

Saskatchewan Labor's Realm

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THE SASKATCHEWAN LABOR'S REALM

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HUGH PEAT EDITOR.

Mr. Geo. S. Houston Addresses The Canadian Labor Party On "Foundations"—Appeal for Greater Care in Selection of Immigrants—Quality Not Quantity

Mr. Geo. S. Houston was the speaker at the last meeting of the Regina branch of the Canadian Labor Party. He chose for his subject "Foundations" and in spite of the fact that he had been suffering from an attack of la grippe, which precluded him from devoting the amount of time necessary for the preparation of a lecture on so great a subject, he nevertheless entertained his audience with a most admirable educational address.

At the outset he spoke of the real necessity of good foundation material in order to ensure the success of any enterprise, and contended that it was of equal significance with skilled workmanship, the one being in fact the complement of the other.

It is a self-evident truth that in the construction of buildings, the greater the dimensions, weight and importance of the superstructure, the greater the necessity for exercising the best intelligence in building the foundations.

The pontoon bridges which so frequently do good service in times of war, have very little analogy to the immense structures which support their precious freight in crossing our great rivers. The former are intended only for immediate and temporary transfer, while the great bridge, with its foundations laid deep and permanent, perhaps in the surging waters of a mighty river, is intended, with its stone or concrete piers, and steel spans, to endure for generations.

These same principles, he said, applied with equal force to the character of our citizens, as well as to the social, educational, political and religious life of our country.

Early life influences are the foundation stones of mature character. The stories learnt at our mother's knee are always with us, and few there are whose lives have not been hallowed and sweetened by the memory of mother's graphic and vivid picture of the sweet story of the Babe of Bethlehem, leaving ever with us the desire to be more worthy of the love and passion of Him who was the subject of that grand old theme—of Him who has become the chief corner stone of our faith.

The speaker briefly touched on the early influences of education, the choice of companions and good literature. Books there were in countless numbers, some good, bad, and indifferent, and he urged his hearers to discard trashy literature and to spend time in pondering over the pages of good books. Reading with a definite aim, viz., that of gleaning from what we read, an inspiration that will lead to the highlands of a more useful life, so that, even though our names may not be written high in the temple of fame, it may at least be said of us by those who come after, that we did what we could, honestly and well, and that the world is better for our having lived.

Passing on to the consideration of the questions of social life the speaker maintained that in the social life of Canada, there is less class distinction than in the older portions of the empire. If in any country under the sun it may be said that Jack is as good as his master, it applies with strong force to social conditions in this fair land of ours.

To be sure, we have our "Four

Hundreds" here and there in our large centres of population—those whose names become familiar to us by seeing them in the social columns of the public press, rather than by our coming in contact with them.

Those people do not rub shoulder to shoulder with the toiler, by the sweat of whose brow, and by the faithful work of whose callous hands they are enabled to assume that self-important social air, seemingly oblivious to the fact that the blood that courses through their veins is no better than that which gives life and vigor to the sturdy soldier of labor who builds the streets over which they drive with their costly carriages, and who build the sewers which carry disease and death away from their doors. But, after all, we have a great mass of genial, warm-hearted, whole-souled, frank, fearless, honest, industrious, law-abiding, justice loving people, ready to extend a helping hand whenever and wherever service is required. These are the salt of society.

The great middle class—the merchant who deals out his wares, not altogether for profit in gold that accrues from his business but as well realises a responsibility for the best interests of those whom he serves, giving value for value, doing an honest, legitimate trade, with mutual advantage to himself and his customers; the professional man whose fees are in keeping with the intrinsic value of the services rendered—the farmer also, who has been so well styled "the backbone of the country" and in fact, upon whose success depends the prosperity of our land in all its various phases of material national life. These, with the artisan, make up a large proportion of our people whose interests are so mingled and co-mingled that those of one class are the complement of those of the other classes, they possess so much in common that when they meet they meet on common ground.

