

THE Montana Nonpartisan

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF NONPARTISAN LEAGUE IN MONTANA

Published Weekly at Great Falls, Montana by the Montana Nonpartisan. Entered as second class matter, November 30, 1918, at Great Falls, Montana, under the act of March 3, 1879. Place of Publication Great Falls, Montana, November 30, 1918.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR

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THE HAIL ACT FAILS.

We call the attention of our readers to the comparison of the salient points of two different hail insurance acts, one from Alberta and the other, which we publish on another page, native with us. We are giving publicity to the failure of the Montana act and making what perhaps may be an odious comparison to some of those who read this sheet, because it shows very distinctly the fundamental weakness of the arrangement as we have it here.

With us, of course, the village localists pride never existed, if there is outside of this state and nation more advanced parties and administrations we are going to lay hold of these and endeavor to incorporate them into our social fabric. All around us the world is changing and they are hammering out new and shining processes which mean greater ease, refinement and culture to those who participate in these benefits. We do not intend to be outdistanced and left miserably behind if it is possible to avoid it, hence we must keep awake to the vastly progressive things which have already been accomplished, and which are yet to be accomplished.

The Canadian hail arrangements are superior to ours, because those who wrote the law were enabled to proceed without the everlasting drawback of a constitution. Montana's Act has fallen down miserably because it was unconstitutional to make appropriations covering the present emergency, for the reason that insurance against hail is a "private matter," touching individuals and the constitution does not allow moneys to be apportioned to that end.

Just by what peculiar legislation this idea was arrived at shall not concern us here, what is of importance is this, that the Alberta law makes for communal group effort on the one hand and provide an arrangement whereby full care is taken of emergencies such as have arisen amongst the farmers of Montana. We venture a guess that had the A. C. M. profits been concerned in the writing of this act a different state of affairs would have been visible. Of course political control is all there is to it in a case like this, and the A. C. M. understands that.

LABOR STARTS ON RECONSTRUCTION.

The first gun for the battle for the retention of the railroads under government control has been fired by the Machinists' organization, who met some time recently at St. Paul to discuss their various troubles in convention. The resolution adopted by them on this matter will be found on another page and is worth considerable study. Labor seems to have become convinced that working under government control is preferable to its former status and is going to put up a fight to have the thing rendered permanent.

It is true that the workers of Europe have not been very happy under similar conditions for of course the government control idea has long been a fact there, especially where nations had entered and vulnerable frontiers which had to be dominated by absolute government control, so that in the event of attack no time would be lost in changing ownership. A fearful middle resulted in England right in the most critical phase of the late struggle as a result of corporate ownership of the railroads.

Be that as it may, the great factor in the government ownership thing is not that economic benefits are so marked as to make a vast difference one way or the other, for of course the laws of market, of price and value are still dominant and are not very amendable to legal supervision, but that the spirit of ownership is inculcated in the minds of the mass. The psychology of ownership is set up, the various things coming under the ownership of the government become "Our Railroads, Our Packing Plants, Our Metal Mines," and from that arises of course the desire to make them in reality what they now are nominally.

Industrial Democracy which is real democracy rests upon the fact of ownership. The creation of desire to own and control is one of the great factors in accomplishing that end. After all, the thing boils down to the pertinent remark that "It depends who are the government." Thus in North Dakota where a very large measure of the power of administration is actually in the hands of the people great benefits accrue to them, millions have been retained in the hands of the farmers where else it would have helped to make fat the parasite, but given government ownership under, say the late Minnesota administration, and a good deal of misery could have been dealt out to the useful people and a great deal of gain to the idle coupon-clipper. The League's purpose is to place the administrative powers in the hands of the producers, then the instrumentalities of transportation and production will be in a fair way to function for all.

We are in the fight with Labor for government control.

\$110,000,000,000 WAR DEBT.

Financial journals and responsible authorities generally seem to agree that the world war debt is now almost beyond human computation. That is, one may set it down in so many cyphers, but to visualize what lurks behind the string of numerals thus set out in a task involving a very vivid imagination indeed. Some people who ought to know give the total indebtedness as \$110,000,000,000 up to last May and what has been added since that time must be a very fat amount also.

