at best is but a small and comparatively unimportant part of education.

A thoughtful article in The Open Door of the Farmers' Sun has this to say on the subject:

"Even were it possible to secure teachers with a fair knowledge of the manifold subjects of the present top-heavy curriculum, it would be utterly impossible to impart more than a superficial smattering to the average pupil during his comparatively short public school career. A superficial knowledge is a dangerous thing, and is evident in the host of half-baked theorists and impractical idlers who overcrowd our cities. Judging by the product of our public schools, which is finding its way into the business life of the community at this time, its education, so far as the simpler and more important rudiments are concerned, has been grievously neglected. The school curriculum needs to be simplified, not still further complicated."

The Catholic Church has always and everywhere consistently held that religion is a vital, an essential part of education; that to divorce religion from education is absolutely fatal, subversive of education's chief purpose.

This view is now the rule rather than the exception amongst thoughtful observers outside the Catholic Church.

The article above referred to goes on to say:

"We have no desire to belittle the value of practical knowledge, but infinitely more important than the technical or material aspect of education is the moral, or, if you like to call it so, the religious or spiritual aspect of it."

There was a time—and that not far distant either—when such a clear cut assertion of the part religion must play in education could be found only in a pastoral letter of a Catholic bishop or in some other such distinctively Catholic presentation of the Catholic conception of education. Now it is quite common to find this Catholic view accepted by non-Catholics and propounded almost as a recent discovery. The writer already quoted continues thus to amplify and emphasize:

"Education is not merely a process of gathering encyclopedic knowledge of facts and figures, and ways and means, but rather a process of acquiring those virtues and principles which we sum up in the word 'character.' Dr. Johnson wrote that 'The knowledge of external nature and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind. The first requisite is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong.'"

And after deploring the fact that education and the results of education today are not used for moral purposes, he says: "This would not be so did we but wholly recognize the principle laid down by Socrates, that 'the most important lesson we have to learn is how to do good and avoid evil.'"

Is it not pathetic that at this stage of Christian civilization we should have to go back to a pagan philosopher for the "most important lesson," the lesson that has little or no place in the overcrowded curriculum of our glorified educational system?

The article closes with this quotation from Dr. Smiles:

"Nations are gathered out of nurseries, and they who hold the leading strings of children may even exercise a greater power than those who wield the reins of government."

Now the last thing in the world we desire to do or lead our readers into doing is to indulge in any idle triumph over the inconsistencies and the failures of the much-vaunted system of modern secular education. No, rather should we humbly thank God that those outside the household of the faith are being led to embrace the Catholic view of Christian education. We have been true to the Catholic principles governing this all-important matter; we have fought for them and suffered for them. Humbly grateful to God that we have had that privilege, now that the justice and necessity of these principles are gaining general recognition, let us not grow weary in well doing, but taking a fresh grip of our courage and our convictions carry the good work on, at the cost if need be of fresh sacrifices, until the whole Christian world accepts the Catholic ideal of Christian education.

THE HOME BANK DEPOSITORS

At the meeting last week of the Home Bank depositors according to the Globe report of the proceedings Mayor G. G. Henderson of Fernie, B. C., stated, that the bank's assets on the Pacific Coast, made up of mostly of timber limits, would, if held for two, three or five years, bring 100 cents and probably 150 cents on the dollar, whereas if sold at this unture they would not realize 10 cents on the dollar. He moved, therefore, that a holding company be formed to take over such assets of the Bank.

Why a new holding company specially created for this purpose? Trust companies do just this sort of work. They are fully organized already, with qualified staffs, offices, experience and every other requirement to undertake the work that the proposed new holding company would have to do.

But the new holding company formed for this special purpose will

have to rent offices, and create an entirely new organization to look after the Home Bank assets exclusively. And the entire cost of all this overhead expense will have to come out of the Home Bank assets.

What earthly reason is there for duplicating at great and needless cost the organization already existing in Trust Companies?

A big, safe Trust Company should be made liquidator; then with its existing organization it would be at once liquidator and holding company without any additional expense. That is the cheapest, safest, sanest and most satisfactory course to pursue.

H. H. Higginbotham of Calgary, representing the Alberta Farmers' Organization, of which he was Secretary, said that "there were many people waiting around the Home Bank wreck like ghouls around a carcass, waiting to see what they could pick up."

