

Western Clarion

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A GENERAL ELECTION

AFTER sixteen years of effort in what is known as labor journalism in Vancouver, and about one year of service as the official organ of the Federated Labor Party of British Columbia, the "B. C. Federationist" is about to become the mouthpiece, not of any specific section of the labor movement, but of the farmer and labor movement of B. C., as a whole—without factional bias.

The last year of existence of the "Federationist" has been, it is to be supposed, somewhat of a trial, since the Federated Labor Party's financial ability to maintain such a paper as the "Federationist" as its official organ seemed improbable, and suitable mutual terms between "The Labor Statesman," official organ of the local trades union element, and the "Federationist" for amalgamation have apparently been impossible to arrange.

Lacking expected or hoped for trade union support the "Federationist" now turns to the elusive farmers' movement of B. C. for support—so we are to suppose. However, even in the heyday of its full prosperity and circulation as the official trade union organ in British Columbia, the "Federationist" has presented a variety of points of view, and that sometimes when the presentation—through advertisements or general features—has worried its readers as to which side of the fence it might really be on—particularly at election times.

Here and now throughout Canada there is a flutter in the political dovecotes as to the likelihood of a general election. The economic salvation of the West is forecast by government instructions given to the Railway Board to effect as far as possible equalization of freight rates—a sore point of grievance among western traders and manufacturers for many years—and all hands look upon that as a sure indication that the Ottawa government of the day is fishing for western support in an immediate election. That support is expected to come through the interest of western trade and, as we know, parliamentary representation may be forecast, in a general way, through economic channels.

If a projected government measure offers sustenance and prosperity which appears feasible in any section of the country to those who are the shining economic lights of that section then former political allegiance is near the breaking point. In the present case, however, there is a bugaboo, and that is the infantile labor party of the west.

When we saw the announcement of the projected equalization of freight rates we had an idea that there was a general (Federal) election at once to come. When we saw the announcement of the "Federationist" of their "enlarged" policy we became sure of it. And in saying that, strange as it may seem, we are casting no reflections upon the Federated Labor Party of British Columbia.

We are, of course, always "wrong."

"ALAS! MY POOR BROTHER!"

Here below we introduce Mr. Jacobs, M.P., House of Commons, Ottawa. His remarks concerning immigration to Canada given in the House we set forth word for word from Hansard. Whether those people from London, Liverpool and Glasgow are of the Nordie race (now famous as the race mon-

opolizing all the virtues) or not we do not know. The Aryan, Alpine, Mediterranean, Nordie and others have, since the war, outdone the Anglo-Saxon in fame. The lost ten tribes of Israel had better remain in obscurity if the following is descriptive of their present supposed representatives on earth:—

"Mr. Jacobs: I will tell my hon. friend why. I do not know who those 60,000 people are, but I will venture to tell my hon. friend that most of those people are from the British Isles, gentlemen who largely do not want work. I do not say that is true of all of them, but it is true of a very large number. The hon. gentleman probably remembers the story of two Englishmen on the streets of Toronto. They were walking down Yonge street and one said to the other: "Look how happy everybody looks in this city." The other said: "Why should they not be happy? Do we not own them?" That is the view the Englishman has of Canada. He will not work himself; he wants the other fellow to do the work. The men who work in this country are the men who come from the continent of Europe and not those who come from the streets of Glasgow, Liverpool and London. They are victims of the dole. They have never done any work or wanted to do it. They are wastrels, useless, and they never should be permitted to come into this country. I am speaking, of course, of a certain type. The House will not, for a moment, think I am making an attack on the British people. I say this is true of a certain type. If you will analyze each and every one of these cases, you will find that many had an opportunity to go to work, but would not go. We see them in our country and in other places. Every man who comes to this country and who is ready and willing to work, can find work to do. That is why those people who come from continental Europe, ignorant of our language and of our customs, are able to find work. They are willing to put their hands to do anything. That is why they are a better element in the community than those whose only qualification is that they can talk English and think they own this country."

THE ISLAND STRIKE.

