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Prairie Manifesto Project

Jared Wesley
PhD Candidate
Department of Political Science
705 Social Sciences Building
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4
phone: 1.403.220.4184
fax: 1.403.282.4773
email: jjwesley@ucalgary.ca

Province: ☒ Alberta ☐ Saskatchewan ☐ Manitoba

Party: CCF Election Year: 1940

AA = Alberta Alliance
CON = Conservative Party
LP = Liberal-Progressive Party
PC = Progressive Conservative Party
SKP = Saskatchewan Party
UFM = United Farmers of Manitoba

CCF = Cooperative Commonwealth Federation
LIB = Liberal Party
NDP = New Democratic Party
SC = Social Credit
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☐ Constitution

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Second Edition

C.C.F. PROVINCIAL POLICY

—●—
What the C.C.F. Will Do
for Alberta

—●—
By William Irvine

—●—
SOME OF THE QUESTIONS ANSWERED IN THIS
PAMPHLET:

What is the difference between the C.C.F. and all
other political parties?

What is a political platform for?

What can be done in Alberta toward a program of
Public Ownership?

Can the people own the Packing Plants?

Where will the money come from?

What can be done about debt?

Can taxation be reduced?

Foreword

By CHESTER A. RONNING
Alberta Provincial Leader of the Co-operative
Commonwealth Federation

I COMMENT the following pages to the consideration of every Alberta voter. The provincial platform of the C.C.F. stands by itself as the only concrete, definite program for the social development of this province being offered by any of the political parties now appealing for your franchise. The other parties are making vague promises—the C.C.F. offers an economic plan THAT HAS WORKED WHEREVER IT HAS BEEN TRIED.

Trained observers of world affairs are in agreement that the standard of living in New Zealand and the Scandinavian countries is the highest in the world. Why have these little countries, with natural advantages greatly inferior to our own, forged ahead in the attainment of economic security? The answer lies in their adoption of policies in many cases identical with those enunciated in the C.C.F. platform and in the pages of this pamphlet.

The C.C.F. Platform is not a series of election promises. It is a social and economic way we are asking the people themselves to take to a better social order. We invite you to be fellow-travellers with us on that way.

C.C.F. Provincial Platform

We recognize that it is not constitutionally possible to set up a complete Co-operative Commonwealth within the province of Alberta. There are, however, certain very definite powers which under the Canadian Federation of Provinces may be exercised by a provincial government, and a C.C.F. Government of Alberta would make use of these powers to inaugurate the following policies:

1.—Public Ownership.

Progressive socialization of natural resources, industries and services such as electric power, oil production and distribution, packing plants or any other property or service the public ownership and operation of which is necessary for the common good.

2.—Security for Farmers on their Farms and for Workers in their homes against Debt Claims.

(a) We unhesitatingly subscribe to the principle that human life and all the requirements of human life shall take precedence over debt rights under a C.C.F. government.

(b) Exemptions will be provided for farmers and workers sufficient to maintain living standards, no debts to be legally collected until the amount of the exemption has been received.

(c) Debt must be reduced to that point where it can be paid from the income of the debtor within a reasonable time without prejudice to an adequate standard of living.

(d) Legislation will be passed to provide that the creditor shall take the same risk on his capital earnings as the farmer takes on his crops or the worker on his employment.

3.—Economic Security for Workers.

Guaranteed right to organize, and freedom to bargain collectively for wages, hours and working conditions; co-operation with the Federal Government in the establishment of unemployment insurance; progressive reduction of hours of work in keeping with the technological improvements in industry.

4.—Adequate Relief for Unemployment.

(a) The C.C.F. regards unemployment relief as a federal responsibility and will press for the acceptance of that responsibility.

(b) Meanwhile a C.C.F. Government of the Province of Alberta will use every possible means to reduce unemployment in the Province by initiating a works and housing program, and will assume responsibility for adequate relief pending the assumption of that responsibility by the superior government.

5.—Equality of Opportunity in Education.

(a) Greater Provincial responsibility for financing of education. A C.C.F. government would also press for supplementary equalization grants to provinces from the Federal government.

(b) Free elementary and secondary education for every child in the Province, including the introduction of a system of free distribution of school texts and supplies.

(c) University education, Normal and Technical schools shall be free for all who have the capacity to justify the public expenditure.

