



MR. PEPYS IN THE WEST:

Opinion and Democracy---The Farmers' Platform---
A National Policy---Wage-Earners and Farmers

unit in every one of these organizations the centre of thought and of active discussion of all the matters of public policy dealt with in the Farmers' Platform.

Every local unit is, so to speak, a workshop in which individual citizens work in a group, helping to weld together and strengthen an enlightened opinion to work for the common good.

A Truly National Policy

Plank by plank, the Farmers' Platform is built together into a strong whole, a truly Canadian national policy, based on genuine concern for the common progress and welfare and on the principle of equal rights for all and special privilege for none. Every plank in it will stand the closest scrutiny in the light of that genuine concern and that fundamentally just principle.

This is what makes it of so great importance that all Canadians who are concerned in the securing of justice to all classes and interests in the country and in having the public policies of the country based in justice and sound economic principles, should give the Farmers' Platform their most earnest attention. Of no class of Canadians is this more true than it is of organized labor.

Recognizing this, the Council of Agriculture passed a resolution expressing cordial sympathy with organized labor in its demands for economic justice, and encouraging the various farmers' organizations to become better acquainted with the labor organizations and the labor problems of Canada, with the purpose in view of finding a common ground of action.

Wage-Earners and Farmers

The wage-earners of Canada and the farmers of Canada have the same enemies against whom to fight the good fight for economic justice. The interests organized for the maintenance and strengthening of a fiscal system which works injustice to wage-earners and farmers alike are using every endeavor to create antagonism between wage-earners and farmers. This is being done in divers and sundry insidious ways, under various disguises.

What is needed, in the interest of equal rights for all and special privilege for none, is that organized wage-earners and organized farmers should get together in co-operation and for the education of public opinion.

I had written thus far when Snagsby came in to smoke a pipe of tobacco, as Mr. Pepys would have written it, and talk things over with me. On seeing that I had the Christmas Number of The Guide spread open before me at the pages containing the Farmers' Platform, he began at once to speak of the planks in the Platform dealing with the tariff and direct taxation.

Tariff Planks of the Platform

"The definite, clear-cut demands set forth in the Platform in regard to the

tariff," he said, "are the best that have yet been made in any declaration of policy in this country. Beginning with a general demand for an immediate and substantial reduction of the tariff, the Platform declares that the customs duties on goods made in Great Britain should be cut down to one-half the duties in the general tariff and further reduced gradually until there is complete free trade between this country and Great Britain in five years. It demands the acceptance of the United States offer of Reciprocity, which was rejected in 1911, and for taking all tariff taxation off any food stuffs not included in that arrangement which was wrecked. It declares that agricultural implements, vehicles, fertilizers, coal, lumber, cement and illuminating fuel and lubricating oils be placed on the free list, and that all raw materials and machinery used in their manufacture also be placed on the free list."

"Yes," said I, "and it demands that in the event of any tariff concessions being granted to any other country than Great Britain, such concessions shall immediately be extended to Great Britain likewise. And the tariff plank ends with these two declarations, which are by no means the least important of all:—

That all corporations engaged in the manufacture of products protected by the customs tariff be obliged to publish annually comprehensive and accurate statements of their earnings.

That every claim for tariff protection by any industry should be heard publicly before a special committee of parliament.

Publicity the Remedy

"Good work!" exclaimed Snagsby. "The daylight of publicity is the most effective cure for tariff injustices. And I note that Section 5 of the next plank, which is named Taxation Proposals, says that in levying the business profits tax, the profits must be calculated not on watered stock, but only on the actual cash invested in the business. That will mean more letting in of daylight. More illuminating of the dark methods by which exorbitant profits are extracted from the pockets of the mass of the people and their huge volume more or less successfully disguised."

He went on to speak of the declarations in the Platform for direct taxation of unimproved land values (including all natural resources), and for a graduated personal income tax, a graduated inheritance tax on large estates, and a graduated income tax on the profits of corporations, and against any further alienation of natural resources from public ownership. And coming to the Land Settlement plank he had much to say about the requirement that owners of idle lands be obliged to fix a selling price, which shall be registered, and shall be made the assessable value for purposes of taxation.

To Fix Land Values

"There should be a registration of all the idle land in Canada," said he, "just

as there was a registration of man power, and the demand made in the Farmers' Platform that all owners of idle land must fix their selling price, thereby fixing at the same time the assessment of their land for taxation purposes, is excellently just and in every way to be commended, being no less just than it is simple and workable, and no less simple than it is manifestly in the public interest all round."

