

## Western Clarion

A Journal of History, Economics, Philosophy,  
and Current Events.

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VANCOUVER, B. C., DECEMBER 16, 1924.

### BETWEEN OURSELVES.

WE approach the end of another year, and once more our Party pulse-register awakens anxiety among our friends as to our state of health. Once more, we say, because fears for our wellbeing and hopes for our early demise (as the case may be) have had their innings before, and we are not unused to the difficulties of hard breathing.

At this time, however, our party friends are notably concerned as much over our seemingly heretical and allegedly death-bed utterances as over the decline of our once organized usefulness in this vale of tears, and, to avow the truth, it would appear to be as creditable as wonderful that after these many years we should still be able to extend intellectual hospitality to new ideas, or new interpretations of old ideas, even though these are conceived and set forth by folk of our own party kin for whose capacities we have high regard.

We have reference, of course, to the family quarrels on doctrine that have been an outstanding feature of these pages for some time, particularly over the past year. In what passes for our wisdom we had held that they were bound to come, and we are not so certain that they are bound to go, or that immediately.

We are very well aware hopes have been expressed that soon the philosophical battle shall end so that we may then endeavor to abandon critical examination of each other's point of view, thereupon flag the man in the street and crave a word with him. Which hope expressed simply asks compromise among ourselves on doctrine and a yielding to the insistent claims of the atmosphere of every day practice. It is very likely a poor philosophical argument to put on and quite likely nobody will altogether commend its pattern, but this much appears certain—if it fits it will be worn.

Likewise, while our writers, readers and party members have been re-casting (or re-affirming) their opinions, the query has been abroad: What is the party point of view? Here it would appear to be conceived that a party point of view can exist outside the membership of the party in question—which obviously is not so. Whereby we reach the stage wherein the established party point of view, being so seriously challenged as to set the party into discussion, becomes disputable as much through inconsistency among those in support as through strength of challenge. It appears also as if a party point of view may be conceived of as of consistent application over such a period of years as we have covered as an organisation, and also that the general principles which we hold to be identified with our work as a party should be, and should always have been unmistakable, wholly recognisable and, among ourselves, forever agreed upon in full content. And that appears reasonable, if it would only work out so; but it doesn't. It would be logical to suppose a party was fully agreed on the principle first binding its adherents together, and upon the application of that principle, else its members had not come together at all, but it is probably true to say that the binding principle in the first instance is only very generally understood and that idealism is an

attractive feature. The principles are worked out later and are lived over in time and experience. Thus we find that while we have been encouraging education among our fellows, and inviting their examination of our text-books, we have been at the same time rounding out our own education—to which we see no end. Here it is worthy of remark that whereas party controversy has ranged itself around our presentation in these columns of philosophical and political matter, charging against the trend of these a marked change from the accepted past, our controversies have not yielded recognition of any new departures, in that sense, in matter that has been presented in economics.

If further evidence were required as to differences of outlook more or less identified with our general principles, in columns other than these we find furnished by one of our party members an interpretation of recent happenings in Russia which, we venture to say, would be hard put to find any support at all among us. We have reference here to Com. Lestor's article in that connection recently published in the O. B. U. Bulletin (Winnipeg), and although we are loathe to be very critical of the efforts in any direction of anyone who has to endure the hardship of socialist propaganda on the Canadian prairie, particularly under S. P. of C. conditions, we nevertheless disclaim Lestor's expressed opinions in the article in question. It by no means follows, of course, that the matter or method of criticism maliciously launched against him in certain quarters is viewed by us as commendable. Imitation, it is said, is the sincerest form of flattery. Poor imitation is often a form of idolatry. His critics would steal from Lestor his coveted failings and turn these to their own use! This is a digression.

With so much variety of opinion among ourselves there would appear, therefore, to be good ground for our holding that the party position is in the melting-pot. Our several writers' opinions, all put together with those of the party members, comprise what point of view we have, and in this we include in proprietorship those whom circumstances of one sort or another have removed from actual personal contact with us but who are, through past association, still actively of our kind.