6.—Encouragement of Consumer and Producer Co-operatives.

7.—Socialization of Health Services.

8.—Removal of Political Patronage from the Civil Service through establishment of a Civil Service Commission.

9.—To safeguard the principle of Democracy, and to guarantee freedom of religion, of the press, of speech and of assembly.

10.—Taxation Policy Based on Ability to Pay, and Progressive Reduction of Taxation as Returns from Socialized Industries and Services Become Available.

(a) Increase of income and inheritance taxes on a steeply graduated scale. (b) Surtax on unused land. (c) Industrial and agricultural fuel oil to be tax free.

C.C.F. Provincial Policy

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE C.C.F. AND ALL OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES?

This difference must be made clear before an intelligent choice on the part of the electorate is possible.

The C.C.F. is democratic in that the rank and file of its membership determines its policies and chooses its candidates for elections without interference on the part of any official or external authority. It also differs from the older parties in that it is financed by the small subscriptions freely given by its members and by collections taken at public meetings. This method of financing, although often leaving the treasury as bare as Mrs. Hubbard's cupboard, protects the movement from falling under the domination of those who might willingly finance it in order to use it as a means of maintaining their own privileges. Democratic control and financing through membership dues and public collections are very significant differences, but they are minor when compared with that fundamental difference in economic policy which draws a line sharply between the C.C.F. and all other major political parties.

That policy may be stated briefly. It is a planned system of national economy in which the production of goods takes place not for the profit of a few, as is now the case, but for the use of all.

WHAT IS MEANT BY SOCIAL OWNERSHIP?

Production for the use of all instead of for profits for a few implies social ownership, or ownership by all of us

together. For if the machines of production, the natural resources from which raw material and power are derived, and the financial institutions are owned by a favored few, they will not produce for use. They are in a profit system engaged in a profit-making game.

If, therefore, the economic policy of the nation is to come under the direction of this new motive of production for use, the ownership of the means of production must pass from private or individual ownership to public ownership. So that banks, transportation, electric power, factories, oil, coal, and timber etc., would be owned by all the people. Dividends are being paid today to the few who do own these things. As years go by their dividends grow larger as they pass into fewer hands.

Only when the sources of a nation's wealth are owned by the people, will the people have access to the wealth that is produced. Just as private ownership yields private dividends, so social ownership will yield social dividends or dividends for all.

WHAT THINGS ARE TO BE SOCIALLY OWNED?

The C.C.F. desires the public ownership only of those things which, properly considered, are public property. There is no intention of doing away with private property. Rather the intention is to prevent that which is really public property from remaining in private hands as a means by which the many are exploited. It has been convenient in the past for our opponents to claim that we seek to end all private ownership and private property. This was and is purposeful misrepresentation, of course. The fact of the matter is that we recognize that private property in the true sense should not be publicly owned. But we also declare that public property should not be privately owned. We go further and say that the basic evil of capitalism is that what should be public property is in private hands, enabling those in whose hands it is, to make large profits while the people who are thus being plundered of their own property are in want.

It is not difficult to determine what in the nature of things should be public and what should be private property. Things which should be private or public property are determined by their nature and function. For example, air and sunlight may be regarded as natural resources absolutely essential to the life of every living thing. They are not privately owned chiefly because up to the present it has been found impossible to so control air and sunlight that they might be sold in small quantities to individuals.

But there are other natural resources as essential to life indirectly as air and sunlight are directly, but which are said to be privately owned, and at least are at the disposal of private individuals. We say that it is just as absurd that the power of a river, the minerals in the earth, a machine of production, a transportation system or a banking institution which all people must use directly or indirectly in order to live, should be privately owned as it would be if air and sunlight were privately owned and sold to individuals at two cents for a quarter.

The C.C.F. contends that the great agencies of production, natural or mechanical, which are essential to human life on this planet must be regarded as public property. Since these things have passed into private hands they must be recaptured for the public. But one's personal belongings such as a home, furniture, what one has earned by one's own labor, one's savings, are all private property and at the disposal of the individual citizen as he sees fit.

