

# Saskatchewan Labor's Realm

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## THE SASKATCHEWAN LABOR'S REALM

A Weekly Labor and Social Reform Newspaper.

Justice, Truth, Fraternity. "Labor Omnia Vincit."

HUGH PEAT - EDITOR.

THE Trades Hall was crowded to the doors on Sunday last when over one hundred of the trades unionists of the city gathered together to discuss the advisability of forming a Regina branch of the Independent Labor Party of Canada.

Thos. M. Molloy, President of the Regina Trades and Labor Council was voted to the chair, and in a brief but stirring speech outlined the object of the meeting and urged the necessity of forming a branch of the Labor Party in Regina in order to educate the workers to look after their own interests instead of leaving it in the hands of those Canadian who had little in common with Labor them and who were too busy Party looking after themselves to trouble about the working classes.

There was a notion abroad, he said, that the proposal to start an independent labor party in the province was a straight political move. It was not, however, so much a political as an educational move. There would be no need to put up independent candidates. There was plenty of room for work from their standpoint in connection with the municipal administration of Regina itself. At the present time all the city's work was being done by contractors and working men should organize and have a say in what was going on.

### POLITICAL OUTLOOK

Touching on the larger question of Provincial and Dominion politics, the chairman said that so far as the local legislature was concerned, labor had no ground for complaint. What little they had asked for they had got and altogether they had received good treatment.

But with regard to the Dominion House it was a very different proposition. Sir Wilfrid had practically ignored the labor men of Canada over the Asiatic question. Up to the present time the claims of Labor had been fully recognized in the Provincial House, but such was not the case in the House of Commons at Ottawa. In his opinion the time had come for laboring men to throw off all the old "isms" and stand for independent labor. Let them rid themselves of old party ties and support the party which they could get the most out of.

### LABOR MUST ORGANISE

Hugh Peat, secretary of the Trades Council, then explained something of the working and objects of the Canadian Labor party of which it was proposed to form a local branch and whose political creed was summed up in the following sixteen planks:

1. Free compulsory education.
2. Legal working day of eight hours and six days a week.
3. Government inspection of all industries.
4. The abolition of the contract system on all public works.
5. A minimum living wage based on local conditions.
6. Public ownership of all franchises, such as railways, telegraphs, waterworks, lighting, etc.
7. Tariff reform by lessening taxation on industries and increasing it on land values.
8. Abolition of the Senate.
9. Exclusion of the Chinese.
10. A union label to be placed on all manufactured goods, where practicable, and on all government and municipal supplies.
11. Abolition of child labor by children under 14 years of age, and of female labor in all branches of industrial life, such as mines, work shops, factories, etc.

12. Abolition of property qualification for public offices.

13. Voluntary arbitration of labor disputes.

14. Proportional representation with grouped constituencies and abolition of municipal wards.

15. Direct legislation through the initiative and referendum.

16. Prohibition of prison labor in competition with free labor.

### A NECESSARY CORRECTIVE

If there was room in Canada for two great parties occupied with solely looking after their own interests, there was room, urged Mr. Peat, for a third and it was up to the labor men to form that third party whose function it would be to act as a healthy corrective of the other two. What had either of the two existing parties done for Labor? It had invariably been a question of the spoils going to the victors, whether Liberals or Conservatives were in power.

Almost every piece of legislation that had been enacted in the interests of working men had been brought about by the few devoted workers for labor at Ottawa, and not by either of the political powers already existing.

He referred to the recent Convention of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, and called attention to the fact that whilst they were agitating there for a tariff as high as Haman's Gallows to protect their own interests they advocated the policy of the open door for all classes of labor—protection for the capitalist but no protection for the toiler was their motto—and yet the working men had been foolish enough in the past to vote for such as these and expect better results. In the future it would be the duty of the working men of Canada to look after themselves.

Referring to the fact of the meetings being held on Sunday, the speaker touched upon the relationship between Labor and the church. He believed that if some of the church dignitaries would step down from their pulpits and speak to them as men to men, the world would be a great deal better than it was. The object of the Canadian Labor party was largely humanitarian and the protection of women and children formed one of its chief activities. The condition of affairs which existed in the McDonald tobacco factories at Montreal, was such as should not be tolerated; but that such conditions were possible was largely the fault of the working men in sending men to Parliament who were too busy looking after their own interests to have any time left to devote to the working men. One of the political parties, it did not matter which, must be got to adopt the Labor platform until the Labor party was strong enough to stand alone.

### NEED FOR EDUCATION

James D. Simson, the secretary-treasurer of the Typographical union said that the time had come to educate working men how to vote. Like the capitalists, the working men should look after their own interests. The time was ripe in Saskatchewan for the formation of such a party as was proposed. He was not in favor of the system of exacting pledges from parliamentary candidates. Men would often pledge themselves to anything to secure votes.

F. J. Richards strongly supported the organization of a Labor party. For twenty-five years the working men had been deceived by both political parties. He thought, too, that Labor should be represented in municipal matters. Under the present method of conducting municipal improvements, contractors left the city

every year with bulging pockets, whilst the working men and tax payers of the city received anything from \$1.75 to \$2.25 a day. Further, the bad sanitary arrangements in the city boarding houses would bear investigation, while with the appointment of a proper building inspector, he believed that several accidents would have been prevented.

