



# MR PEPYS IN THE WEST

About the Old Year's Ending—Also About Divers  
and Sundry Comments on the Farmers' Platform

THIS is the last issue of The Guide for the old year, which will go into history as the most memorable of all years thus far, since "the first syllable of recorded time." Each year is as a garment which Time puts on at the beginning of each journey of our world round the sun, and when the journey is done Time casts the outworn garment away into the gulf of Oblivion, and dons a new garment for the journey of a new year. In all his annals Time has never had a job more important for the world's welfare to perform than the job of ushering Autocratic Militarism and the last of the would-be world-rulers out of the world and into Oblivion, there to be swallowed up in everlasting night, together with his outworn garment marked "1918."

This is symbolism and imagery. As a matter of fact, every morning marks the beginning of a new year for each of us mortals on our journeying between eternity and eternity. We live our lives day by day.

## Comments on the Farmers' Platform

And to come down from these philosophizings to the things immediately at hand which claim my attention, I find several letters on my table and quite an accumulation of newspapers from various parts of the country in which I have been marking the comments they have had to make on the Farmers' Platform.

As it happens, the paper which lies on top of the heap is the Financial Times, of Montreal, a journal which exists to cater to plutocratic prejudice. It has its being in the midst of war profiteers, and knowing that there is no music sweeter to their ears than vilification and derision and misrepresentation of the farmers, it goes gladly to its job.

In The Guide of last week its utterances were reprinted in full and commented on. Some of its utterances were so grotesquely outrageous in their deliberate misrepresentation and offensiveness as to deserve being printed once more.

## Blackguarding the Farmer

Says the Financial Times:—

The farmer has put over 75 per cent. of the world's war profits into his jeans

—pardon, into the pockets of his dress pants; he spends his winters abroad; he lets the other fellows pay the war taxes, pensions, Red Cross and Patriotic Funds, etc., etc.; he enjoys a guaranteed minimum for his wheat; treats his farm hands in a way which would not be tolerated in commercial or industrial circles; wants government ownership of railways so that the tax-payer will provide lower freight rates for crop moving; wants everything he consumes, internally and externally, put on the free list; wants soldiers settled on the lands "with the aid," as he specifically states, "of public funds," and a whole lot of other things too numerous to mention.

The farmer is the most prosperous individual on the face of the Dominion. He has a lot of money in the bank, and a few Victory Bonds—in fact he has everything needed to make him the most contented individual in Canada, with the added assurance of another two year's highly favorable market conditions.

But he is not satisfied. Successful as he undoubtedly has been and as he undoubtedly will continue to be, he still wants more—he wants the other 25 per cent. of the world's goods which slipped by him when orders were placed for munitions.

## Piping to the Plutocrats

It is difficult to see how even the Financial Times could crowd more misrepresentation into the space on its editorial page which thus bristles with dishonesty of statement and insolent perversion of facts.

Are we really to believe that it is through ignorance the Financial Times represents the price of wheat as having been fixed to keep it up? It was fixed to keep it down.

If the price had not been fixed, wheat would have shot up to \$5.00 or \$6.00.

Does the Financial Times imagine that the wheat comes upon the farmer's land like the manna of old that fell from heaven, costing no expenditure either of labor or of money, and that every cent of the money he sells it for is sheer profit for the farmer to put in his pocket?

The four-hundred-and-fifty-odd Canadian factories that were kept busy at top capacity on war orders, amounting to many hundreds of millions of dollars were all working on a dead sure thing.

All that each factory had to do was to turn out the required quantity of the article specified in its contract, and its profit was sure. There were none of the usual costs of salesmanship; the market was sure. There were no chances of drought, or too much rain, or hail, or frost, which the man who works on the land has to face.

## The Plight of the Farmers

Last year the farmers were urged to put every possible acre into crop for 1918, contrary to sound farming method. Many of the farmers, in order to fulfil these injunctions to patriotic duty, strained every effort to the utmost and exhausted their credit to the limit; and not a few of them in Alberta and parts

of Saskatchewan were overwhelmed by crop failure.