The more public property is privately owned, the less private property will be owned by those who compose the public. The C.C.F. is a crusading movement to recapture for the people the means by which they live. We repeat, that according to the C.C.F. philosophy, property which is essential to everyone's life, and which when owned by an individual enables him to exploit all others, is properly considered public property and must be recaptured for the public. By this policy the C.C.F. must stand or fall. A paragraph from John Strachey's "Why You Should be a Social-

ist" will help to make the point of difference between private and public property more clear:

"Private property in the means of production carries an income with it; private property in consumers' goods does not carry an income with it. For instance, if you own \$500 worth of shares in the Austin factory in Birmingham, you will get an income from these shares. But if you own an Austin motorcar priced \$500, no one will dream of paying you anything because you own that motorcar. On the contrary, you will have to pay quite a lot of taxation and upkeep and the like for the privilege of owning it. There you have the distinction." The C.C.F. does not propose to interfere with the latter sort of private ownership.

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN ALBERTA TOWARD THIS PROGRAM OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP?

There should be no misunderstanding on the part of the citizens of Alberta in this connection. We have stated in the preamble of our provincial platform that "it is not constitutionally possible to set up a complete Cooperative Commonwealth within the province of Alberta." But it is quite as important for us to realize that without definite action on the part of the Alberta government and without its active and purposeful co-operation with the Dominion government, it would be equally impossible to achieve the Co-operative Commonwealth.

In other words, under our constitution the social ownership program of the C.C.F. will be partly achieved under provincial and partly under Dominion jurisdiction. We propose to solve our economic problems by constitutional means. We recognize that our province is an integral part of the Dominion and that under the constitution certain powers are exercisable by the province and must not be infringed upon by the central government, while on the other hand certain powers were conferred on the central government and must not be encroached upon by any provincial government.

The objectives of the C.C.F., therefore, must be worked out in both fields of action. It is just as essential that socialization of those means of wealth production which properly fall within the powers of the province, should take place, as it is that those means of wealth production which fall within the powers of the central government should be socialized. Accordingly the C.C.F. has set forth the specific action it proposes to take in these respective fields if and when power is achieved.

WHAT IS A POLITICAL PLATFORM FOR?

It has been humorously or perhaps cynically said that political platforms are made for parties to "get in" on. That has been to a large extent true in the past. But it is now the case that the platforms made by politicians to "get in" on are subsequently used by the public for the same politicians to "get out" on. And rightly so. If democracy is to survive, or if it is to be worth survival, it must insist that its elected representatives must be honest with it. They must fulfil the pledges on which they are elected or resign.

The provincial platform of the C.C.F. is a pledge that if elected to power it will proceed to implement these specific proposals during the five years of office. This platform must be regarded as progressive steps to be taken provincially toward the objective of a Co-operative Commonwealth. The Federal platform of the C.C.F. dovetails with the provincial into the national economy.

WHERE SHOULD PUBLIC OWNERSHIP IN THE PROVINCE BEGIN?

A program of socialization whether in the Federal or provincial field will have to be carried out progressively. That is to say it will be done step by step. The experience of Russia, of the Scandinavian countries and of New Zealand all go to show that it is not practicable to leap from a capitalist society in the process of disintegration, into a co-operative commonwealth in one act.

Since it is expedient for a government, and especially a provincial government, to begin its program of social-

ization by taking one or two things at a time, it becomes at once important what those things shall be.

The answer to the question, "where should social ownership in the province begin?" is that it must begin with those resources, industries or services that are ripe for socialization.

WHAT IS MEANT BY BEING RIPE FOR SOCIALIZATION?

A natural resource may be regarded as ripe for socialization when an individual or corporation has secured a monopoly of it, or when the natural resource in question is limited in quantity and may be wasted to make a few millionaires while the people are deprived of necessary supplies. Or an industry in which the waste of competition amounts to a national economic loss, is ripe for public ownership.

Oil is a good example of the waste of a natural resource which is limited in quantity and which is being wasted to make a few millionaires. What advantage have the fuel oil consumers of Alberta derived from the Alberta oil fields? The supply of fuel oil from Alberta fields is probably sufficient for all of Canada, but marketing difficulties prevent oil operators from supplying the Canadian demand. But this does not mean that the people of Alberta, who really own the oil if anyone owns it, obtain the fuel oil they require at a reduced price. Meanwhile a great waste of gas and oil goes on.

The net result will be that ultimately Alberta oil resources will be exhausted with nothing to show for it but a few nondescript millionaires. Such a resource is ripe for collective ownership. It should be conserved for the use of the people, but it is being wasted to make millionaires. It can't be conserved under competitive production for profit; it can be conserved only by socialization.