And while capital and labor have had their historic battles fought over and over again through unequal economic conditions that have always obtained, in many instances individual avarice and corporate greed on the one hand, and on the other an assertion that those rights and privileges which have been regarded by the man who works with his hands as his birthright which is being wrested from his possession, he has been forced to assume an attitude of antagonism towards such individuals and corporations. Fortunately for society and for the general good of our people, the sympathies of the masses have been in his favor. These sympathies have been expressed through pen and pulpit with such emphatic and definite purpose, that those soulless corporations and heartless individuals controlling capital have been forced into a compromise in numerous instances, until today we have that promising and happy augury which inspires us with a prophetic vision of a better future—in fact it has already dawned. A new era has already been entered upon. Ere long these individuals and corporations will be vying with one another for first place in the good will and respect of their fellow men. This can only come through a more

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MOOSE JAW TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL

Branch of Canadian Labor Party to be Formed—Important Resolution on Immigration Adopted

At the regular meeting of the Trades and Labor Council on Feb. 3, the delegates settled down to business with a right good will, and determination to keep pace with neighboring councils in the cause of the workers was evinced in every discussion brought before the meeting.

The delegates favoring the promotion of a Labor Club, branch of the labor party of Canada again brought their favorite question forward, whereupon the delegates who have persistently argued the uselessness of labor politics questioned the legality of the council calling a meeting under its auspices for the purpose of organizing such a club, and asked for a ruling.

The president, considering the Labor Party of Canada had been formed by the Trades Congress of Canada, considered the formation of a local branch of the former to be the duty of the local branch of the latter, and as the Trades Councils of Winnipeg and Regina had been the means of forming branches of the Labor Party in their respective cities, ruled that the Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council were entitled to call a meeting under its auspices for the purpose of organizing a branch of the Canadian Labor Party in Moose Jaw.

The municipal committee expressed dissatisfaction with the city council's employment bureau and recommended that a delegation be sent to its next meeting asking the council to broaden out their scheme.

The organization committee reported that the formation of a Musicians Union was now an historical fact, and a local branch of the Brotherhood of Teamsters would soon be formed.

Under the heading of new business the following resolution was brought forward:

"Whereas, the demand for emigrant labor from Europe for agricultural and industrial purposes cannot be accurately determined at this time, and;

"Whereas, there is now a surplus of labor in Canada in every skilled and unskilled trade, and throughout the country laborers in enforced idleness are experiencing distress, and whereas the incoming of Asiatic workmen has further deprived Canadian working men of opportunities to earn a decent living, and now threaten to lower their economic standard to a deplorable state;

"Therefore, be it resolved that this Moose Jaw Trades and Labor Council believe that the Dominion government should take steps to restrict emigration to Canada during the next three months from all countries and that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Hon. Frank Oliver."

An amendment was put and carried to insert the word years instead of months, and upon the main question being put was carried.

The election of officers deferred from the last meeting resulted as follows:

Sec. Treas.—I. P. Mumphrey, (Carmen).
Statistician—Ed. Stephenson, (Typographical).
Chairmen of Committees:—
Municipal—Fred Grey (Carmen).
Legislative—Wm. Allen, (Machinist).
Organisation—E. Stephenson (Typographical).
Label—Wm. Keay (Machinists.)

Meeting of the Canadian Labor Party Sunday. Be there.

CO-OPERATION

By
Jas. D. Simson

In one sense of the word co-operation generally means an association of working people for the control and management of their own productive and distributive stores, and the distribution of the profits thus accruing among the members of the association—that is to say, the profits return to those who have the most right to them. It has been said, and truly, I think, that co-operation and unionism have been the two main factors contributing to the betterment of the conditions of the working people during the last fifty years or so. It is certainly true that once men are banded together for the protection of their own trade interests, they come in time to realise how much more they could benefit by co-operation in their industrial undertakings, and the fact that large numbers of trade unionists are co-operatives leads me to think that the people are beginning to realise this.

