

Western Clarion

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COMING EVENTS

OF late the wage workers throughout the U. S. A. have suffered much advertising in the way of exceptional prosperity, a prosperity unique in its relation to the years after the war when there were five million wage workers unemployed.

Now, however, if we are to believe Roger W. Babson—head of the Babson Statistical Bureau, the U. S. A. industrial slaves are due to encounter an industrial depression and another period of unemployment. He says the basic industries of coal, copper, oil, fertilizers, leather, rubber and wheat are "flat on their backs." All other enterprises to which these are contributory must suffer sooner or later. The farmers, he says, are realizing nothing on their labor, and "some way" must be found to solve the farmer problem, particularly as it shows itself in wheat farming.

In connection with the wheat production problem, the farmers are apparently not the only people who are worrying. We gather from the annual statement of Sir Frederick Williams-Taylor of the Bank of Montreal, that in the wheat farming areas of the Canadian west the storekeepers and general merchants and banks are in the same fix as the farmers. Quite likely this is so, though, of course there is not manifested the same evidence of distress. At any rate, the financial and statistical experts seem to agree that diversified farming is required as an offset to specialisation in wheat. Babson predicts a trade depression next year in the U. S. A., and maintains that the financial structure of that country is receiving all the artificial bolstering possible in the meantime. "Don't stock up," he says, buy no more than you can do without, curtail credit and prepare to reduce wages.

The financial experts take quite an interest in the farmer problem, because on farm properties and produce they advance loans. Concerning wage labor, however, they calmly announce wage reductions and allow the wage workers to worry alone. The wage worker and farmers manage to identify their worries as producers. Each case, however, is capable of a somewhat different analysis. The farmer has upon him the responsibility of property concepts and he shows it in all his activities. Necessarily so, because he produces on the property basis.

But whatever prosperity there may be its visitation is of short duration to either wage worker or farmer. To that Mr. Babson would add industrialists and financiers, but the system he envisages rests upon the two latter. With us its basis is the producer.

PROPAGANDA ON THE PRAIRIE.

Comrade C. Lestor is somewhere on the prairies at present. Since leaving Vancouver he has spoken in meetings at Sheerness, Scotfield, Sunnybrook, Flowerdale, Silverleaf and Stanmore. He will be at Seal from December 17th to 22nd and will speak in Calgary December 23rd. Thereafter he goes to Seven Persons and Medicine Hat district for three weeks.

THE GRAIN CROP.

WE have harvested and threshed the golden grain, but methinks that we are none the better physically, mentally, or financially after the ordeal. In the first place—as usual we are confronted with the sluggish state of the grain market, which means a low price. Secondly, we are confronted with a state of affairs where marketing is impossible. The elevators are blocked with superabundance of grain. The transportation facilities, and storage at the eastern terminals, are inadequate. Thirdly, owing to the bulk of the grain being of low grade and frozen, the harvesting, threshing, and hauling expenses, will about be equal to the amount received for the grain when it is marketed. Thus, you will clearly see that there is not even wages left for the farmer to maintain his family in food and clothing. Not allowing for seed, ploughing, drilling, and all the incidentals of spring work, let alone payments of taxes, interest on mortgages and the payments that accrue to the bankers, machine companies, and numerous other sharks who have been in the habit of drawing their toll from the farmer, it can be clearly seen that the grain ring, and the transportation companies are the only capitalist groups who will have the first draw on this year's grain crop. The banks, mortgage and machine companies, and the host of smaller capitalistic fry will not fare so well. This can be clearly seen by the activities of the latter bunch, getting judgments and other legal strangleholds on the farmers "property." This crop has been enormous, as far as yield is concerned, but I know plenty of farmers with low grade wheat (value about 35 cents per bushel) who quit threshing and left the grain in the stook—as it would not pay the two items of threshing and hauling a long journey to the elevator.