After a delay of eight or nine months the coal owners of Vancouver Island have succeeded in arriving at the point where they have been able to press their hope for a bonus reduction of sixty cents per day to the point where they consider themselves well enough stocked with coal supplies to squeeze the miners into the usual groove of starvation and defeat. Nearly a year ago the miners declined a similar cut but the owners were not yet ready. Now they suppose themselves to be ready. Mainly, the situation covers the local field in the domestic coal trade, although the world's coal production has its long distance bearing.

We are interested in the fact that after twelve or thirteen years operations without any effective union in the Vancouver coal area the miners have shown that they are not to be crushed without effort in the maintenance of the wage standard. It is too soon yet to forecast the result. If the situation were to be gauged in the likelihood of success for the miners from the angle of present world coal production and sale of coal then the outlook for the miners would be dark. However, Vancouver Island mining conditions are more fortuitously set through geographical isolation and other factors strong enough to warrant hope for a win.

THE SOCIALIST INDICTMENT.

The Socialist indictment of the Capitalist system of industry, and the society based upon it, has four main counts.

History proves that, whilst national poverty may have other causes, whenever and whatever the greater part of the population is divorced from the ownership of production, even where the aggregate population is relatively enormous, the bulk of the people live in penury, and large numbers of them are perpetually threatened by starvation.

In the second place, this penury and its accompanying insecurity are rendered more hideous and

humiliating by the relative comfort and luxury of the proprietary class and by the shameless filthiness of some of its members.

The worst circumstance of Capitalism is, however, neither the poverty of the wage-earner nor the luxury of the property-owners, but, thirdly, the glaring inequality in personal freedom between the propertyless man and the member of the class that lives by owning. Hour by hour, day by day, year in and year out, the two-thirds of the nation who depend for their daily or weekly housekeeping for gaining access to the instruments of production find themselves working under the orders of the relatively restricted class of those who own those instruments. The sanction for the orders is not legal punishment, but, ultimately, a starvation which is supposed to be optional. That is meant by the wage-earners when they complain of "wage slavery."

Fourthly, the Socialist believes that the very basis of the capitalist system is scientifically unsound, as a means of organizing the production and distribution of commodities and services, and fundamentally inconsistent with the spiritual advancement of the race.—Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

TO OUR FRIENDLY CRITICS

EVERY now and then we observe the labor press of the City of Vancouver to be worrying itself over the activities or inactivity of the Canadian Labor Party. What work has already been done, we gather from those comments, might have been more effectively done, and what has been left undone might have been done if the Socialist Party of Canada would jump in and lend a hand. That being given in a just and complimentary fashion our quarrelsome disposition is held somewhat under restraint, at any rate for the time.

Now in these comments in the labor press to which we refer we find some very truthful records of the events of recent years in working class political circles in British Columbia, besides some records otherwise that would come to no harm if amended or rounded out to fuller explanation but, on the whole, their records are not in very serious error in so far as bare events are concerned.

However, the mere record of events lacks substance if there is no effort made towards analysis of those events. The several authors of the articles in question are fairly well known in spite of the anonymity attempted in some cases and, generally, we find them to have been members of our own party in past days whereby they are able to speak of our party history intimately. In the case of one contributor's detail concerning the decline of our party influence and importance we find no explanation given as to why he himself left our ranks long years ago nor why, now that he returns to working class political activity, he does not return to the same camp. By this we do not mean that he has no such reason good and sufficient in his own eyes, but simply that he does not set it forth. Up to date our friendly critics have told us that we have been split asunder, or that the workers who in past times paid attention to us have now largely deserted us, and we are left to assume that they themselves are but following that example. There is left to us the imputation that so long as we persist in existing as a working class political party, without identification with the Canadian Labor Party, we are therefore frustrating complete working class political unity—in short, a sort of red herring which may be the means of leading the mass up a trail allegedly too narrow to follow.

We have had within our ranks in past years plenty of differing opinion and we have it now, but while reasons aplenty have arisen within our own ranks as to why we should change our policies and why we should not, we should like to see our friendly critics continue their articles setting forth the reasons they have for being where they are and what they consider the important factors that have caused them to now assume a position they once derided. In what respect were they wrong heretofore or were they right heretofore and right now? Like the Japanese schoolboy "we ask to know"—and that in full confidence.