

# The Rainmakers

THE credulity of men is proverbial and displays itself in a multi-variety of ways making it a state common to all. There is a story told about a people who lived on an Island, Medischon, in the sea of Alkali, which emphasizes this quality in an unmistakable manner.

They were simple folk, the story says, who used the most primitive methods in gaining a livelihood. Primitive in this they were equally backward in their notions, customs, and habits of thought—unaffected by the tremendous strides of Science, especially Meteorology—remarkable at this particular time in the land of Great People. From which they were cast adrift in a moment of spleen by Nature.

The folklore of these simple people relates how the land at one time was rich, fertile, and generously watered—just when and where it was most needed—and was thickly covered with long, lush grass on which their stock grew fat and sleek.

In those days everyone fared sumptuously on tender steaks and juicy entrees rounded out with wholesome bread and delicious Mocha.

Came a time, though, when the rain ceased to visit them. For some unknown cause, the atmospheric conditions changed and were opposed to them. Consequently their lands were parched; great cracks, into which their stock did fall and die, were seen everywhere.

Like all simple folk harrassed by fear and worry, they opened their "josh" (!) houses and prayed long and earnestly to Tosh and Bosh to bring back again the gentle, life-giving rains.

From the Isle of Medischon to the land of Great People came a traveller who told to one wise-acre this strange phenomenon. The latter listened attentively and, afterwards, meditated long and seriously. Then he, next, did pack a suitcase, some trunks and boxes, filling all with queer contrivances, much chemicals and many books. He did buy, too, a ticket from Steamboat Bill who carried him to Medischon.

The distressed people who met him, their minds immediately captivated by his sparkling wit and charming manners; the womenfolk, seduced at once by his modish clothes, his bohemian character; they did all agree that he was IT.

Having then established himself, he did undo his trunks and boxes. And one day when the heavens were heavy with dark grey cumulae he set up his Marvellous Machinery.

The wondering people gathered around and watched intently his every movement. Turning to the crowd, he said: "With this machine and the chemicals, which you see me mix, I can bring back to you the rains you need so much."

"For so many golden shekels I can give you so many inches of rain. Measured by the wealth in crops and stock that will accrue to you, the price is but a trifle."

The machine whirred; a cloud of stellar dust was disturbed. And, fast on the heels of this event, there came one man from a nearby village, much excited, gesticulating wildly, crying—"Rain is falling on Noggull lake."

The now agitated people looked at the stranger from the land of Great People. Wearing a dejected mien, a tremor of the lip, and with a note of grief in his voice, he addressed his audience, saying:

"I am sorry: I shot too much with the result, as you have heard, the rain was sent too far."

That night the wise-one received a deputation from the anxious people of Medischon. They would pay his price. A week afterwards, according to the story, rain came. Everybody rejoiced—none more so than the Rainmaker of Great People.

This somewhat crude synopsis will give the reader a useful analogy which can be applied to the rain makers at work in modern society. And nowhere more sedulously employed than in Canada.

Mackenzie King is the chief rainmaker for the Liberal Party. The seductive but contradictory utterances of this honored gentleman awaken hope in the tormented minds of the agrarian and industrial elements of this community.

In brief and in substance this is what his message to the people amounts to: By taking off such tariffs as prevent the farmers from acquiring cheaper agricultural implements from American producers enabling Canadian farmers to produce grain at less cost while competing with their kind in other countries.

On the other hand by placing tariffs on such products as enter here from other countries, and especially those that can be produced as cheaply here (given the industrial developments), "Mac" thinks he can aid the merchants and the workers of this country.

He forgets, if he ever knew, that shifting tariffs from here to there does not affect the general economic situation but simply removes the burden from one shoulder to the other of the body politic.

And so, too, we find the honorable Meighen jupiter-pluvi-ing for Wall St. Canadian exploiters never did possess much capital of their own, and to keep industry running even in normal times they had to borrow.

To carry out local, provincial, and dominion improvements, the governments have had to borrow. And Wall St. is the most convenient place just now to borrow from.

"Art" is not so ambitious as "Mac," he proposes to keep tariffs just as they are, or a little higher. Which, in either case, suits the usurers of Wall St.

But what neither of these potential statesmen understands is this: Canada in company with all other countries needs a market. And so great is the pile of national debts; so many the claims on property that cheap as we can produce there is not in the pile of surplus values, which is appropriated by the capitalists, enough to pay these bills, keep industry running, and still have a margin of profit to themselves.

Yet Imperialism has not ceased to develop, the State, already large, is but an infant prodigy, whose maw will soon drip red again in the task of carving out another market. More debts, rainmakers; what then!

