

Farmers and Militarism

An Address delivered by Professor Eastman, of Calgary University, before the Convention of
Alberta Rural Municipalities and Local Improvement Associations

I am by temperament a militarist. In early childhood the glamor of war excited my imagination, and in my boyhood I was busy organizing military societies. I was credulous enough to believe that war was a biological necessity, that international struggle was essential to the development of physical courage and moral fibre, and that other similar sophistries were eternal verities. At times reason and fact made me pause, but it needed a period of study and observation in militarized Europe to convince me that I must right about face. Since then I have realized that a war between two of the nations that are in the van of progress would be an unmitigated curse to mankind; that today the real foes of every people are within and not beyond the frontier; that limitless moral fibre may be developed in combating these domestic enemies; and that, as for physical courage, we could trust to football and lacrosse.

The Cost of War

As far back as 1853, Greg, in his "Essays on Political and Social Science," said: "Judging from the past history of our race, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred war is a folly and a crime. Where it is so, it is the saddest and wildest of all follies and the most heinous of all crimes." Greg had especially in mind the Napoleonic era. The battles between England and France alone cost these nations the blood of 1,900,000 of their sturdiest manhood. As for France, according to Leroy-Beaulieu, her wars between 1793 and 1799 robbed her of 1,500,000 lives. Such wholesale slaughter has a fright-

fully demoralizing influence upon the physical stamina and ultimately upon the moral strength of a people. The very year after Greg wrote, Europe saw the commencement of the Crimean War, truly a wild folly, parent of the heinous crimes of the recent Balkan imbroglio, for as Von Moltke once declared, "Every war is the father of other wars."

Twenty years later came the Franco-Prussian War, which struck such a staggering blow at human progress, smothered all liberal thought and movements and turned Western Europe into an armed camp. This catastrophe would have been avoided but for one man's aggressive folly and another man's unscrupulous cunning, seconded on both sides of the frontier by the official press. And this press, then as always, talked of France and Germany, as if they were two persons, one of which had insulted the other. Yet all this time the peasants and citizens of both countries were patiently toiling at the world's work, quite unaware that they were insulting or being insulted. Nevertheless the blunder destroyed their wealth to the extent of over \$2,500,000,000, inaugurated the baneful reign of Armed Peace and rolled national debts into the billions. Today the military budget of France stands at \$460,000,000, while the impoverished social budget amounts to barely \$36,000,000. "Life is languishing, and death alone absorbs our living resources," cried Jaures, last December.

Civilization Stagnates

And so it seemed to me even before the wild militarist reaction of the last

two years. Every work of industrial improvement, of education or artistic advance was delayed or crippled thru lack of funds. I remember once pointing out to the librarian of the Bibliotheque Nationale that certain volumes were indispensable for the history of French colonization. He shook his head and said: "I know it, but they would cost \$30, and we have to count every sou." Everything goes to organize destruction. And so it is, more or less, in all the militarized nations; civilization stagnates; the forces of progress are atrophied; the militarist snowball grows into an avalanche and threatens to sweep us back into savagery. Even in the United States of America, in 1910, the total war cost was 67.25 per cent. of the national expenditures.

In Canada the monster is trying to raise its head. In 1894 the entire cost of our militia was approximately \$1,285,000; the estimates for 1914 demand nearly \$19,000,000, which is more than double the sum expended five years ago. Someone has lately mentioned a navy, and a few months ago the minister of militia laid pompous plans for the militarization of our universities. All this comes most opportunely at a time when the financial stringency has arrested educational progress thruout Canada. By the way, do you know that one discharge of a big gun costs as much as a four years' university course?

Waste of Intelligence

Thus far we have been discussing the waste of human life in war and of social wealth in militarism, but we must not forget the waste of intelligence in both. Try to imagine what our civili-

zation might be already if during the last century scores of thousands of inventive brains and generous hearts had been concentrating their energies directly upon productive industry and social amelioration instead of upon destruction and oppression. True, from destructive inventions the world has sometimes wrested constructive machines, but how indirect and how uncertain has been the process! And how great our loss by the way!

Modern War—An Industrial Game

Of what nature, then, is war? Obviously it partakes of the character of the civilization to which it belongs. The kings of agricultural peoples make wars of territorial conquest; their dream is to round out their domains, to seize their neighbors' fields. The governments of industrial countries make commercial wars with a view to the exploitation of new regions and new markets. In 1895 the Japanese fought the Chinese for the exploitation of Corea; in 1898 the Americans fought the Spaniards for the exploitation of Cuba; in 1899 we gloriously triumphed over the Boers (oh, those palpitating memories!) for the exploitation of the Transvaal's gold mines; in 1900 the Europeans invaded Peking and imposed their railways upon China; in 1904 the Japs and Russians massacred each other for the exploitation of Manchuria. Five wars in ten years! The triumph of pacifism! Whatever the pretext or the war cry, the basic cause was commercial. Our modern financial oligarchies seek not subjects but customers; business men make business wars.

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The Mail Bag

THE FARM SIDE

Editor, Guide:—I, as no doubt most of your readers, have been much interested in the articles from the pen of Mr. Woodsworth on "Some Problems of City Life," and the contrast therein suggested between city and rural life.

I heartily agree with the writer that the workers in the city and those on the farm have much in common—a common interest to uphold and a common enemy to combat; and that we should get together and reason these things out.

