

The Farmers in Politics

TAking it as a whole, the success at the polls of the farmers of Ontario has succeeded in causing quite a stir in the arena of capitalist politics. There are strange surmises abroad as to what these farmers will do. Some people are of the opinion that radical changes will be made in the administration of both governmental and industrial affairs. Philosophical editors must spend hours in coining well-balanced sentences which set forth their none-too-optimistic views as to the probable course of events. While these political prophets disagree somewhat in detail as to the succession of events, they do agree on drawing a dark outline picture of the disastrous state of affairs that will exist after the next Dominion election at which it is forebodingly prophesied that a large number of farmer candidates will be elected. The old-line politicians also bewail the sad state into which Ontario has fallen, and into which, in all probabilities, the whole of Canada will fall with the success of more farmer candidates. It is easy to understand the bereavement of the old-party politicians at being beaten out of a job by a new set of office-holders. Most every person hates to lose a fat job.

As for the staid and sober business element, it is not certain what its particular thoughts or fears about the matter are except as it is given by the voice of its minion, the press. This voice is no doubt a faithful echo of its master's voice, and it cries incessantly in a foreboding monotone—class legislation. In this cry it is abetted by that brand of political idealists which nourishes the notion that governments exist solely to do the "people's will." The purport of all these lamentations is that class legislation is a kind of legislation that has never before been known in democratic countries.

To those who know little about our government machinery and who have formerly been lulled to sleep by such lulling melodies as "the greatest good to the greatest number," the shrieking sounds of "class legislation" produces harsh and discordant notes. The farmers themselves are disturbed by its sound, and they spare no pains to impress on the public that they have no intention of using the government machinery for the benefit of one class. On the contrary, they aim, like their predecessors, to do "the greatest good to the greatest number." Premier Drury declares he would consider his government a failure if it constrained its efforts to benefit one class, and did not try to increase the well-being of all classes. The executive of the farmer's party in Alberta has recently seen fit to disclaim officially against class legislation.

So, in reality, there is no wide contrast between the policy and political ideals of the ordinary capitalist politician and those of the farmers except in words. All politicians strive, in words, to do as the "voice of the people wills," to realize social justice and right, to bring about more harmony between the classes and to give every producer and consumer a "square deal," and that is all the farmer's party, as master of the gov-

ernment, intends to do. Really the farmers are thinking nothing or intending nothing that has not been thought and intended many times before.

So we would say to our capitalist brethren that they do not need to get into a panic because of the recent political successes of the organized farmers. They are not going to do anything, except they do it accidentally, that will seriously affect business profits and financial capital's interest. They will very likely try to keep the ball of nationalization of industry rolling, but that is not going to hurt business at all. On the contrary, owing to the complexity of international relations this will rather be a boon to industry.

Besides the farmers, due to their ignorance of capitalism and the laws which govern it, to their inability to grasp the very essence of the capitalist system—the irreconcilable conflict between the classes—cannot, in their present state of consciousness, even if they would, prove a dangerous menace to the continuation of the present system, inasmuch as they have not only rejected, but actually repudiated, the only weapon that could make them such, that is the weapon of class-power. Moreover, they are not class-conscious except in a vague and desultory fashion and their minds are still chained to the metaphysical abstractions of the petty bourgeoisie. This limits them in their governmental activity to dabbling in useless and cumbersome reforms, and absolutely unfits them from playing the heroic role of revolutionists.

The only party or class which the capitalist class need fear at all is that which is knowingly class-conscious, which has cast all metaphysical abstractions on the dust-heap, and which consciously sets out to place itself in control of social functions.

C.M.C.

PERJURY TRIALS IN VANCOUVER

The trial of the two Dominion Secret Service agents, Doursoff and Roth, for perjury in the case of Russians who were tried by the immigration tribunal on deportation charges, is still proceeding though with intervals of unaccountable postponement. A short session was held on Wednesday afternoon, which adjourned abruptly again until the afternoon of Monday, Dec. 29. Large crowds are interestedly watching the proceedings. The police are searching all who are admitted for concealed weapons, thus giving the necessary cinema screen effect.