Meanwhile an extravagant and unjustified wastage of gas goes on. Millions of cubic feet of gas are wasted every day. The C.C.F. being untrammelled by capitalist influence is alone in demanding that this waste must stop.

The C.C.F. is realistic enough to adopt and enforce adequate conservation methods.

When Albertans think of Turner Valley they can appreciate the words of Hon. R. B. Bennett when he said in the House of Commons: "I believe that there is no government in Canada that does not regret today that it has parted with some of its natural resources for considerations wholly inadequate and on terms that do not reflect the principle under which the Crown holds the natural resources in trust for all the people."

Let it be supposed that Pigeon Lake was the only possible water supply for the whole province of Alberta. In that case would the government lease sections of the lake to capitalistic pumpers who desired to make profit out of the peoples' necessity? And would the government permit the capitalist pumpers to waste two gallons of water for every one which reached the thirsty people, and allow them to charge the thirsty people as much for that one gallon as would pay for the two wasted, and a profit besides? Surely the people of Alberta in that case would be ready to socialize Pigeon Lake and send the wasteful profit-seeking pumpers about their business. At any rate, Pigeon Lake under such circumstances, would be ripe for social ownership.

The oil fields of Alberta are in the position that Pigeon Lake would be in were it the sole supply of water for the province, and under capitalist control.

An industry is ripe for social ownership either when the waste, due to competition, increases the price beyond the purchasing power of the consumer or when an industry has achieved a monopolistic status in which it can fix its own price.

A social service is ripe for socialization when the people whose taxes build and maintain the institution, are unable to pay for the services it offers. There are people in Alberta who have paid taxes to build and equip a municipal hospital, but who are unable to pay the per diem charge in that institution when they are sick. There are

many people in Alberta who have paid taxes to build a University but who are unable to send their children there to be educated. These institutions are ripe for socialization.

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF WEALTH AND THE SOCIAL SERVICES WHICH THE C.C.F. PROPOSES FIRST TO BRING UNDER PUBLIC OWNERSHIP IN ALBERTA?

Electrical power, oil and packing plants are specifically mentioned. These have been selected as coming within the two classifications made above, namely a natural resource such as oil which is being wasted under ruthless competition and giving no advantage to the people who in reality own the oil resources, and industries which like electrical power and packing plants have achieved a virtual monopoly.

It must not be thought, however, that the process of socialization will stop at these. They are only first steps and indicative of a program of progressive public ownership.

HOW ARE OIL AND POWER TO BE RECAPTURED FOR THE PUBLIC?

Oil and water power are natural resources. All governments in Alberta have permitted speculators to exploit and to waste this natural wealth without reducing the price of the product to the people or giving them a share of the profits made by the oil and power companies. This sort of thing must be stopped. We must check the draining of the oil fields by grasping capitalists and we must make electric power available to the people.

The provincial government will be within the constitution when it takes over the oil fields and the water power. It can and should expropriate oil and power. There will be legal difficulties about leases, there will be problems of financing, but neither are insurmountable.

While negotiations and financing are pending, the government could take over the entire distribution of fuel

oil, just as it took over the distribution of liquor. Fuel oil to farmers and industries is more important than liquor, and the one would probably yield as much revenue as the other.

WHERE WILL THE MONEY COME FROM?

This question may be answered very briefly. Any person or government which owns real wealth need not have any trouble about money. Real wealth is the mother of money. If the Alberta government had oil and power it would get money. Having nothing it can only get money from taxes. The whole trouble with the Social Credit government was that it expected to create money without having the ownership of the real wealth which alone justifies the creation of money.

Let it further be remembered that the government of Alberta, if it will assert its rights, owns the oil and power already. It does not need to buy them. All that the oil companies own are the holes in the ground which they have drilled and the derricks above them. It should be possible to pay for these holes in the ground by selling the oil which comes out of them. That is where the money will come from. Where else could it come from?

DO THE PEOPLE OF ALBERTA DESIRE TO HAVE CHEAPER FUEL OIL AND ELECTRIC POWER?

