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VANCOUVER, B. C., NOVEMBER 16, 1921 ....

FIVE CENTS

## The Farmers' Policy

AS LAID DOWN BY MR, CRERAR

R. CRERAR, spokesman for the Farmers' movement, like Mr. King, leader of the Liberal Party, is attempting to turn to the advantage of his movement the general discontent prevailing in Canada by directing it into a channel of animosity against the party now in power at Ottawa." Unhappily, in the present state of ignorance of those institutional causes, and not the errors of government which lie at the root of present discontent, there are little other prospects than that success may attend the efforts of the two leaders at the appreaching election. Not that the present administration is worth preserving from a working class standpoint. All that Mr. Crerar or Mr. King say in condemnation of its tyranny is true, and more, for, neither they nor their party followers have experienced the political terrorism such as has been set in the British community. Reading Mr. Crerar's speechaction by that edministration against the advanced section of the working class movement.

In fact, neither of the gentlemen are free from the charge of aiding and abetting that terrorism. As to the administration's subserviency to the "big" interests, and the general vileness charged against thunder of their polemics. it, suffice it to say as explanation that it is a bourgeois administration of the coarse and chameless Crerar's eloquence, his logic, or the high sentimental "American type."

the better, in view of their own putrid record when in power. The Liberal Party exists no longer on any political reality. It is a political parasite, preying on antedeluvian sentiment in Quebec and Ontario, and elsewhere exists merely as the "ins" and "outs" of office. But for the political backwardness of the labor movement in Canada it would long even more powerful propertied interests, but secur-

quite recently developed remarkable strength. This these years of trial and error? Millions existing on rapid development is eloquent testimony of the pres- doles, and such doles, that from one end of the counsure of economic conditions, when a notably individualistic and conservative class is forced into organized activity in furtherance of economic and political aspirations reputed to be radical in their natureas the radicalism goes that proposes to leave intact the institutions of the present order. But lest some who are expecting much be disappointed, it may be well to point out that agrarian movements are old phenomena in Europe, being as a rule notably reactionary and "safe." In fact, during the critical perled in Germany and France, following the cessation of of the war, it was the agrarians who saved the day for the old order. Generally, because of his habits of life, the agrarian's political and social outlook is narrow, conservative, and self-centred. Nevertheless, there are features in the agrarian sitnation on the North American continent which make it necessary that the movement here be estimated on its own merits, though no startling departures from the normal of capitalist orthodoxy are to be expected, not for some time at any rate; nor does Mr. Crerar voice any indications of such departure in his long speeches.

It is true that the language is of a high idealistic quality in which Mr. Crerar, speaking for the Farmers' movement, voices its complaints against the existing administration—the corruptions, tyrannies. and its subserviencies to the big interests that move obscurely in the background of the market and of

governmental policies. It is language fervently addressing itself to purity in political life in the behalf of public interest: "but so are they all, all honorable men'-in the public forum.

If high sounding phrases and sentimental appeals were alone sufficient to solve community problems under capitalism, even though uttered by good men and true, social life would not now be running in the perilous, and for the underlying populations, distresful courses it is today.

In the Great Britain of the latter half of the 19th century we find a forerunner of the movement for free trade, which Mr. Crerar is heading, in the free trade movement of the manufacturing class of capitalists. That movement agitated for the abolition of tax laws on imported corn, a tax which existed for the special benefit of the privileged landed class, at the expense, it was said, of all other sections of es, those who are acquainted with the arguments of the great protagonists of the British movement will sec that Cobden, John Bright and other spokesmen of that movement were his intellectual and political forebears, though his voice is but a faint echo of the

In Cobden or Bright we can more than match Mr. appeals in behalf of public interests-yet what has As for the Liberals, the less they say on that score it all availed—the eloquence and the political and economic victory, the free trade policy inaugurated and corn tax on imported foodstuffs struck off the statute books? Is the principle landlordism any the less secure? It is true the landed interest is no longer politically dominant in the State, having, however, only given place in that respect to other ago have been relegated to a well deserved oblivion. ity of private holdings in land, to which the commun-To the astonishment and even consternation of ity must have access in order to live, has suffered no many people, the Farmers' movement in Canada has at atement. What of the toiling masses, after all try to the other they riotously and, in the main, what is not the least of the evils of capitalism, blindly protest against their miseries!