PALEY ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

If you should see a flock of pigeons in a field of corn; and if (instead of each picking where, and what it liked, taking just as much as it wanted, and no more) you should see ninety-nine of them gathering all they got into a heap; reserving nothing for themselves, but the chaff and refuse; keeping this heap for one, and that the weakest perhaps and worst pigeon of the flock; sitting round, and looking on, all the winter, whilst this one was devouring, throwing about and wasting it; and if a pigeon more hardy and hungry than the rest, touched a grain of the hoard, all the others instantly flying upon it and tearing it to pieces; if you should see this, you would see nothing more than what is every day

Industrial Reserve Army

WE have seen that the introduction of female and child-labor in industry is one of the most powerful means whereby the capitalists reduce the wages of working-men. There is, however, another means which, periodically, is just as powerful. This is the introduction of working-men from regions that are backward and whose population has slight wants, but whose labor-power has not yet been sapped by the factory system. The development of machinery makes possible, not only the employment of such untrained working-men in the place of trained ones, but also their cheap and prompt transportation to the place where they are wanted. Hand in hand with the development of production goes the system of transportation; colossal production corresponds to colossal transportation, not only of merchandise, but also of persons. Steamships and railroads, these much-vaunted pillars of civilization, not only carry guns, liquor and syphilis to barbarians, they also bring the barbarians and their barbarism to us. The flow of agricultural laborers into the cities is becoming constantly stronger; and from ever farther regions are the swarms of those drawing near who have fewer wants, are more patient and offer less resistance. There is a constant stream of emigration from one country of Europe to another, from Europe to America and even from the Orient to western lands. These foreign workers are partly expropriated people, small farmers and producers, whom the capitalist system of production has ruined, driven on the street and deprived not only of a home, but also of a country. Look at these numberless emigrants and ask whether it is Socialism which robs them of their country.

Through the expropriation of the small producers, through the importation from distant lands of large

practiced and established among men. Among men you see the ninety and nine toiling and scraping together a heap of superfluities for one; getting nothing for themselves all the while but a little of the coarsest of the provision, which their own labor produces; and this one, too, oftentimes the feeblest and worst of the whole set, a child, a madman, or a fool; looking quietly on, while they see the fruits of all their labor spent or spoiled; and if one of them take or touch a particle of it, the others join against him, and hang him for the theft.

A NEW INTERPRETATION

Winnipeg, Dec. 18.—Under certain circumstances a general strike is a crime. This was a statement made by Mr. Justice Metcalfe at the trial of H. B. Russell, who is charged with seditious conspiracy. It was made in reply to a protest by Robert Cassidy, K.C., counsel for the accused, and his lordship intimated that he was going to charge the jury to this effect. In his opinion, his lordship explained, the constant reference to the striker as a superman, made the statement he had decided to make to the jury, necessary.

masses of labor, through the use of the labor of women and children, through the shortening of the time necessary to acquire a trade—through all these means the capitalist system of production is able to increase stupendously the quantity of labor forces at its disposal. And side by side with this goes a steady increase in the productivity of human labor as a result of the uninterrupted progress in the technical arts.

Simultaneously with these tendencies the machine tends steadily to displace workmen and render them superfluous. Every machine saves labor-power; unless it did that, it would be useless. In every branch of industry the transition from hand to machine labor is accompanied by the greatest suffering to the working-men who are affected by it. Whether they are factory workers or independent craftsmen, they are made superfluous by the machine and thrown out upon the streets. It was this effect of machinery that the working-men felt first. Many riots during the first year of the nineteenth century attest the suffering which the transition from hand to machine labor, or the introduction of new machinery, inflicts upon the working-class and the despair to which they are driven thereby. The introduction of machinery, as well as its subsequent improvement, is always harmful to certain divisions of labor. True enough, under some conditions other working-men, for instance, those who make the machines, may profit by it. But it may be doubted whether a consciousness of this fact affords much comfort to those who are striving.

Every new machine causes as much to be produced as before by fewer workmen, or larger production with no increase in the number of workmen. From this it follows that, if the number of workmen employed in a country does not decrease with the development of the system of machinery, the market must be extended in proportion to the increased productivity of these workers. But since the economic development increases the quantity of disposable labor, it follows that, in order to prevent enforced idleness among workmen, the market must be extended at a much more rapid pace than that at which the productivity of labor is increased by the machine. Such a rapid extension of the market has, however, rarely occurred under the rule of capitalist production. Therefore, enforced idleness is a permanent phenomenon under the capitalist system of production, and is inseparable from it. Even in the best times when the market suddenly undergoes a considerable extension and business is brisk, production is not able to furnish work for all the unemployed. During bad times, however, when business is at a standstill, their number reaches enormous proportions. They constitute, with the workers of superfluous small concerns, a great army, "the industrial reserve army," as Marx called it, an army of labor forces that stands ever ready at the disposal of the capitalist, an army out of which he can draw his reserves whenever the industrial campaign grows hot.