Power is the secret of modern civilization. Machines without power would be of little advantage. It is power generated by oil and coal and water, etc., which has taken the place of men in the industrial field and brought about the army of the unemployed. These unemployed are now being inadequately fed and cared for by doles from the taxes of the people. Why should not the government take the profits from the power which displaced these men, and thus help give them a decent living and at the same time relieve the burden of taxation?

There are two alternatives before the people in connection with these matters. They can continue to permit their own resources to remain in the hands of profit seek-

ing corporations and to be used against themselves as weapons of exploitation, or they can repossess their alienated resources. One thing is certain, and that is that oil and water power cannot belong to capitalists and be available for the use of the people at one and the same time. Which is it to be? It is for the people of Alberta to say. If they still say "Let the capitalists and speculators have our oil and our electrical power," then they are merely unfit to survive.

WHY SHOULD A PACKING PLANT BE A PRIVATE MONOPOLY?

A packing plant in an agricultural country like Canada is one of the important industries of the nation. The report of the Royal Commission on Price Spreads reveals that there is in this vital industry a virtual monopoly. It showed that there were over fifty-four million dollars of capital invested in the packing industry in 1933. The report says that "The history of the past twenty-five years is little more than a succession of mergers and consolidations resulting in a steadily decreasing number of medium-sized plants, and an increasing dominance by the consolidated units." To such an extent has this developed that of the \$92,000,000 production by the entire industry in 1933, the two largest concerns account for \$79,000,000 of it or 85 per cent of the entire packing plant business.

After showing that while during the depression the return to the primary producer declined by 50.9 per cent, while the returns to the packing companies declined only 24.5 per cent the Price Spreads Commission report mildly says: "We cannot therefore escape the conclusion that the continued prosperity of Canada Packers Limited during the depression bears some relation to the enjoyment of relative freedom from competition. That the inadequacy of such competition has operated to the detriment of the primary producer seems evident."

But this industry is still operating to the detriment of the primary producer and nothing has so far been done by any government to remedy the situation. The packing

plants go on to make their millions of profits while farmers sell at prices often below production costs. As an example of what actually takes place in the packing industry the case of Canada Packers may be fittingly quoted. For the five years preceding March 29th, 1934, that company allowed for depreciation and repairs \$6,000,000 or nearly 52 per cent of the average depreciable value of the fixed assets. This was of course over and above the regular profits.

The Canada Packers Limited is a holding company owning the Harris Abattoirs Limited, the Harris Abattoirs Western Limited, Gunn's Limited, Gunn, Langlois and Co. Ltd., Canada Packing Company, Limited, William Davies Company Inc., William Davies Company, Limited, and Ontario Fertilizer Company, Limited. The Price Spread report concludes that the packing industry which is of national importance, "presents an illustration both of large scale production and monopolistic concentration. . . . One further result . . . is that during a trying period of economic readjustment the dominating packer has been able substantially to protect his profit margin while other branches of the industry, more especially the live stock producer have had to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of depression."

So we see by actual evidence that while in 1933 and through the depression farmers were not getting sufficient money for a steer to pay the freight on shipping him, the packing plants maintained the prices of meat to the consumers and thus made high profits while both the primary producers and the consumers were starving. The producer is at the mercy of the packers in respect to weight, grade and price of live stock. With three strings to the packers' bow, how could the farmer escape?

CAN THE PEOPLE OWN THE PACKING BUSINESS?

A monopoly exists in the packing industry. That monopoly contrives on the one hand to cheat the farmers out of a fair price for their live stock and on the other to

overcharge the consumer. A practice of this sort will some day be seen for what it is, legalized banditry. Only a government that is either socially and morally blind, or that is entirely at the mercy of such a corporation through the economic power of interlocking directorates, would tolerate such a monopoly in the nation's food supply as the packing industry represents.

Public ownership of this industry is the remedy. It would be more appropriate were the packing industry to be brought under public ownership by action of the Federal government. But since neither of the major parties in Canada is free to take such action when in office, there is no reason why a provincial government should not either acquire the packing plants of Alberta through purchase at replacement value or else set up a plant of its own. The C.C.F. believes that a publicly owned packing plant is necessary and practicable in the province of Alberta and if elected, pledges itself to the implementing of that policy.

WHAT ABOUT DEBT?