We farmers are indebted to Mr. Woodsworth for the sympathetic way in which he analyzes the economic problems of the wage-earner, but much more are we indebted to him for the fair basis he suggests—the gross produce of an average Manitoba farmer, as shown by the last census returns—from which we can arrive at something of a conclusion as to the economical problems of the average farmer. This is vastly different from the ordinary course of the city writer on farm topics.

Mr. Woodsworth has not analyzed the gross income from the farm so as to show what net income the average farmer has to provide for his annual "budget." Had he done so I do not think he would have inferred, as he seems to have done, that the position, financially, of the farmer is so much better than that of the city wage-earner. Probably he thought that that should be done by a farmer and so I will take this \$1,554 gross income from the farm as a credit and charge up to it the various items of outlay that a farmer with a wife and three children has to meet under ordinary advantageous circumstances and we will see how he comes out at the end of the year with his farm holding worth \$10,950. In doing so I would premise by saying, for the benefit of your city readers, that this gross produce includes the value, at market prices, of everything produced on the farm that may be consumed on the farm or sold off it.

The following is the balance sheet of an average Manitoba farm:—

By gross value of all products from farm, \$1,545.

To working expenses:—Seed for year, \$100; grain for horses (5 say), \$225; hay for horses and cattle (8 say), \$75; grain for cattle, pigs and poultry, \$75; hired help, \$200; taxes and insurance, \$60; threshing and twine, \$180; blacksmithing and repairs, \$30; upkeep of machinery and implements, \$50; upkeep of buildings and fences, \$50. Total, \$1,045.

To produce of farm consumed by the family:—Meat, 800 lbs. at 8c., \$64; butter, 300 lbs. at 20c., \$60; eggs, 50 doz. at 15c., \$7.50; potatoes, 30 bus. at 25c., \$7.50; milk, 160 gals. at 12½c., \$20; vegetables, \$10. Total, \$169.

To household expenses, etc.—Groceries, tea, sugar, dried fruit, \$100; flour, \$30; fuel, light and water, \$50; clothing for family, \$200; personal expenses, marketing, \$20; upkeep of house furnishings, \$20. Total, \$420.

Grand total of expense, \$1,634. Balance, on the wrong side, \$89.

This leaves our farmer \$89 "in the hole" he would say. Is it not about the average position? Yes, altho he has not even paid a subscription to his "Guide" or a cent for any other literature; nothing for the church or for pleasure, and that trip East has been postponed to the far distant future. Some explanation I feel is due Mr. Woodsworth for my charging for vegetables, fuel and water, as I know these items tho very low will meet with criticism. The census enumerators included the value of every beet, carrot, onion and cabbage in the farmer's garden in their estimate of the produce, and why not?

While many of our farmers get their fuel with their own labor, more have to buy it at their railway stations and then haul it home miles, so it is only right in attempting to arrive at a sane conclusion as to the expense of running a farm to include at least something like

half what it costs the more unfortunate one. An artesian well costs from \$200 to \$600 and sometimes runs much higher; then pumps break and wear out and sometimes the well gives out or caves in, and there is considerable annual expense connected with the water supply on the average farm, while many have to haul water for their stock, as well as for domestic use, for miles and some have even to buy it. Is it conceivable that in a city with say 50,000 householders co-operating for their water supply it will cost more than to supply 50,000 farms depending on individual effort? If so then our modern methods of consolidation and co-operation are worthless.

I would particularly draw the attention of your city readers to the expenditure of \$1,045 under the head "working expenses," as I fear they generally fail to realize how expensive the upkeep of a modern farm is. I expect that Mr. Woodsworth himself took it for granted that nearly all the gross produce of the farm was available to provide the farmer with his "budget," while as a matter of fact there is but a third of it, \$500. This net produce gives the farmer his earnings, about \$1.66 a day or 16½ cents an hour for a day of 10 hours, or about 14 cts. an hour for time actually employed.

But we have shown this average farmer who has tried to support his family by his own efforts and give them a decent living is now in debt. If that continues from year to year he will soon have no farm. Is not that often the result? There is another way out. Included in the inventory of the stock on the farm are two nice heifers rising three years old, on which the eyes of the good wife rested often in anticipation of the increased produce she would be able to dispose of next year. They are sold for beef, the debt is paid and there is a little over to go to—the church.

Not good business, says the banker, reducing his working capital; he should have borrowed money and increased his

stock and his revenue would have increased. Well may be, but again, if many farmers in his position do likewise there may be a scarcity of dairy produce and the income from this source, because of lessening of the supply, may actually increase. We are now dealing with one of our pushing go-ahead farmers who is bound to "get on," and he thinks the situation over and decides that he must economize somewhere. Johnny is twelve years old and must help on the farm next year, so he can do without hired help and so save \$200. Is he blamable? Another average farmer in the same position (we have many of them amongst us) takes the banker's advice, mortgages the farm, gets a few more cows, finds it difficult to meet the interest, loses a few head, chiefly on account of a scarcity of food one winter, sees no hope of extricating himself from his difficulties and sells out, goes to the city and may succeed. Another, finding himself in the position of the average farmer not able to make both ends meet, tries to economize by working himself and family harder, encounters illness, has to have in the doctor and a trained nurse. Four dollars a day and keep for the nurse, to say nothing of the doctor, soon runs the expense up to crippling proportions, and he, to extricate himself, sells out at a good figure, goes West where land is cheaper, but the conditions more onerous. He goes thru the process again and finally seeks a town, where if labor is scarce the pay bears some proportionate relation

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