Now these debts are also to be used as political propaganda, and we shall have congressmen and senators shooting tremendous numerical gas attacks from both sides of the house, while platform orators will likewise rattle-dabble unwilling listeners with the metallic clatter of rapidly juggled arithmetic. All of which will not tend, we may be sure to enlighten anyone about the matter in any way. That is not the purpose of such stuff.

We must confess ourselves, that the necromancy of figures, ably handled, always was more than a match for our ordinary intellect, to listen to these experts as they trail away into the trillions, as they lead their battalions and their divisions against an equally well equipped opponent, has always been very successful in filling up with intense edginess.

For what is there to it after all? What is a great debt but a mortgage upon the power of the producers? If it has ever been otherwise we have yet to hear about it. Certain gentlemen in Europe gathered together to float a loan. They presented their case something in this manner: There are in Europe so many millions of people who toil in mine, factory or farm, the annual result of their combined efforts is so many million dollars, the annual share of this product paid back to them in wages or left with them in the case of small farmers, is so many millions less than that amount, about one-third as a matter of fact. The progressive increase due to improved technique and possibly the results of a few wars will be so much more per annum, they are fairly tame and not very much inclined to strike, and anyway we have a big army to take care of that—allowing then, a generous share for the other parasites, how much can you advance upon our security? That's about all there is to it, of course, for interest is not made by an increase in coin, but an increase of other wealth wrung from the producers in which process, money is but a circulating medium. Making the debt democratic, puts another angle on the matter, of course.

The "reconstructionists" have found it must be "reconstruction" no longer, "readjustment" from now on please. The new after-war dictionary gives as the meaning of this word. Low wages, private ownership, low priced farm products, bank control absolute—to gouge, coerce, bludgeon, as "they smashed the unions and trated the farmer to a bludgeon."

"THE BLOODY SHIRT."

Press dispatches of a few days ago carried the story that General Pershing had been mentioned for next president of the U. S. A. and that a club of some sort had been organized to boost the proposition. Now we do not know what Pershing thinks about this himself, but we are quite sure with such swiftness that, if there lurks in the minds of those who started this boom, the detestable idea of launching a "Bloody Shirt" campaign they are doomed to utter disappointment. The "Bloody Shirtists" may as well realize that a time is upon them when such hideous exploitation of humanity pain will not be possible either in the domain or politics or any where else.

We are anxious to hear however, how this news affected the "great colonel." We have always understood generally—after reading that gentleman's books—that one Theodore Roosevelt was something in the nature of a soldier himself and since he has also been mentioned as a possible presidential candidate, great wrath must be consuming him at the idea of some one else presuming upon what he no doubt regards as the right of the Roosevelt family. That his military qualifications are undoubted there is no question. Everyone is familiar with the speech making occasion when he led "columns of type up San Juan hill," but we have always thought that military experience was not a very necessary qualification for the office of president of the U. S., especially in the trying days to come.

MACHINISTS START FIGHT AGAINST REACTIONISTS

The report of the committee on resolutions was read as follows: We, the delegates of Districts 32 and 48, assembled at St. Paul, recognize the justice of the Government control of Railways, and believing that if the railroads were ever to revert back to private ownership it would tend to create strife and discontent in the ranks of millions of railway workers and do hereby

RESOLVE, that all Labor Boards created by President Wilson and the Director General of Railroads, be retained until Government Ownership of all railroads and transportation facilities is authorized by Congress and the Senate of the U. S.

WE FURTHER RESOLVE, that our National Agreement Committee and Executive Boards of all Internationals use every effort to retain all Labor Boards, and use all the machinery of our organizations to bring about Government Ownership of Railroads and transportation facilities as soon as possible.

Committee—S. E. Gartner, Dennis Doyle, T. P. Conroy, J. F. O'Connor, John Grudnhofer, H. Hudson, W. T. Bibb.

THE RETURNING SOLDIER AND THE LAND.

We are getting a good deal of conversation lately about the returning soldiers. "Our boys" as the writers and orators call them. A good deal of the noise is merely for the purpose of saying something and generally darkens the air, and is quite in line with the habit of parrots to smash a thing out of the mind and merely echo it, but now and then we read wisdom upon the subject. Wilson in his speech to Congress on December second made use of these words:

"I have heard much counsel as to the plans that should be formed and personally conducted to a happy reconstruction, but for no quarter have I seen any general scheme of 'reconstruction' which I thought it likely we could force our spirited business men and self-reliant laborers to accept with due pliancy and obedience."

