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THAT "PEEP INTO THE FUTURE."

On another page will be found an article by "The Critic," replying to our editorial of last week, which had for a caption "A Peep Into the Future." The article is written in "The Critic's" usual conclusive style, but it is apparent that the writer presupposes something that the Free Press is not willing to accept; namely, the supposition that representatives elected under the group system in Canada will have only one end in view, i.e. opposition to every policy of every other group. "If we are to get progress through Parliament," says the critic, "there must be a real party with a programme in power. If the group system comes, the party in power must be formed by a union of groups favoring a similar policy; (Horrors! Another coalition!) those groups which oppose the policy must oppose the Government and not expect seats on the cabinet." But suppose on the election of a new parliament there cannot be found a "union of groups favoring a similar policy," that would control a majority in the House. What then? It was this latter condition the Free Press had in mind in the article of last week.

Accepting for the sake of argument the probable executive suggested by "The Critic," i.e. one manufacturer, one educationalist, two soldier members, four farmers, and two Labor men, (we cannot see, however, why under ordinary circumstances soldiers comprise a separate group) what objection would "The Critic" have to the executive suggested holding a relative position to the "smaller executive" which is elected by "the All Russian Council of Soviets." This Executive could in the same manner elect "the people's commissars," or department heads. To quote "The Critic," "therefore it is possible to make sure that each of the people's commissars (or department heads) is an expert at the work of which he is made the chief. He is not made a commissar because he represents a group but because he is an expert. . . . This elaborate system . . . proves that under a group system of government, the cabinet must be selected from specially skilled managers rather than specially skilled leaders of special interests." "The Critic" agrees with the Free Press, however, that group government is coming. We think he will also agree that the executive suggested by the Free Press would not be so much part of an "elaborate system" as the Soviet "smaller executive," for the reason that the latter is further removed from the people. The Free Press agrees with "The Critic" that we must have "specially skilled managers." "What is the use of being governed by second raters?" he very properly asks. Such specially skilled department heads would, however, be answerable to the whole executive of the legislature, and the executive in turn would have its general policy defined by, and would render account of its stewardship to, the legislature itself.

In the paragraph of "The Critic's" article following the above quotations, we are given a woeful picture of what would happen between sessions. But why? Suppose, the "commissar" on foreign affairs, for example, who had been appointed by the executive, deemed it advisable to take action in some matter. He would submit a report to the executive in council. After carefully weighing the evidence submitted, taking cognizance of expert opinion, the executive would unanimously or by majority vote, lay down a general policy to be followed. Surely that would be a business-like procedure. The same commonsense method could very easily be followed in connection with every other department of governmental affairs.

Apart altogether from the correctness or otherwise of our method of treating it, the subject of the probable make-up of future governments is extremely interesting. The Free Press would be glad to receive other readers' views.

THE DECISION AGAINST A STRIKE

Very significant was the action taken at the special session of the British Trade Union Congress last week. According to a dispatch the congress by an overwhelming vote decided against direct action to gain Labor's objectives, and in another resolution recorded its reliance in the constitutional method of the ballot box, to bring about the necessary changes in the social order.

The action taken would indicate one or both of two things. It may be that the British workers do not believe entirely in the efficacy of the strike, or it may be that Labor is confident of becoming the dominant political factor in a general election, which may or may not be called in the very near future. It is very likely that the belief in Labor's political triumph had the greater part to play in the decision of the British trade unionists. Unless one follows the independent press of the old land, the impression that Labor does not stand a very great chance of political victory, is likely to be gained. It must be borne in mind, however, that the dispatches received in this country, are forwarded from a source that is interested in belittling Labor's position. On the other hand a perusal of independent and Labor papers will give the impression that Labor is confident of success.

Appropos of the decision of the Trade Union Congress, the following quotation from Philip Snowden writing in The Labor Leader (organ of the L.L.P.) three weeks before the convention, may throw some light on the reason for the decision against a general strike: "The Special Trade Union Congress will meet in the course of a week or two, and it will have to decide what measures shall be taken to force the Government to accept the recommendations of the Sankey Commission. There is no doubt about the line of action which Mr. Lloyd George would like the Trade Unions to take. He would like them to declare a general strike to try to compel the Government to surrender to industrial force. That Mr. Lloyd George would like Labor to take this course is surely the strongest reason why they ought to refrain from doing so. The ease for the nationalization of the mines, and the nationalization of other great industries, can be defended by arguments. The country can be converted by education, but it will not be convinced against its will by inflicting inconvenience and suffering. The Government have clearly indicated their desire to force Labor into a position which will turn public opinion against it. Labor must be careful not to fall into this trap."

A LABOR COLLEGE.

The question of education from the workers' viewpoint cannot be too strongly emphasized. The Free Press has urged upon the Government the necessity for widening the usefulness of Alberta University, and it is to be hoped that the matter of an appropriation to provide for a greater extension work by that institution will not be neglected. The university is the proper institution to organize and conduct classes among the workers of this city and province. Many men and women who have not had the opportunity to attend College would jump at the chance to participate in a scheme for mental development such as might easily be inaugurated by the local university.

But whether or not the Government make provision for extending the work of the university, the workers themselves should seriously consider the establishment of a college. At the cost of a nominal sum for each person, lecturers could be secured and classes organized. This is being accomplished with marked success in Britain and in some of the United States. The Trades and Labor Council and the Labor Party might take this matter up immediately, with a view to the establishment of such classes to commence with the fall term.

A contemporary rises to remark that Moses was the leader of the biggest strike in history.

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The question of housing is becoming a most serious problem in this city. The law of supply and demand is working overtime and rents are increasing to a degree that is becoming unbearable. The Government should pass a fair rents act that would limit rent charges on a building to a reasonable return on the actual investment.

Almost all of the plague spots of society have an economic foundation. There is a tremendous amount of splendid energy being expended on the comparatively useless efforts to heal the social sore by applying salve to the outbreak, instead of probing at the root of the evil.

The Labor Press

The Cowboys' Union has been organized in Wyoming and is asking the American Federation of Labor for a charter. They will probably present a scale of so much per hour for herding longhorns and slightly lower for the short-horns.—Kansas Trades Unionist.

Progressive minds of today believe in the private ownership of private property, but not in private ownership of public property. In other words, what is privately used should be privately owned, what is publicly used should be publicly owned.—Industrial Banner.

The present social structure is gradually being demolished, and even if no apparent change is discernable, the undercurrent of a more equitable state of society is sweeping the whole universe.—Halifax Citizen.

A weakening of the forces behind the non-union shop movement is already noticed in many sections of the country. That it could never succeed was apparent to any thinking person. The fight is by no means over, but the ultimate result is not in doubt. Money power may make much misery but cannot turn the world back in its course. The open-shoppers are engaged in trying to sweep back the tide of progress, and if they persist in the effort they may be caught in a tidal wave which will submerge them for all time.—Oregon Labor Press.

Attorney General Palmer has succeeded in rounding up several thousand agitators. If he will secure the arrest of the same percentage of profiteers there will be a building boom caused by erecting enough jails to hold them.—Oregon Labor Press.

The incorporation of the labor organization and the incorporation of institutions run for profit are two different things. Labor organizations are not run for profit, but for the co-operation and welfare of each individual member, as well as for the membership as a whole. No dividends are declared and no profiteers are gouging the public.—The Labor Clarion.

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