It is not here argued on behalf of protectionism, as a fiscal policy, that conditions in Britain are the result of free-trade, but it is contended that that policy is no preventative of such conditions. Such conditions are found to prevail in every country alike where the capitalist system of production for profit prevails, be those countries protectionist or

Both free trade and protectionism are fiscal policies adopted as oceasion warrants, to aid rival groups of propertied interests in the competitive struggle of capitalism, and the benefits neither one way or the other acrue to the working masses. The truth is, in no capitalist country in the world are the people a commuity of interests in the full sense of the term. In all of them, in spite of denial, there are class issues based on conflicting economic interests which find expression on the political field. Mr. Crerar may deny that the Farmers' movement is a class movement on the grounds that because it is the chief industry in Canada that therefore those political measures calculated to benefit that industry must redound to the benefit of the community as a whole. Be that as it may, the fact remains, he is at the head of a distinct economic group within the community, who have marched on to the field as a

unit. It is charged against the protectionist policy that it puts all barriers against the free flow of commodities into the local market, thus preventing the low prices which arise from an abundance on the market. Thus it is claimed that protectionism is in the nature of a sabotage on the community for the benefit of protected interests. That is true enough, in theory, but what avails low prices to a working class whose wages are based on the cost of living and vary with the fluctuations of supply and demand on the labor market?

SALAHARI SAN TI

Significant of the generally overstocked state of the labor market, and hence, as would naturally follow, a decline in the standards of living, is the report of a long and exhaustive enquiry into the American standard of living, published in the September number of the "American Economic Review."

(See the "Pointer for Pre-election Audiences," in last issue of "Clarion.")

The report shows that at the high point in the early part of 1920, wages had hardly returned to better than three-quarters of the 1896 level. Since 1896 much water has run under the bridge. productive capacity, through new inventions and improved methods has increased enormously, but it is evident the increased capacity is not benefiting the working class-as it would if our communities were really based upon a community of interest.

What has the Farmers' movement to say to the wage-working class as to its falling standard of living, through the economic and political ideals of Mr. Crerar? The truth is, no more than can be expected from any other capitalist party!

Every last one of his proposed reforms shows that the present system of production for profit is expected to last for ever. Cnly, surplus profits of the farming industry, now going into the pockets of large scale financial and manufacturing industrial interests, must be recovered for the farmer. Those parasite interests are looked upon, and correctly, as a charge upon the surplus values produced in the farming industry. The economic ideals of the Farmers' movement, as voiced by Mr Crerar, are capitalist ideals of profit making; and between the profit maker and wage-labor there is no community of interest other than the one that obtains in all exploiting systems-that the exploiter and the exploited are the two ends of mutually antagonistic poles. As a figure of prominence on the political field, if Mr. Crerar is not on the side of the working class seeking emancipation from their exploitation, which is carried on by means of wage labor, then he is against them and on the side of the exploiter.

The farming class, according to all accounts, have failed to prosper. Mr. Crerar says that "agriculture was never in so difficult or precarious a position as today." Other accounts of that industry in the United States, to go no further, show that the Canadian farmer is not alone in his failure.

At present, the Farmers' movement seems largely animated by the idea that the schemes and machinations of what are called the "big business interests" are responsible for the condition of the farming industry. The trouble, however, lies deeper in the structure of the present economic system. The independent farmer, who did what he liked with his own, is of the past. The modern farmer is caught in the system of credit and the world market, and the system sets for him what he can do with his farm

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