Which is wisdom for the reason that "our spirited business men" will not accept anything but free and unlimited opportunities to profiteer, while "our self-reliant laborers" are not yet more than merely self-reliant.

Thus the business of the returning soldiers causes deep concern, for no one except the "unthinkable radical" has any plan to propose that is not a standing insult to the men who have endured the horror and misery of this great war.

There is a proposition to "put them on the land" but the details involve such flagrant ignoring of progressive ideas upon the subject that the plan is unthinkable. The project is to drain swamp lands and irrigate desert lands and sell them in small lots to returning soldiers at "easy terms." This is all very well, or would have been if we were discussing the return of Roman Legionaries some two centuries B. C., but we are not, we are facing new and terribly complicated developments. We have to improve upon the small allotment idea.

It is expected, under what plans have so far been put forward, that the soldiers will go to work at day labor, first of all to earn enough money to make first payment upon the small farm he is expected to covet, which of itself is stupidity incarnate. What on earth is in the minds of our "leading men" that they are so incurably reactionary? Put the tent to the soldier and he will immediately decline or maybe work a short while and then drift away disgusted, to gather in the wage markets of the nation, where, after all another gang wish to see him.

In any case, if the group system is not put in vogue with these men the farm project will go to the "damnation bow-wow" for they are used to group work and the ordered mass action. Let them have the land, not by slaving at day wages first for an unlimited time, and not by deed of gift in small parcels, but by a system of tenure in which title rests with the community in perpetuity and with the individual in terms of service. This scheme has a few advantages which will not appeal to the loan-shark and the banker, for there is no way in which this tribe can get a strangle hold on individual farmers and for ever after hold them as bond slaves. It will serve as a barrier against the oppression of the Harvester Trust and against the railroads, should they again relapse into private hands. It will develop the idea of orderly cooperative action which is the open sesame to progress, now as ever.



Some Things To Ponder Over

GLAMBECK WRITES OF POLITICAL POWER

(Alberta Nonpartisan).

We offer this to our readers as a typical sample of how they think on the other side:

By John Glambeck, Sec.

There is cheering signs of a healthy awakening along independent political lines both among farmers and industrial workers. Now that the conservative farmers of Ontario have started to grasp its importance, it is more than certain other eastern provinces will follow their lead, and with the west becoming more and more alive as a political factor, we can in a few years begin to look for the voice of the farmer and worker to ring in the legislative halls of the dominion on behalf of the producers and consumers of the country.

The political activity of most farmers amount to attending a political meeting or two right before election and vote the liberal or conservative ticket because their fathers did the same before them. They have to vote for somebody, so what's the odds, they don't expect anything great to come from it and nothing does—only harm to themselves and the country at large.

Big Biz Awake to Politics.

On the other hand, the big interests and big business of the country take a very lively interest in politics, it's not too dirty for them to touch. They are keen enough to realize that their real power depends on their political control of the country. For it is an absolute indisputable fact that their power is political rather than industrial, that is, they use the political power in their possession to gain their industrial power. And the very moment the farmers and workers awoke to the full knowledge of this immense power they have gained, if they agree to stand together, it will be all up with the industrial power now held by the great financial magnates.

Big interests care nothing about as long as they can control the party. Hence they generally contribute to the campaign fund of both. This has been proven absolutely true in the States and would no doubt be true in Canada also.

Has Industrial Experience.

Before taking up farming 12 years ago, I lived 25 years in the city of Chicago as a wage worker and as a salaried employe in the civil service. I always belonged to a workers' union and when there was not one I tried to organize one. I realized the importance of trade unions, but also realized it was only one part of the defense if the workers were to obtain any great benefit from our modern system of production their trade union government must be supported by independent political action.

Attending as a delegate the trades and labor assemblies, a central body composed from the various labor unions in Chicago, I used to be astonished to find the prominent labor leaders and delegates were not only staunch republicans or democrats, but that around election time they were actually engaged as henchmen for one or the other of the two old political party machines, even using their official standing and eloquence to pull the wool over the eyes of the rank and file of their fellow workers and delivering their votes to the party bosses. I could never comprehend how on earth workers should organize to fight their employers and then on election day drop their differences and put their arms around the enemy's neck by casting their votes for the very candidates the bosses had picked out to further their own interest. How they could expect any beneficial results to themselves is beyond me.