Not that it is of the least use to point these facts out to the Financial Times, of Montreal, or the other eastern panders to the prejudice of plutocratic profiteers, slanderers of the farmers and hypocritical deplorers that the West is so hopelessly unreasonable.

The thing for the farmers to do is to organize and by using their ballots co-operatively make their political weight effective in forcing equal rights for all and special privilege for none.

## The Only Definite Platform

The next paper in the heap is the Saskatoon Star, which says:—

Of all the political parties and groups in the Dominion, there is one which has ventured to express its political desires in plain and unmistakable terms. There is only one with a definite program.

The Conservatives reorganized, to a certain and limited extent, at the Rogers' banquet in Toronto. Nothing came out of the meeting in the way of a policy or a program. The battle-cries as intoned by Mr. Rogers was a song of words, words which mean anything or nothing.

The Liberals expected something from Sir Wilfrid Laurier's recent public speech but heard nothing to indicate that he has a policy of any description. His battle-flag is apparently still the weathercock.

The Reconstruction Association has been talking and publishing endlessly, and has laid down with much force and fervor the condition which it desires to bring about. But as to how it proposes to bring about the condition it desires, it is as silent as the tomb.

Remains the Union government, and if it has any policy it is keeping it as its own deep and dark secret. Really, its policy seems to be to deal with questions as they are forced upon its attention by circumstances. As to looking ahead, it seems rather to fear the future than to face it.

It is the farmers of Canada, as represented in the Canadian Council of Agriculture, who know what they want and how they can get it. They have a fairly complete idea of the condition they desire to bring about. They have worked out a series of gradual changes leading up to that condition.

And they have not hesitated to make them public and ask public support for them.

## "Answers Boldly and Directly"

The Saskatoon Star says, in closing its editorial on the Farmers' Platform:

What about these questions?

Does the country propose to keep a heavy tax on the implements the soldier-farmers will have to buy—penalise them, in fact, for buying good machinery?

Does the country propose that they will have to pay a heavy tax on vehicles, fertilisers, coal, lumber, cement, illuminating fuel and lubricating oils—things all farmers have to buy?

Does the country propose that the market for their products shall be restricted in every way, though offers of open markets stand ready to hand?

Does it propose that they shall have an even chance for success, or does it propose to handicap them in every way as all farmers are handicapped today?

Both the Liberal party, as represented by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and the Conservative party, as represented by Hon.

Hon. Rogers, are apparently afraid to voice answers to these questions—any sort of answers.

The Canadian Council of Agriculture answers them boldly and directly. If the Union government possesses that quality of statesmanship with which from its composition one would credit it, it will answer them boldly and strongly too. If it does not, then some substitute for Union government must be found.

## "Radical and Comprehensive"

The Winnipeg Free Press, which comes next has this to say in beginning its editorial:—

The Platform drawn up by the Canadian Council of Agriculture is radical and comprehensive. It touches international, imperial and Canadian affairs; and it states the politico-economic principles of the western farmers in terms impossible to misunderstand.

The prominent features of the document are those concerned with the tariff and taxation, demobilization, land settlement and public ownership.

In each of these spheres of future governmental action or of "reconstruction," the Council's demands are plainly expressed, are of a practical, though sometimes drastic character and will command, broadly speaking, the assent of the people of the three Western provinces.

## The Free Press editorial closes thus:

In the plans of reconstruction and in the solution of the great problems arising from demobilization and future development, the western agricultural interest must necessarily exert a powerful influence. If the Coalition government is to be maintained, if Canada is to go forward as a nation animated by a common desire for peace and prosperity, the opinions of the farmers must be respected and considered by the administration.

The reasonable and essential conditions upon which the western farmers rely for the development of their opportunities must be created if this Dominion is to meet its obligations and attain prosperity.