Co-operation in Great Britain has succeeded best in distribution; that is the form of stores for the supply of domestic wants of the working people. The productive side of the case has not advanced so much, although it has by no means been neglected. The first really practical society to start business on a proper and sound basis was the Rochdale Pioneer Society, founded in 1844. The men who laid the foundations of that pioneer society were all working mechanics who had seen the advantages coming to them through organisation in their own trades, and they painfully collected \$140 with which they started business. Their success which was steady and rapid was ascribed to the 5 per cent. limit of interest on shares, and the division of profits among members in proportion to their purchases. From this time onward the success of the co-operative movement in Great Britain was assured, and societies formed after the pattern of the Rochdale Pioneer, sprang into existence in every part of the United Kingdom. In 1857 the total membership was 1850, with yearly rates to the amount of \$400,000. By the end of 1905 the societies had 2,215,873 members, and the yearly turnover was \$500,000,000. In 1864 the wholesale society was started at Manchester for the purpose of supplying commodities to the different stores, and later on another wholesale house was started at Glasgow. Since 1869 congresses of co-operative societies have been held every year, which are in fact the annual parliaments of co-operation. At the present day the movement in the United Kingdom has attained, in spite of much persistent opposition, such a standing that it is regarded as a national institution, and its power for good among the workers is recognised on every hand. Though essentially a working men's movement it owes much to men like Robt. Owen, called the father of co-operation; Maurice, Kinsley, Neal, Holyoak, Hughes, Ludlow, and the Marquis of Ripon. These men recognised the importance of the movement, and whenever they found the opportunity to help it on they did so.

IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Co-operation in Denmark originated in 1863, and today there are one thousand societies, with a membership of 200,000. The co-operative dairies started 25 years ago, export yearly to Great Britain \$65,000 worth of products.

In Germany and Italy it has flourished chiefly in the form of people's banks for the purpose of furnishing credit to the working people. In Germany the societies have an aggregate membership of 2,000,000 di-

vided amongst 11,000 societies, of which about one thousand were for distributive purposes, about five hundred formed for the purpose of buying raw material, and the rest were distributed amongst credit systems, co-operative dairies, farmers co-operative societies, etc. In Italy at the end of 1895 there were 950 societies mainly for the purpose of extending credit to the working classes. They receive the support of the Italian government. Co-operation is also spreading in other places.

In France there are now 18,000 co-operative agricultural associations with a membership of over 800,000. These societies are operated for various purposes, some even existing for the insurance of cattle, and insurance of crop against hail.

In Austria Hungary there are about 3,000 societies, and in Belgium the system has secured a firm foothold.

In the United States co-operation has not made so much progress, the reason given being that the rewards for exceptional capacity in private enterprise are so enormous that the working people have not yet realised the necessity for industrial association among themselves. Complaints have been made that the laws of some of the states do not offer reasonable facilities and securities for the formation of co-operative societies. Co-operative business statistics in the New England states give the following yearly figures: In distribution \$3,000,000; productive co-operation, exclusive of dairies or creameries, \$1,000,000; creameries \$750,000; banks \$1,000,000; in all about \$8,750,000. In Philadelphia co-operative building societies have provided the workmen with from 80,000 to 100,000 homes.

In Canada the movement has been practically confined to dairy farms and fruit growers, with a few people's banks in the province of Quebec. Co-operation stores were started amongst the people of Labrador by Dr. Grenfell, the well known medical missionary of that region, and are still in successful operation, having most beneficial effect upon the people.

CO-OPERATIVE LAWS

On Nov. 26th, 1906, a bill was introduced in the federal parliament by Mr. F. D. Monk, M.P., member for Jacques Cartier, and read a first time. It is entitled "An Act Respecting Industrial and Co-operative Societies," and its special object, as stated in the preamble, is "to provide for the creation and organisation of co-operative societies among the farming and laboring classes of Canada." A special committee was appointed to deal with the bill, Hon. R. Lemieux, minister of labor, being chairman. Various witnesses were examined for and against the measure, full details of the evidence appeared in the Labour Gazette for May 1907, to which I am indebted for many of the figures quoted in this article. The committee reported favorably to the adoption of a bill along the lines of the one mentioned, but the measure was not proceeded with during that session.

It might be of interest to students of co-operation to note the resolution passed by the Retail Merchant's Association of Canada against the principle of the bill.

THE RESOLUTION

"That whereas a bill has been introduced at Ottawa by the Hon. Mr. Monk asking the government to endorse co-operative societies and to give them special provisions in

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