Political Control at Work.

Just to show how the employers' political control works out in real practice: "Suppose the workers in a certain industry decide to form a union. As soon as a majority joins a committee is sent to interview the employer and ask to have the union recognized and to get a raise in wages. But business is run to secure big dividends and as higher wages would mean decreased profits, the workers are usually told their union cannot be recognized and if they are dissatisfied they can quit. The result is a strike and the bosses then start in to engage non-union men who are known as scabs. As the bosses control the civic government the mayor is notified to furnish police to protect property—the employers' property. As the men own no property they need no protection. The workers seeing their job filled by other men, and knowing that this job is all that stands between them and starvation, at once become active and decide to fight. Pickets are posted and moral persuasion is first tried on

the scabs. That fails, then trouble starts and in the heat of passion some get hurt and it may happen that someone gets killed.

The I. W. W.

The city fail to keep order and the bosses who also own the state government, sends for the state militia, and as a last resort for the federal troops, and that settles things. Only once in while is a strike won by the men and that only in times like the past two years when idle workers are scarce. During the strike a few leaders and turbulent fellows are gathered in and put in jail, and then the bosses make good use of another branch of the government they control—the judiciary—and the victims get a few years in the penitentiary.

The leaders of the Industrial Workers of the World especially get this independent political action and whenever the workers who do not believe in it have asked for their cooperation, the I. W. W.'s have laughed at them and called them political fools, etc., etc. This is often where ignorant editors and their backers go astray when they dub every labor man who agitates for better conditions as an I. W. W. They say to the farmers that when it suits them so to do, but people are now getting better read and understand when such terms are misapplied.

No, the I. W. W.'s believe in sabotage, general strike, direct dislocation of industry, they would fight the employers on the industrial field. They forget that the industrial, the army, navy, police and courts, could crush them whenever it gets to a show down. The big employers have waited their chance and it came directly the United States entered the war. The I. W. W.'s were aggressive and obstructive, the federal government was notified the harvest was ripe and the time was come to throw out the drag net. This was done and all the most prominent and turbulent spirits were arrested, given a sort of trial in Chicago, and some sort of 20 years in the pen.

Sad but true. Let us hope that these poor deluded fellows not only will be set free long before their term expires, but that they will have learned the lesson that political action is the one important thing after all for the workers.

Farmers Must Use Politics.

To return to the farmers. When we in the farmers' unions, have decided to cooperate, we put our dollars together and send for a carload of goods, we have cut out the profit of middlemen and done a good turn to ourselves. But don't forget the goods were bought from some concern who were able to set their own price. At any rate it was freighted over a privately owned railway, whose owners, through their political power, could charge exorbitant freight rates.

When we go to our own company, the U. G. G., and buy machinery we get good machinery and perhaps for less than we would have to pay the old line companies. But whether that machinery was bought in Canada or in the States it had to be bought from some combination that could set their own price and the protective tariff was added to that price, and it had to come over the privately owned railway. So the amount saved is small. And when we have organized our strength and forced the provincial governments to recognize us and grant little concessions, it is all very good, but don't forget it is the real big thing we must get after.

Demand No Good Without Power.

Those demands that would interfere with the profits of big business, we will never get until we obtain political power. When the war came the government decided to set the price of wheat and offered the farmers \$1.40 per bushel. The organized farmers objected and sent representatives to Ottawa. When these succeeded in effecting a compromise of \$2.21 per bushel, it was a good thing for all and if for no other reason every farmer in the land should join the farmers' organization.

But what the organized farmers did not do, and could not do, was to prevent the big business interests of the country raising the price, eye, doubling and trebling the price of everything the farmer needed and had to buy in order to raise that wheat. Our power stopped short, so we were little better off with wheat at \$2.20 than we were when wheat was cheaper.

The Farmers Industrial Organization is a good thing and every farmer should belong to it, but just as the workers' industrial union is only one part of their defense so likewise is the farmers'. If we are to obtain any great and lasting benefits our industrial unions must be supplemented with independent political action.

—JOHN GLAMBECK



Representative M. W. PENWELL, Gallatin County