It may be said right off that the C.C.F. does not propose to become a collecting agency for the debts of capitalism. In fact, if capitalism could pay its debts there would be no need for the C.C.F. Having said that we turn to face the reality of the situation. Everyone agrees with the principle that honest debt should be paid and most people really desire to pay such debt. But under a debt creating system such as we now have, when a man borrows \$10,000, pays back \$10,000 and still owes \$10,000, we may well query the advisability of trying to pay up.

At any rate the fact is that while everyone is paying debt, debt, both public and private, continues to grow at an alarming rate. So much is this the case that any party aspiring to power either in a province or in the Dominion cannot escape the obligation of stating its policy on the debt situation.

The debts now heaped on the backs of the Alberta people represent the wreck of an economic system. The

C.C.F. does not desire to salvage that system even if that were possible. But we believe it is impossible to pay present debts with the incomes which the system affords to the debtors. So the first duty of a C.C.F. government would be to rescue the people from the wreck of the system by insisting that "human life and all the requirements of human life shall take precedence over debt rights."

HOW WOULD WE GIVE PRECEDENCE TO LIFE REQUIREMENTS?

The C.C.F. would pass an Exemptions Act providing that farmers and workers must receive an income sufficient for an adequate standard of living before debt can be legally collected. Surely there could be no objections to this. Creditors would hardly claim that interest should be paid before children have bread. With this protection to human life we can afford to wait until the creditors come to their senses and voluntarily write off that part of the debt which they know it is impossible to pay.

HOW MUCH DEBT CAN BE PAID?

The amount of public debt that can and should be paid is that surplus of taxation over and above that which is required for the maintenance of public services. The amount of debt which an individual can pay is that amount left from his income after he has taken care of his family adequately. Under a C.C.F. government that is all the debt which anyone would be required to pay, indeed no one can possibly pay any more than that except at the expense of the requirements of life. We would therefore negotiate the reduction of all private debts to that point where they can be paid in a reasonable time while retaining for the debtor and his family an adequate standard of living from income. If and when the creditors were willing to reduce debt on that basis then debt should and would be paid. We should continue to protect the debtors' living until the creditors agree to that principle of debt reduction. If they never agree the debtor will have his living anyhow and need not worry.

CAN PYRAMIDING OF PRIVATE DEBTS BE PREVENTED?

Debt pyramids through the operation of the interest system. Interest rates and regulations are in the hands of the Dominion government. Still it is within the power of a provincial government to prevent the pyramiding of debt in another way. First let us take an example of what actually takes place as things are now. A farmer, we shall say, wants to borrow a thousand dollars. He expects to pay that back in a certain number of years from his crops. But the first year he has no crop, he is haled out and therefore he can't even pay the interest, so the interest is added. The next year he is dried out and again the interest is added. The third year he is frozen out and again the interest is added. Now the question arises why should the money lender claim a profit when nature denied any returns from the enterprise in which he risked his money? In other words, why should a money lender not take the same risks of crop loss from natural causes as the farmer? If he did there would be no interest charged in years of crop failure and the farmer would start the following year no farther behind than he was the year before.

We believe that this is a sound principle and therefore the C.C.F. would pass legislation to the effect that mortgage agreements and every Agreement of Sale of land in order to be legal, must contain a clause stating that in any year in which, through crop failure or poor prices, the income of any person who may have borrowed money against such property, is less than the sum fixed in the exemption, there shall be no payment due on the principal and no interest chargeable for that year. The contract of the debtor would thus be extended each year a crop failure occurred. The same principle would be made to apply to the homes of workers who through no fault of their own are thrown out of employment.

As a result of such legislation, contracts will not be in arrears during crop failures or times of unemployment

because payments of principal will automatically be deferred for a year and no interest will be chargeable. In other words, by such legislation those who lend money will be compelled to take the same risks of crop failure through natural causes or of low prices for farm products or for unemployment, that the farmer and worker takes. And surely that is as it ought to be.

WORKERS PROBLEMS MUST BE SOLVED

It is now general knowledge that it is impossible to continue technological improvement under private ownership of the producing machine without affecting the wage earners adversely. It is true that extensive mechanization will reduce production costs and make for greater capitalistic efficiency, but it is also true that under the profit motive this results in reducing wages and in depriving many willing workers of the opportunity to work for a living.

The National Employment Commission, in its enquiry into the hours of employment in Alberta found that thousands of hours in excess of 44 hours per week were being worked by a section of the workers while on the other hand thousands of people were in complete idleness. Estimates based on the Commission's report indicate that if the surplus hours now being worked by a section of the people were redistributed on the basis of a 40-hour week, 9,000 more persons could be employed.