Should the court in the best interests of the depositors do the wise and sensible thing, and appoint a safe Trust Company as liquidator some of the "ghouls" will be disappointed; but if it do otherwise there will be fat "pickings" at the depositors' expense.

It may be objected that the depositors have already voted in favor of a holding company.

It might be illuminating to think seriously over these extracts from The Globe report of the depositors' meeting.

"R. A. Reid sprang to his feet and declared that the same principle of 'gag rule' and proxies, at a meeting of the Merchants Bank depositors in Montreal which he had attended had succeeded in shutting off all chances of obtaining full information."

A motion being declared lost W. W. Petley threw a bomb into the meeting when he rose from his seat and asked for the exact count.

"I did not count, but I know, from the number of proxies held, that the motion was defeated four to one," said Mr. Clarkson.

"Then if you have sufficient number of proxies to railroad through anything you want, we had better go home, and not waste our time or yours," Mr. Petley went on. "If you have control, why not say so, or give us an idea how much you have?"

Mr. Clarkson replied that between them, I. E. Weldon, assistant liquidator, and he had about \$3,500,000 in proxies.

Are you voting on the basis of the number of dollars or depositors?" was asked.

The Winding-up Act prescribes that the voting is to be on the dollar value."

"Then, you can't possibly tell how many dollars are represented down here in the audience. We might as well go home."

Not one in a thousand who gave the solicited proxies were given any information whatever as to the use intended to be made of them. Not one in a thousand suspected the existence of "ghouls around the carcass." The claim papers and proxies were solicited by disinterested angels of mercy and goodness not "ghouls around a carcass waiting to see what they could pick up."

The voting of such proxies should not influence the Court.

There is good and sufficient reason to believe that with a Trust Company as liquidator the cost of liquidation will at the outside not exceed 34%; otherwise it will cost, as has been publicly declared, at least 10%.

In the best interest of the depositors, to safeguard the assets and not dissipate them, the Court should appoint a safe, reliable Trust Company as liquidator. It is folly, and very costly folly, to create a new holding company with all its expensive organization to do what the Trust Company is already organized to do cheaply and competently.

The Mayor of Fernie shows very clearly that a holding company is necessary. Other assets doubtless are in the same category as the timber limits he speaks of. But why a new specially organized company? One answer and one only suggests itself.

ALIEN IMMORALITY

By The Observer

"Some of New York's shows are so foul they would not be tolerated in Suez," so say the members of the Board of Temperance of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York. The New York theatre, they say, had sunk to depths of indecency which must be characterized as alien.

There is a little touch of the Pharisee at the end, of course. The gentlemen are quite right in the main, and might well have left the

matter there. But that would not have been in accord with the usual pharisaism of national and racial self-complacency. Alien, say they. Now we wonder at what stage, at what compositions, at what fashions, at what actors or actresses, at what motion picture producers, in all the wide world, New York can cast any stones. Is it necessary to resort to foreign countries to find indecency or foulness of thought? Is it necessary to go outside of American compositions, or American dirt diggers to find authors looking for gold in the dung heaps of public entertainment? Is the United States so clean that American critics can hope to calculate the enormity of the corruption of public morals by instituting comparisons with "foreign" countries.

The gentlemen of the Methodist Episcopal Church board give us the answer to these questions; for they say that New York tolerates shows that would not be tolerated in Africa. What is the use of hypocritically and pharisaically pretending that Americans or Canadians or some other race or people in whom we are specially interested are all right if "alien" ideas could be kept out? It is nonsense on the face of it. Men sin for the same reasons everywhere; and commit the same sins everywhere. If the Americans or the Canadians have in times past reached a higher general standard of morals, it was because of the cleanliness of a country and peasant population, and the clean inheritance they had received from a clean ancestors. But there is little difference between one big modern city and another, whether situated in Europe or in North America. New York has nothing to learn from Paris, nor London from Berlin, in depravity and wickedness.

Why try to put the bulk of the blame on "aliens"? Dirt is not a product that is indigenous to any one country alone. There is an outpour of filth from New York; and it is not "foreign," unless it be taken for granted that the devil is a foreigner. A story is told of a traveller in Ireland who was questioning his driver about the places they were passing through. There was the devil's gulch and the devil's gap, and the devil's rock, and other places bearing the name of the devil, and said the traveler: "The devil has a lot of property about here, Pat." "He has sir," said Pat, "but like all the other bad landlords he's an absentee." But unfortunately the devil is not an absentee from any country in the world.