From that our talk travelled back and forth over the Farmers' Platform; and in speaking of the tariff plank, Snagsby mentioned that he knew of parts of Ontario in which some farmers held exactly the same tariff views as the Manufacturers' Association, so great was their appreciation of "the home market." Which reminded me that I had heard J. W. Leedy, of Whitecourt, one of the Alberta representatives in the Council of Agriculture, deal with "the home market for the farmers" plank in support of protectionism.

The "Home Market" Argument

As a former Governor of Kansas, Mr. Leedy is an honorary member of the committee of the National Highway Association of the United States. The National Highway project is for the building of roads capable of carrying heavy trucks, to cover the entire area of the United States, the cost to be defrayed out of the United States treasury. A survey and estimate have been made, and the cost of the 150,000 miles of highway which would be needed to carry out the project is estimated at \$6,000,000,000.

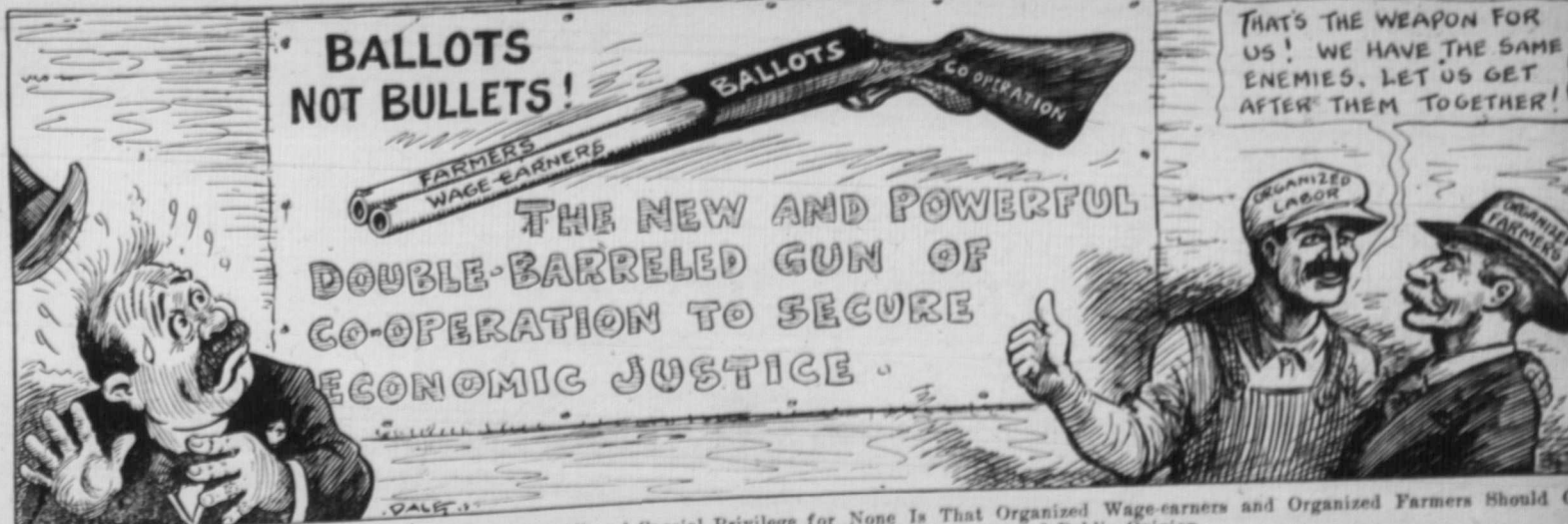
"Against the project the New England States and New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania have protested," said Mr. Leedy. "Those States declare that they would pay an unduly large proportion of the cost. They constitute only 5.4 per cent. of the total area of the United States, but they have 35.8 per cent. of the total wealth. How did they get it? Chiefly by tariff-protected manufacturing and by banking. A large part of their wealth consists of mortgages on the rest of the United States. Well, in those States there are more abandoned farms than in all the rest of the United States put together. I should like to hear some protectionist arguer about 'the home market for the farmer' explain why it is that in those States, which are only 5.4 per cent. of the total area of the United States, there are more abandoned farms than in all the other States put together."

Where Does the Tariff Come In?

"Well," remarked the protectionist to whom Mr. Leedy was talking, "how about say, Missouri? Aren't the New England States and New York and Pennsylvania a home market for Missouri?"

"Quite so! Quite so!" Mr. Leedy agreed. "But the surplus of corn and hogs raised in Missouri has always gone and will continue to go across the Atlantic. And the price paid for that surplus which is decided at Liverpool, is the price Missouri gets for its corn and hogs consumed on this side of the Atlantic. Where does the tariff come in?"

W.J.H.



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