Our contention here is not that unnecessary work should be created just in order that people may be employed. By all means let technical improvement go on but it must be insisted upon that the work that has to be done whether much or little shall be equitably distributed, and that each worker receive sufficient income for the work done to maintain a standard of living in keeping with the abundant production of mechanized industry.

In spite of unprecedented war activity and with millions enlisted unemployment is increasing in Britain and in Canada we still have about half a million out of work. It does not require a very keen imagination to realize what

will happen when the war is over and we plunge into the inevitable depression, inevitable because the system which brings about this ridiculous situation will be retained if those desiring to change the system do not come to power.

We maintain that under a system of production for use there is plenty of work to be done, plenty to keep every worker busy for as many hours a week as it is advantageous for him to work. The following facts from the cities of Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary reveal the great need of houses for our people and show what could be done in the building trades alone.

In Winnipeg in 1939 there were 5,743 families on relief. Of these 13 per cent were found to be living in one room, and 26 per cent of them lived in two rooms; in Edmonton there were 2,031 families on relief, with 16.2 per cent of them living in one room and 21.1 per cent living in two rooms; in Calgary there were 2,496 families on relief and 11.9 per cent of them lived in one room and 25.9 per cent lived in two rooms.

ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

Political democracy is of little value unless we use it to achieve economic democracy. Economic democracy means at least that every person in the community shall have the opportunity and the obligation to do a fair share of the work necessary to produce the goods and services essential to the highest possible standard of living; it means also that the people shall have control of the economic policy and a share in the direction of industry, the means by which they live. Canadians have voted for parliamentary representatives, but they have never voted on a banking policy, or on an industrial policy of any sort. The workers in a factory are not consulted about the industry in which they spend their lives. We hope to win the fight for democracy in Europe. Have we as good a hope to win it in Canada?

Steps toward economic democracy are the absolute unquestioned right of workers to organize and to engage

in collective bargaining; control by them of the conditions under which they work; and the right to a fair share of that which their efforts have helped to produce, and a definite participation in deciding by negotiation as to what is a fair share. These principles are accepted as fundamental by the C.C.F.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT IN ALBERTA?

Unemployment is the most characteristic phase of the modern economic problem. It springs from the very roots of capitalism. Its cure implies a change of economic system and therefore the Federal government is involved. A provincial government alone cannot solve the unemployment problem, although when the time comes to apply the solution the provincial governments will play an important part.

The C.C.F. in its provincial program takes the position that the unemployed must be provided with work at prevailing wages or else given adequate relief. But experience has taught that it is not practicable for a provincial government to even provide adequate relief. For Confederation, which imposed so many social obligations on the provinces, failed to confer also an adequate source of finance with which to meet such obligations.

For these reasons unemployment and relief are essentially matters for the central government. The C.C.F. if entrusted with power in this province would use its influence to the end that the Dominion government assume all responsibility for unemployment relief. Meanwhile, we would endeavor to give people work to do rather than doles, not that there is anything particularly wrong with the dole except that it is not even a step toward the solution of the problem. If, however, all the millions of dollars expended by Alberta and the Dominion governments jointly for the past ten years had been spent on an irrigation project for the south country, or in building better roads, highways and schools, etc., the unemployed would have been employed and the province would have assets

where it now only has debts. It is true that it would take more money to carry through a work and wages program than it would to extend a relief dole sufficient for a mere existence. But it would be better to expend much money and have assets to show for it, than to expend considerable sums and have nothing but a half-starved and dissatisfied unemployed army to show for the expenditure.

While the province still nominally is responsible for the unemployed, the C.C.F. will insist on adequate relief. It is better to have adequate relief and bankrupt the capitalist system, than to have inadequate relief and break human hearts and destroy human life. The C.C.F., however, must rely in large measure upon its federal program for adequate treatment of the unemployed situation.

IS EDUCATION WITHIN THE REACH OF EVERY CHILD?