Next spring will see an exodus of farmers from the prairies to the slave market in the cities. Land in the west is worth nothing from an investment point of view. The C.P.R. and the grain trust, will shout for more slaves to fill the vacant farms. The former, (C.P.R.) although owners of a vast portion of the western wheat growing areas are more concerned about the transportation end of their huge concern, than in taking revenue direct, in the form of land payments. They no doubt realize that the farmer can't pay at both ends, hence their schemes of 10, 20, and 34 years to pay for land with their land offices and land agents in every country where capitalist civilization exists. The farmer's problems cannot be analysed by uttering a few Marxian phrases, or a few empty generalities such as production for use instead of for profit, etc. There are many intricate phases to this question which are deep rooted in the complexities of the capitalist system, and are inseparable from it. The Marxian student is better equipped mentally to tackle the task of throwing more light on the farmer's position in modern society, by virtue of his training in economics, and history, and his general knowledge of the sciences. A general knowledge of business monopolies, statistics and the credit system is also necessary to understand the details of the circulating process. And need I mention that a general practical knowledge of farming would not be amiss in tackling a task of this nature. I am sure we have men in Vancouver within the S. P. of C. who will fill the bill, had they the necessary time. It is sometimes painful to listen to a socialist speaker addressing a bunch of hayseeds, garnishing his generalizations by obscurities void of all meaning to the man with the property concept, and a psychology built up on the same. We must, as socialists and educational purveyors, attend to the industrial problem in some manner after the "case" method suggested by "C," and in this way the farmers' problem may be, in examination, freed from the method, so called, of obscure generalization with which we have sometimes treated it in the past. More anon.

D. MacPHERSON.

DOMESTICATED AND WILD ANIMALS.

BY J. HOWARD MOORE.

ALL domesticated animals have come from wild animals. Man was once a wild animal himself—before he had invented houses, and farms and clothes, and vehicles, and art, and science and before he had acquired the enterprise to domesticate other animals.

In many cases it is possible to put your finger on the particular wild species from which each domesticated variety has come. In other cases it is impossible. This may be due to the fact that the changes in the domesticated race have been so great that it is no longer possible to identify the ancestral species; or it may be because the wild part of the species; has been exterminated since domestication began and the species exists now only in the captive state. This last is true of the camels. There are no wild camels. All the camels there are in the world are associated with men.

"Wild" is an adjective which is applied to those races of beings which are not associated with man. Wild animals are sometimes thought of as being in an unnatural state. This is not true. It is the surroundings of the domesticated animals and of man that are artificial.

Animals are domesticated for various purposes—the sheep for its hair, the horse for its strength and speed, the cow for her milk, the pig for its "bacon," fowls for their eggs and feathers, the dog for hunting and companionship, the bee for its sweets, the canary for its song, and the goldfish for its grace and beauty.

Most domesticated animals have been greatly changed, both in body and mind, during the period of their domestication. These changes have been made in order to fit the animals more perfectly to human needs. And these changes are destined to continue to go through the ages to come. The mammoth apple and potato have come from wild ancestors so small and tasteless that our luxurious palates would today regard them with disdain. Probably we would not eat the wild potato in the condition it was in when the Indians began to cultivate it. We have too many other things that are better. But the Indians ate it because their sources of nourishment at that time were very few.

The great changes in domesticated animals (and plants) have been brought about by Selection—that is, by the long and incessant choosing of the more suitable for breeding purposes. Farmers select the best corn and the largest potatoes to be used for planting. And in the same way they select for breeding purposes the sheep with the longest and finest wool, and the best laying hens. The domestic chicken is a bird; and in the wild state it lays a nestful of eggs in the spring and hatches them, and then lays no more till the next spring, like other birds. But by selecting for breeding purposes those hens that had a tendency to lay more eggs man has developed breeds that now lay eggs the year round.

In the same way cows have been developed to give milk for a year or two after the birth of a calf, although naturally, in wild cows, milk is produced for only a short time after the calf is born and serves as food for the calf until it is able to get its own food. By repeated emphasis of any peculiarity, either of mind or body, it can be developed in time to an extent almost without limit. It has been by this simple method of selection that "green roses" have in these later times been produced, and the spineless cactus, and seedless grapes, apples, oranges, bananas, and pineapples. This process is called Artificial Selection, because it is carried on by man.

Science teaches us that it has been through a similar process of selection carried on by nature and extending over millions of years that all of the different species of animals and plants existing on the earth have originated. The first animals were the lowest, and from these through Natural Selection, operating throughout immeasurable periods of time, have arisen all the higher animals, including man.