

The Farmers' Forum

A PLEA FOR THE FARMER.

It is not the purpose of this brief article to deal with and explain the fundamental basis of the farmer's poverty and misery while producing superabundantly. Possession of existing knowledge of agricultural economics would solve all his problems, but a point of contact forms an apparently unsurpassable obstacle.

Extant literature proves scientifically that under Capitalism the farmer like the worker undergoes exploitation, differentiated only in subtlety of method which coming into action at a later date in its growth becomes more indirect, more complex and consequently more efficacious,—on the other hand less easy to understand.

The higher intellectual grasp of economics by the Socialist, clarifies the situation for him. He knows how to act. But the farmer with a lower potential, finds the solution enshrouded in mystery. Metaphysical arguments and conclusions follow. The "hayseed" envelops himself with a policy of useless temporary reforms and feels aggrieved at the resultant poverty of his efforts.

Savagery produced the stone axe, modern civilization the keen, quick-cutting, steel tool, but comparison would serve no useful purpose. Both are products of the aggregate intelligence of their historical period. The same is true of the Socialist and the farmer, the latter being a product of an older civilization extending into the present day.

When, therefore, many Socialist writers from their superior vantage point hurl their keen, barbed arrows of reason and ridicule at the farmer, they forget that things have both a time and place utility. They overlook the fact that feelings, not reason rule the world; that feelings drive humanity blindly onwards to avoid the unpleasant and seek the pleasant. Reason only guides these feelings on their course. "Necessity is blind."

The farmer, in consequence is perfectly justified in requesting from the Socialist a sympathetic attitude towards his present temporary position not from abstract but concrete hypothesis.

Occasionally assumption is made that mental deficiency forms the cause of the lower intensity of farmer intelligence. On the contrary his average brain power is equal to that of any other worker-group—no more, no less. Rather should it be explained on the basis of opportunity—the possibilities are many but the opportunities are few! The difference between individuals in general lies not in their "gray matter," not in what they are capable of knowing, but on what they actually do know.

It may, again, be shown that this low intellectual intensity may be attributed to economic reasons.

The historical development of the farmer's machinery of production which in the last decade has remained almost stationery, and his limited means of communication including his newspapers, magazines, etc., not only tend to retard progress, but give him exaggerated notions of existing social relationships. In addition, his rural school system of education has not only left him ignorant, but has saturated his mind more than the others of the proletariat with wrong standards of life, false statements of facts, sordid ideals, monstrous unrealities.

Contact with continually improving new and huge machinery, in conjunction with other influences has enabled the industrial worker to rapidly discard these hallucinations, to reason from causes to effect, and to fill his mind with positive truths. With the farmer, the process of demolishing the old and building anew is on the contrary correspondingly slow. He lags behind, a product of the older civilization of belief and individualism.

Similarly this retardation is aggravated by his means of communication — intercourse, language, books.

The ability of the individual mind to acquire knowledge through individual experience is limited; that of the human mind unlimited. Further, the desire to acquire knowledge varies in direct proportion to the amount of pleasure derived there-

from and the fluency of communication. A distinction however must be made between quantity and quality.

Having greater intercourse with his fellows, easier access to scientific books, good papers, periodicals giving 100 per cent. labor viewpoint, the wage-worker with a greater appetite for useful information far outstrips his agricultural brother, content for the most part with 100 per cent. capitalist newspapers and periodicals, or with sentimental rubbishy books from the rural school library.

Even the farm papers—most of them heavily subsidized advertising media — think "discretion the better part of valor." They dislike the sound of Socialism and Revolution, not apprehending the value or true meaning of either. They carry on a campaign of what may be termed sabotage with the stated though hopeless aim of preserving unity between a quick-moving vanguard and a slower-acted rear.

Occupying an unenviable and untenable position in "No man's land," they continue an open flirtation with both Capital and Labor. Aesop's fable of the Bat contains no lesson for them.

Tariff Reform, H. C. of L., Soldier Settlement, Nationalization of Industries, State Control, are to them fundamentals. Group organization, and the "closed door" a panacea for all ills. And on analysis what does it all amount to but a repetition of what has been recognized for the past century—the evils and injustices and anomalies of our social system.

How can the farmer protect himself amongst all this cross-firing? How can he be expected to progress when he is debarred from finding out the causes of these evils?

Yet the farm papers did their propaganda—progressive education! It is—but for the Capitalist. It is an education with a downward thrust to reaction instead of with an upward lift to freedom. For freedom comes with the understanding begotten of knowledge, and not with belief.