It scarcely needs asserting that whatever attitude we have taken in the years gone by has been suitable to the circumstances, insofar as these affected its survival. At least that is so insofar as we have been able to exist at all and to put forth effort, effort which has certainly been felt even though we really never have been at any time more than a corporal's guard as a political body. A view of our position now prompts the question as to how far party acceptance in whatever degree by the people at large is to be considered as influencing party policy, and how much that has to do with our present controversies. It is apparent that the degree of that acceptance may influence party policy, because it may become so negligible as to mean rejection, or insufficient to encourage the possibility of organised usefulness. Or do tactical considerations, apply wherein it is conceived that complete isolation has the sole merit of bringing to prominence "The Straight Issue" point of view (using "R's" phrase;—please note we by no means mean to foist this interpretation on to him), a point of view always threatened with being swamped if given into the majority custody of the practical brethren? If the masses even momentarily reject an adopted point of view, and if it is the case that the mass is never wrong, as Harrington asserts and with which opinion we agree, in what respect does that—by negatively affecting membership of the party, its financial support, its organized existence—in what respect does that affect the survival and possible usefulness of the theoretical structure of the party?

We gather that due to the attitude we adopted here in B. C. in the last Provincial election period the impression has gone abroad that we have been wilfully flirting with the labor parties, with an eye to amalgamation. Consequent upon that impression there has apparently been looked for a frank statement, an intimate revelation of the tremendous secrets of this alleged philandering. Whereas our

trouble actually was to show enough strength to be able to do some good work in the election and yet to hold ourselves free from actual alliances with other bodies, a position we were able to take through the good will of the other bodies, coupled with the high regard they held as much for the qualities of our candidates as for us as a party. We were not then and we are not now committed to the policies of any other party, yet circumstances have given rise to the "attitude," somewhat a change from the past, to be sure, yet not wholly unpleasant. The same circumstances, in the same way, will compel us to maintain that "attitude" this winter by holding joint meetings with the F. L. P. Neither they nor ourselves appear able to hold continuous meetings alone. This is perhaps reprehensible, but it is a fact.

Here it is worth noting that while "C" continues to press for recognition by us of labor parties in the political field, official recognition of their status as working class bodies has been forced from us. We are not so sure that we did not recognise them as such long ago, the while we denounced them for not functioning properly as working class bodies. Nor is that privilege now denied us.

Looking forward to the year to come the path ahead seems not very smooth for us. We have never been given to boasting of our party strength; we certainly have no cause to now. Our membership is low and likewise our finances. Our critics hold that the Clarion contains matter indigestible to the philistine, and with that we agree. And to that we would add, it was ever thus. But meanwhile the process seems to be to clear our own heads first and attend to the philistine after. There is sense enough in the intention, if the methods employed will do it. One thing we can never do, and that is to superintend an intellectual closed shop. We don't know a heretic.

### ALBERTA NOTES.

#### Calgary.

Business meeting of local Calgary, S. P. of C., is held every second Tuesday at 8 p.m.

Economics Class every Thursday at 8 p.m.

Address: 134a 9th Ave., West, Calgary, Alberta.

Everybody Welcome.

### HERE AND NOW.

These days enthusiasm runs to the solving of cross-word puzzles. Here and Now we are worrying over cuss-word puzzles. These totals represent two issues in finance. New cross—or cuss—words—if there are any—have a claim on our devotion:

Following \$1 each: W. A. Blake, J. Jacob, J. Roberts, A. Miller, J. Loheit, W. T. Grieves, J. W. Dargie, W. J. Sim, C. Woolings, B. Foltz, G. Fitchett, E. Johnson, Geo. Paton, J. Olson, A. J. Beeny, Geo. Bowden, R. Law, Jack Shepherd, H. Cottrell.

Following \$2 each: C. Lestor, E. Fiala, H. E. Mills, H. W. Speed.

H. Judd 50c; T. Unhill, M.L.A., \$5; P. J. Den Outer \$1.40; J. A. McDonald \$11.10; M. W. Smith \$7; H. Williams 50 cents.

Above, Clarion subs. received from 14 Nov. to 11th Dec., inclusive, total \$52.50.

### CLARION MAINTENANCE FUND.

Following \$1 each: W. T. Grieves, H. W. Speed, Geo. Bowden, Jack Shepherd, J. C. Chrystal, M. W. Smith \$3; F. Cusack 50c.

Above, C.M.F. receipts from 14th Nov. to 11th Dec., inclusive, total \$8.50.

Note: In our last acknowledgment we set down among C.M.F. receipts Wm. Clarkson as \$7.75. This should have been Wm. Churchill \$5; Wm. Clarkson \$2.75.

Erratum: An article in last issue entitled "Fashions" should have been credited to J. H. Moore.