Recognizing this basic fact, the stable elements throughout the Dominion will grasp the crucial importance of readjusting their ideas to the new conditions which the world-war has, not created, but vastly accentuated; manufacturers will respond to the call upon their skill and initiative; transportation interests will see their prosperity in the promotion of the producing and consuming abilities of East and West alike, and that industry upon which all others finally depend will obtain freedom to expand and increase, bringing wealth, comfort and contentment to the whole country thereby.

## Roseate Vision and Hard Fact

The Free Press, having put on its pink-tinted spectacles for the purpose of gazing into the future and beholding a roseate vision to embody in that last paragraph, sees everything likely to be eminently satisfactory.

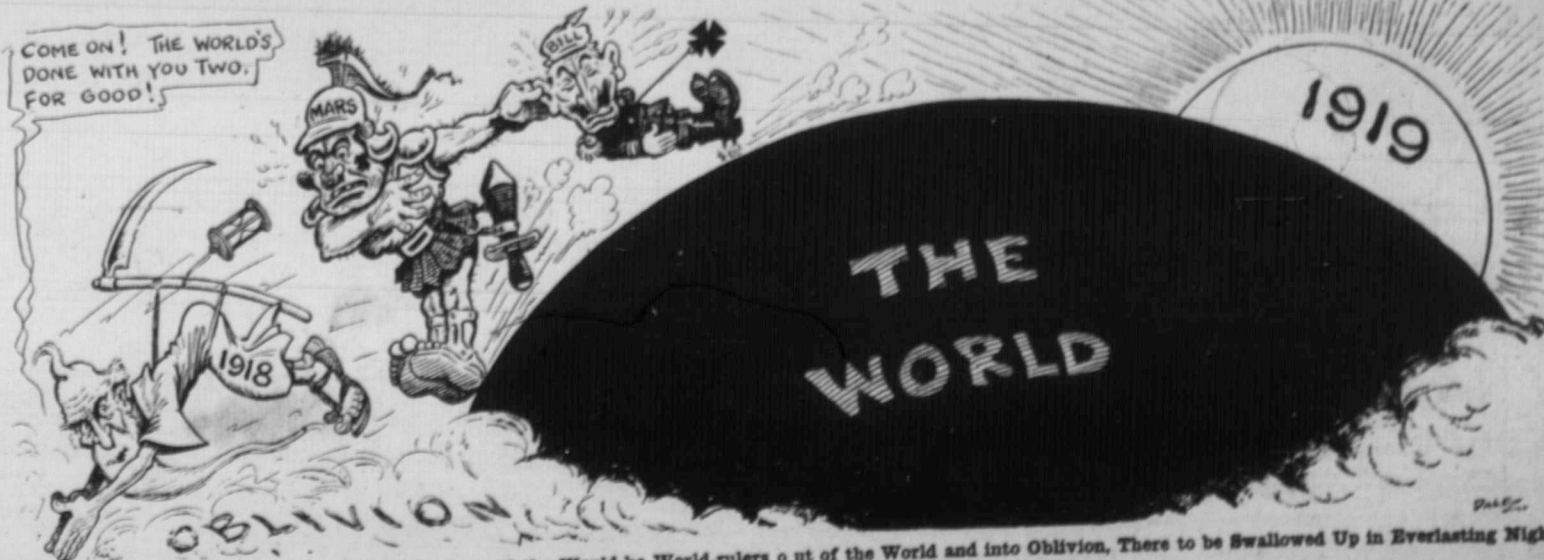
It is nice to view the future through pink-tinted spectacles.

But the Golden Age of the Free Press' vision will not come about of itself.

Of course, those who choose to do so, are free to believe that High Finance and the Big Interests will cease to build higher and stronger bulwarks around their strongholds of Special Privilege, at the expense of the many.

But it seems more likely that they will do nothing of the sort, and that those who desire to see more of economic and social justice in our country will have to continue to work hard with that ideal held steadfastly in view.

W.J.H.



Time Ushering Autocratic Militarism and the Last of the Would-be World-rulers out of the World and into Oblivion, There to be Swallowed Up in Everlasting Night, Together with His Outworn Garment Marked "1918."