The divergence of opinion between the farmer and the artisan can be thus explained. The latter understands the theory of surplus-value, and accordingly endeavors to limit his working day. The farmer not having studied economics imagines that the longer the working day, the greater the chances for acquiring a competency to support him in his old age. Contrary to general opinion the acquisition of riches is not the farmers' aim. But while this mode of thought obtains, conflict of opinion between the two is unavoidable.

Though the "hay-seed" does not understand causes, he has an ever-growing conviction that things are not as they should be, and that he is predestined to set the world "right."

Let there be no mistake about apprehending his motives, mistaken though they be. His earnestness is terribly real, his lack but a guiding rein.

With such material to work upon, let us not attribute all the blame to the farmer for the thoughts and actions of those who would direct him; he has the brain power; incentive is not lacking. Let the S. P. of C. supply the knowledge, the raw material of the finished product—intelligence.

The Socialist Party has a surplus of this knowledge which on the other hand will not benefit the farmer unless he owns it. In addition, its possession in sufficient quantity will unify opinion and bring the farmer into line with the wage-worker.

To distribute—socialize this knowledge—educate the farmer—if it must be done, must be the work of the S. P. of C.

How can this work be accomplished? The farmer in general is no reader of books, nor is he an orator, but can and does appreciate a good speaker. This method of approach appeals to him as none other because it appeals to his feelings as well as his reason, while showing that outside of the profiteering interests, others are interesting themselves in his economic welfare.

The courses of lectures delivered by Huxley in England, and Lewis in America, may be cited as exemplifying the immense amount of benefit derived

by the workers by this method, the idea being to bring a live education to such a stage that the acquired momentum, with the aid of pamphlets and books, would accomplish its own salvation.

The way no doubt is rough and beset with difficulties, but to the Socialist mind which has solved the conventional with the unconventional, it means only another concrete problem to be mastered.

Our "horny-handed son of the soil" with the "back-bone" of Canada shall then emerge from the chrysalis hidden by the web of individualism and its attendant lacqueys, into the free social producer, and free social thinker.

Groups shall then cease; closed doors fly open; race-consciousness shall reign.

Speed the plough!

W. C.

THE SCIENCE OF SOCIALISM

(Continued from page 6)

The clash between rival classes in society, the inexorable hostility between the possessing class and the dispossessed class—this has, up 'till today, been the Nemesis of the Nations. For the most part, this economic warfare between producers and possessors has spelt for progress, and has resulted in the evolution of higher economic and social systems. **We may rest assured that the class warfare which divides modern Capitalism into two great hostile camps, will result in the evolution of a new and higher social order.**

Article VII.—Trend of Modern Social Evolution.

Literature Price List

Communist Manifesto. Single copies, 10c; 25 copies, \$2.00.

Wage-Labor and Capital. Single copies, 10c; 25 copies, \$2.00.

The Present Economic System. (Prof. W. A. Bonger). Single copies, 10c; 25 copies, \$1.50.

Capitalist Production. (First Nine and 32nd Chapters, "Capital," Vol. I. Marx). Paper, single copies, 50c; cloth, single copies, \$1.00; cloth, 10 copies, 75c each.

Socialism, Utopian and Scientific. Single copies, 15c; 25 copies, \$3.25.

Slave of the Farm. Single copies, 10c; 25 copies, \$1.50.

Manifesto, S. P. of C., single copy, 10 cents; 25 copies, \$1.50.

Red Europe. (F. Anstey, M.P.). Single copies, 50c. Ten copies or more 30c each.

The Story of the Evolution of Life. (T. F. Palmer). Single copies, 10c.

Evolution of Man. (Prof. Bolsche). Single copies, 20c; 25 copies, \$3.75.

The Nature and Uses of Sabotage (Prof. T. Veblen). Single copies 5 cents, 25 copies \$1.

Ten Days that Shook the World. (John Reed). Per copy, \$2.00.

The Criminal Court Judge, and The Odd Trick (E. B. Bax). Single copies, 5 cents; per 25 copies, 75c.

(All above post free).

Supplies to Locals.

Dues Cards, per 100, \$1.00.

Letterheads, per 100, 60c.

Platforms, per 100, 50c.

Constitutions, per 100, \$1.50.

Receipt Books, Warrant Books, various prices.

Quarterly Report Forms, free.

Western Clarion Sub. Cards, free.

Make all moneys payable to E. MacLeod, 401 Pender Street East, Vancouver, B. C. Add discount on cheques.

Labor Defence Fund

Send all money and make all cheques payable to A. S. Wells, B. C. Federationist, Labor Temple, Vancouver, B. C.

Collection agency for Alberta: A. Broatch, 1203 Eighth Avenue East, Calgary, Alta.

Central Collection Agency: J. Law, Secretary, Defence Fund, Room 1, 530 Main Street, Winnipeg, Man.