There is nothing that men do that is more foolish than to continually try to blame "foreigners" for whatever is wrong in their country. It is childish, and indeed better might be expected from an intelligent child. Nothing more plainly marks the narrow bounds of narrow minds than this absurd propensity to ascribe an overwhelming preponderance of virtue to one's own country and people and an overwhelming preponderance of sin and evil to some other country and people, bestowing such sin and evil equally on all "foreigners," or principally on some country or people the special objects of our prejudices.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

THE NEW YORK TIMES Book Review heads a notice of the "Life of Mrs. Humphrey Ward" as "Memoirs of a Dead Life." Full as the life of this deceased lady was with achievement in a literary sense it was indeed a "dead life" if measured by the good her writings ever accomplished, or by the measure of inspiration to the things of the spirit which can be credited to them. For that reason if for none other her books will in all probability die with her, and the world will be none the poorer for the loss.

WHILE the air in Canada is permeated at the moment with the discussion on "Church union" between three of the leading Protestant denominations, religion without dogma is the ideal kept most prominently before its aspirants. With those who resist the impending merger there is some show of adhesion to the cherished convictions of their fathers, but with Protestantism in general abandonment of the basic truths of Christianity goes on apace. One preacher in effect advocates suicide; "honor," according to his perverted thinking, "being in God's view more than life." Another defends putting certain incur-

able cases out of existence, while others categorically deny the Divinity of Christ. As for divorce and subsequent remarriage, almost all the sects are committed to this form of practical polygamy. To call Protestantism as such a form of the Christian religion has therefore become a mere abuse of language. The thought is full of sadness, but in view of the onflowing current described, there is no blinking one's eyes to the fact.

AGAINST THIS "stream of tendency" a certain conservative element is becoming alive to the stupendous folly of divorcing religion from education if, as one expresses it, "Christianity is worth preserving." One Presbyterian minister, an official examiner of the papers returned by candidates from all over the Dominion who seek diplomas from the various denominations as "trained teachers," has called attention to the deplorable ignorance of the Bible which these papers display. Here are a few examples culled from a long array of them.

"On the mountain Jesus spoke the ten commandments."

"Another important event in Jesus' Galilean ministry was the destruction of the Temple."

"Matthew's Gospel was the first epistle to the Thessalonians."

"Lazarus was the widow's son at Nain."

"Peter denied that he knew Jesus when He was on the cross."

"Jesus' twelve disciples were Peter, James, John, Timothy, Thomas, Matthew, Judas, Pilate and others."

THESE are not the answers of children, be it remembered, but of Normal School teacher candidates, writing official examinations. It is well within the truth to say that such answers would have been impossible under the same circumstances a generation ago. The fact that they are possible now constitutes, as a Protestant clerical journalist puts it, "a startling challenge of our religious education and the indifferent way it has been attempted in past years." And yet Catholics, who in face of the bitterest opposition and under threat from some sources of deprivation of the right to bring up their children in the love and fear of God, have consistently adhered to the only true system of education, meet with nothing but misrepresentation and abuse from the very people who are forced to acknowledge the evils which have flowed and continue to flow from the Godless system to which they have pledged themselves.

THAT mere ignorance of the Bible is not the only consequence of Godless education, and that mental training of itself is insufficient to stem the tide, the daily papers continue to bear ample witness. The Toronto Globe which would have its readers believe that liquor is almost the sole cause of crime, and Prohibition the infallible remedy, stated editorially a short time ago that, as figures prepared by the United States Government show there has been an increase of 400% in the number of embezzlements during the past ten years while burglaries had increased only 100% within the same period—in other words crime committed by men of education has far outrun crimes of violence. That the prisons of the United States and Canada were never so full as at the present time is also the witness of official reports. In view of which it is no wonder that thinking men are coming to realize that a revision of the system which is largely of their own making is foremost among the urgencies of the time. Then it will come home to them that in this as in so many other things the Catholic Church is in the right after all.

THE PRESIDENT OF CHILI WELCOMES CARDINAL

Cardinal Benloch, of Spain, was formally received by President Alexandri of Chile, in the great Reception Room of the Palacio de la Moneda. The President made the following speech of welcome:

"Eminence: I sincerely appreciate the greeting of amity and fraternity which you bear to me in the name of His Holiness the Pope. I appreciate also, and am deeply moved by the greeting you bear from your Sovereign, the King, the Chief of great and noble Spain."

"You must know, Eminence, that just as children begin to love their mothers with greater intensity,