

HONOURABLE MESSRS. CRERAR, CALDER AND MEIGHEN'S WINNIPEG MEETING.

What Labour has to Say of these Gentlemen.

WE reproduce herewith an editorial appearing in "The Voice" of Winnipeg, the official organ of the Labour Party of Western Canada:

"The first occasion on which members of the new union government representing the old regime and the Liberal recruits appeared together was at the meeting held in Winnipeg Monday night. Despite the cold a large audience filled the convention hall of the Industrial Bureau. These are trying times and many people are torn by conflicting ideas, hopes and fears. They are eagerly looking for some authoritative voice speaking with full knowledge and inspired by breadth of vision which will dispel the lowering clouds of uncertainty and give leadership such as befits a democratic people. It was this desire to perchance hear something virile, strong and true which impelled many to go to the meeting. Others went through curiosity."

"Although the first speech of the evening, that of Hon. T. A. Crerar, the new Minister of Agriculture, was the least applauded and the least embellished by attempts at "platform speaking", it was really the only utterance which contained any promise of real and tangible help to the people of Canada struggling under the burden of war. Mr. Crerar dealt largely with the need for increased production, for he is a representative of the farmers, but he intimated at one stage of his address that steps were being taken to control the packing houses and to regulate the spread between the price of live hogs and the price of bacon. This may mean something for the struggling artisan who at present prices cannot afford bacon and it may not. It must be remembered that Mr. Crerar is a representative of the farmers and they are not interested in any decline in the price of bacon. They are interested, however, in the price of live hogs and the regulating which they will expect their representative to achieve in regard to the "spread" will be to bring up the price of live hogs. The farmers will certainly demand a share of the outrageous profits which are being made from the sale of bacon. The workingmen and women of the cities and their children should not build too much on the announcement of Hon. Mr. Crerar."

"However, it was Hon. Arthur Meighen and Hon. James A. Calder who nearly "spilled the beans" and showed how thin a crust cover the supposed wholesome union. Mr. Meighen, even in the opinion of many who were disappointed over his utterances and eagerly hoped for something different, made a fighting Tory speech. His partisan spirit seemed to thrust itself out at all times. He threw down the gauntlet with some heat and declared he had no apology to offer for the record of the late administration. He intimated quite plainly that he thought the late government had been a good government and that it would go down as such in history."

"Hon. James A. Calder, following later, was not disposed to flunk the challenge. He de-

clared with some heat that if Mr. Meighen had kept his ears open he would have heard some serious rumblings of protest against the doings of the Borden government. Then Mr. Calder passed on but his remarks had touched sparks and a few more of such occasions and the tinder will be alight."

"Mr. Meighen went on to berate Sir Wilfrid Laurier because the latter cannot forsake his life-long principles and get in behind the conscription movement. This young minister, Hon. Arthur Meighen, has the courage or will we call it nerve to berate and to seek to belittle a man who has grown gray in the service of his country, and who stands out against the fastening on this Dominion of a principle which is foreign to the spirit and the ideals of democracy."

"Hon. Arthur Meighen proceeded to declare that the new government was built on the rock of compulsory military service. He didn't mince matters. He then proceeded to paint a gloomy picture of the war and prophesied that unless conscription was applied the Prussian officers would soon be swashbuckling about our streets."

"Hon. James A. Calder told of the negotiations which had led to the formation of a union government. He gave a rather fishy reason for the failure to do anything on the first visit of himself and the other western men to Ottawa."

"And so the meeting may be summarized in the attempts of three men to justify conscription of men for war in this young country. One of the speakers claims to represent the farmers and as he calls for conscription he is also calling for greater production. He would no doubt declare his belief that the farmer were needed more urgently in Canada than abroad."

"The conscriptionists are looking to the workingmen of the cities and towns for the new battalions and yet this is the class which up to date has furnished the bulk of the voluntary army. If the other classes of the country had sent as many private infantrymen to the front as have the laboring classes of the cities and towns there would be a full complement there from Canada."

"The first meeting to be addressed by members of the new government while large and courteous was by no means enthusiastic. Some who went expecting a wonderful demonstration were bitterly disappointed. The crowd seemed to be waiting, waiting for some utterance that would drive home to their hearts a belief that conscription is right in principle even at this time. But they waited in vain for there was none of the resounding contagious applause that would have marked such a conviction. The audience was loyal, loyal to the core. That was easily discernable. Most of the crowd came kindly disposed toward the speakers. They came eager to be convinced and they went away as unconvinced as they came.—From "The Voice", Oct. 26th, 1917."