### ALL THEY DESERVED

T. Martin (a connection of "Fighting Joe Martin"), said that he thought the working men had got all that was coming to them. They were in the majority at the polls, but had no representatives to defend their interests in the House. Working men had behaved like asses and naturally had been treated like asses. They had been for too long willing to sell their votes for a cigar, a glass of whisky or a \$5 bill. At election time they were always looking for the "long green." With Labor properly organized in Regina, whichever party did not properly endorse their platform must certainly be defeated. Let working men fight for bread and butter and righteousness rather than for Liberalism or Conservatism at the ballot boxes. If Labor once put its shoulders to the political wheel, the Government at Ottawa would never forget it.

H. Roller, of Winnipeg, enthusiastically urged the formation of a local Labor party. He was present in the city on Wednesday and had witnessed a grand torch-light procession and attended a great meeting in the rink. But what did it all amount to? Party men were accustomed to going on the platform and promising the workingmen everything, but giving them nothing. He had noticed last Wednesday a great banner which proclaimed the fact that the lands and the minerals were "ours," and that "we" would get them. Who would get them? They might be sure of one thing—it would not be the working men of this country.

### RESOLUTION PASSED

T. W. Turner and Messrs. McLean and Surtees having also briefly addressed the meeting in favor of organization, the following resolution was unanimously carried:

"That we, the working men of Regina, take steps for the formation of a Regina branch of the Independent Labor party."

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following officers were then duly elected: Chairman, Hugh Peat; vice-chairman, Thomas M. Molloy; recording and corresponding secretary, James D. Simson; financial secretary, Mr. Surtees.

The newly-elected chairman then took the chair, and in a short speech congratulated those present on the action they had just taken. He briefly referred to the answer Sir Wilfrid Laurier sent to the delegates at the Trades Congress in Winnipeg on the Asiatic question, and expressed the hope that by a vigorous educational campaign the decision of Congress with regard to that reply would be well carried out and that the electors of Saskatchewan would be fully prepared at the next general election to give Sir Wilfrid his reply at the polls.

The meeting then adjourned till Sunday next, when the next meeting of the party will be held and the necessary steps taken to secure speakers and lecturers to assist in the educational propaganda of the party.

MR. J. Keir Hardie, the British Labor leader gives a few general impressions of his visit to Canada. He frankly states that the whole truth has been anything but told with regard to the conditions of employment in Canada by the emigration touts. If, he says, the Hudson Bay agents have libelled it, as they appear to have done badly for reasons of their own, in regard to its climate and

resources, the modern tout is equally guilty of suppressing the truth in another direction. He draws attention to the fact that wages are higher compared with those in England, and the chances are better for a man to improve his position. These advantages are inseparably connected with the building up of a new country. But he also points out that the chances are that the emigrant will have to put up with conditions of life that he would not tolerate at home. He noticed, as all visitors from the Old Country must notice, the unpopularity of the Englishman in Canada. This he attributes to his natural propensity for grumbling and to his conservative notions and ancient prejudices, and to his unwillingness to adapt himself to new conditions. Mr. Hardie makes special reference to the Londoner, who wants the same kind of house that he had in Seven Dials, and the same conditions and the same arrangements so far as his work is concerned that he has been used to at home, and any departure from which he looks upon as ignorance on the part of the Colonials whom he has to come to instruct. This naturally engenders a feeling of antipathy towards him with the result that his repeated importunities become a source of nuisance to all with whom he comes in contact.

Needless to say, there are many exceptions to this generalization, and amongst farmers the Yorkshireman or the Cumberland dalesman is as welcome as the Scotsman; but of the existence of the fact there is no manner of doubt whatever.

Now, adaptability is a first essential to success in a new country. The man who will not turn his hand to anything that offers had better stay at home. This is particularly so at present, where in nearly every town in Canada there is an over-supply of labor. Emigration is pouring men into the country more rapidly than the market can absorb them, and with every passing year the difficulty of at once stepping into a job and a bit of land is increasing. I met a young Bradfordian at Calgary, an engineer with certificates and credentials galore, who had been five months in the country, and who, when I saw him was cleaning privies, and glad of the job. Mr. W. R. Trotter, of the Typographical Society, met a young Aberdonian at the same place, a stonemason, one of a gang of sixty men engaged in drain cutting. An analysis of the occupations of the sixty showed that twenty were stonemasons, six were carpenters, one was a baker, one a draper, four were bricklayers, and two were plumbers. These were all men who had been lured out by florid advertisements, but who had been unable up to then to find work at their trade, though many of them had been in the country for months.

At Winnipeg things were even worse, that city being a sort of clearing-house for the West, and there, as a consequence, a great many men got temporarily stranded.

We are really at a loss to know what the Canadian Manufacturers' Association have been doing to allow the truth to leak out concerning the gilt-edged opportunities for work in the large cities of Canada. Mr. Hardie's article on his Canadian impressions will go a long way towards putting the emigration touts out of business for some time to come. With a total of 34 skilled artisans employed in the elevating task of cutting drains out of a total number of 60 employed, and with those facts authenticated by a trusted leader of labor in Great Britain, it will be necessary to appoint even smoother gentry than the Louis Leopolds in Great Britain to prosecute the good work of luring unfortunates to Canada to help swell the ranks of the unemployed. Canada needs unskilled workmen by the score, but of skilled workmen there are enough for all classes of work.