So far I have been dealing more or less specifically with the credulity of the exploiting class. From here on I want to make a few comments on the credulity of the workers and the methods of the rainmakers who play upon them.

It is on record that a certain professor of Chemistry approached his class one day with the purpose of determining the power of suggestion. "I have here," he said, "a small bottle containing a colorless fluid which throws off a pungent odor. Members of this class can help me determine the strength of the liquid in this way."

"The moment I withdraw the cork, start exercising your olfactory organs. And the first to perceive the odor let him raise and keep raised his hand. I will keep my eyes on the clock, in order to see how long it takes the smell to travel throughout the class, until the last one of you has raised his hand."

The ticking of the clock was marked by the professor, each stroke was counted. A few seconds passed and the first hand was stretched high; two minutes elapsed before the last member of the class had his hand raised in line with the rest.

The professor, with twinkling eyes, remarked, "It's the first time to my knowledge that distilled water carried such a powerful odor."

This power of suggestion is much in use by the rainmakers operating among workers in the Socialist movement. Sometimes with the best intentions and, then again, often with the worst.

For instance east and west of the Rockies, the

Socialist Party of Canada is—and has been for a long time—considered a bar to further revolutionary organization in the part of class-conscious workers. If a member of this Party walks in the Market Place or is invited to a Social gathering, it may be when he is asked to speak at some demonstration, a public meeting, then instantly one sees the malevolent custom of the East (long since dead) come to life in the West.

The Scribes and Pharisees shake their skirts; close their eyes disdainfully; spit contemptuously as the member passes by. They whisper in the alleys; make mysterious signs in the open. And the workers' interest in the Party, easily diverted as it is, is turned aside. Never pausing for a moment to consider why these tactics are employed—or in whose interest—he teeters at the practice. Not knowing, and caring less, whether the function of a Socialist Party is to make socialists or work up a religious enthusiasm for the purpose of furthering the "SOCIAL REVOLUTION" (heavy on the ink Mr. Printer—please, and for heaven's sake don't forget the inverted commas).

These victims of an "infantile disorder" (small "d" and a little "i"; "Mac," and don't cuss!) fondly imagine they are organizing for a Political Revolution.—In whose interests—Rainmakers?

Those who study Marx, and understand the forces operating in Society, the antagonisms which are generated within the capitalist class, must understand that there is one numerically powerful group who, shouldering the burden of a colossal State, fearing the outcome of future Imperialism, and, feeling the depreciation of their portion of surplus values, they must seek to throw off this yoke. And the worker who understands this cries—Speed the day!

## OUR DECLINING STANDARD OF LIVING

(Continued from Page 1)

mally in its favor, failed to bring the workers back to the pre-war standard.

Capitalism is no "Land o' Dreams," but one of grim realities. And, but one of many grim realities it has brought and will continue to bring, to a wage-working class is—A Declining Standard of Living.

The following is from "The Nation" (New York), October 12th.

"As a matter of fact the American standard of living has been declining since 1896—for the first decade so slowly as to be almost imperceptible, then, after the crisis of 1907, more rapidly, and in the early years of the war with almost catastrophic speed. The rises in wages forced by the workers during the fat years of 1918 and 1919 did not bring them back even to the pre-war standard. We make these statements with some positiveness, for they are based upon the careful study of Professor Paul Douglas, of the University of Chicago, and of Frances Lamberson, as published in the September number of the "American Economic Review." This study continues the authoritative work of Dr. I. M. Rubinow before the war. It is a commonplace of political as of household economy that money wages give a fallacious criterion of real values. What matters is not the number of dollars in the weekly pay envelope, but the amount of rent those dollars will pay, or of coal, or potatoes, or shoes and shirts that they will buy. Comparing the trend of average full-time earnings in fifteen standard industries with the purchasing power of money as measured by the retail prices of food, these economists conclude that the real value of average wages had fallen about 6 per cent. between 1896 and 1907, but that by 1913 the average worker was getting 17 per cent. less, and in 1917—the amazing rise of prices occurring before the workers succeeded in forcing up wages at all—37 per cent. In other words in 1917 the standard of living of workers in the woollen, cotton, shoe, building, baking, stonemasonry, printing, and machine-shop industries in the United States had fallen off one-third between 1896 and 1917. The wage increases of 1918 boosted the level from 63 per cent. of the 1896 standard to 67 per cent.; and the increases in 1919 and in the early part of 1920 also may more than have kept pace with rising costs. At the high point, wages hardly returned to better than three-quarters of the 1896 level."

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