That the doors of our public schools are open to every child in the province is a fact. This in itself is a great achievement and has long been a matter in which we have taken pride. But that is not enough. It takes more than open school doors to provide an education. Even apart from the physical well-being of the children—an important consideration which should also be a governmental responsibility—it is necessary that text books and other essential equipment should be provided. There is no more crushing psychological experience for a child than to appear in class without pencils, note books and text books and have to be obliged to share the equipment of some other pupil. But when it comes to High School there are many parents who just cannot afford to outfit their children and pay examination fees. Because of this many brilliant children never enter High School at all. While these things are so, it cannot be said that education is within reach of every child.

IS THERE A DISADVANTAGE TO RURAL CHILDREN?

Of this there can be no doubt. Much of the disadvantage of rural children as compared to those in towns and

cities in matters of education is due to circumstances which it will not be easy to overcome. As things are now, however, there are practically no High Schools in rural Alberta. So that when a farmer's child wants to obtain secondary education he must go to the nearest town or city, pay tuition and board, and otherwise incur expenses which are far beyond the means of the farming population as a whole. If, then, education is any advantage in life—and we believe that it is—children in rural Alberta do not get a fair start if not assisted through education to develop their native abilities and to discover each for himself the field of activity and public service which will give him the greatest satisfaction.

THEN WHAT OF THE UNIVERSITY?

It is difficult for many children, both urban and rural, to go through high school because they lack the means. It is more difficult for very many more of them to reach the University. Only a small percentage of them do reach it. Many children who manage to finance a high school course find it impossible to proceed to University. On the other hand, no doubt, there have been many who were privileged to attend University who had not the capacity for nor the interest in higher learning necessary for them to make the best use of their opportunity. Meanwhile, it is not unlikely that for lack of that opportunity there are many who remain untutored whose education would be of great advantage to the community and to the race.

WHAT DOES THE C.C.F. PROPOSE IN RESPECT TO EDUCATION?

- (1) That the provincial government — which of course means the people of Alberta—shall accept responsibility for the financing of education. In other words, that education be free to every individual child.
- (2) This implies free text books and supplies for every pupil in the public school.

(3) That High School and the University shall be as free to the individual student as the public school. This does not mean, of course, that every youth shall be forced to take high school and university courses. But it does mean that to everyone with sufficient capacity to make proper use of such opportunities and who desire to avail themselves of them, they shall be free. It is so today that only those who have sufficient money can avail themselves of higher education. We propose that only those scholars who shall go to universities and that they can go whether they have money or not. In 1938 the University cost the taxpayers of the province \$533,388.90. The total fees collected for that year were \$233,153.58. So that it would cost only this latter sum to open wide the doors of the University to every youth who possesses the intellectual ability to profit from entering it.

(4) That there shall be a greater diversity in the courses of instruction so as to meet the needs of a student body of varied interests and aptitudes. And further that recognition should be given to achievements by a student in whatever line of study he chooses to follow. The tendency among our own educationists today is decidedly in this direction. Their efforts should and would be deliberately encouraged by a C.C.F. government.

WILL FREE EDUCATION PAY?

No doubt there will be those who will ask if free education can be afforded? The answer is that we cannot afford any other sort of education. High Schools and Universities are built by the taxes of the people. But many people so taxed cannot afford to send their children to the institutions which they helped to build. Having started by building the institutions, we cannot afford to do other than follow through so that the children may be able to avail themselves of the educational facilities our taxes have provided. But that is only a small part of the story. Education is the preparation of the individual for the life which he has to live. If that preparation is neglected living in

the truest sense is not possible. Then of course education is more important than ever from the economic point of view. Production is becoming more and more of a scientific and technical process. To be ignorant today is to perish. So we just cannot afford not to provide an opportunity for every child to obtain the best education of which he or she is capable. To insure this, education must be free all along the line from public school to university. Yes, we believe that education will pay in the economic sense, but what is of still greater concern it will pay in real life values.

CAN BETTER HEALTH SERVICES BE PROVIDED?

The C.C.F. believes that a great improvement in health services is possible. According to a speech made over CJCA on February 10th, 1938, by Hon. Dr. Cross, Minister of Health in the present government, health services in Alberta are very inadequate. The minister then told the people of Alberta that from 50 to 75 per cent of the children of this province required dental care which they could not afford to provide; that 20 per cent suffered from diseased tonsils, 10 per cent from eye trouble, and five per cent from diseased ears. These suffering children we were told are unable to secure adequate attention for these ailments.

Continuing, the Minister of Health said that 1200 people die in Alberta each year who would not die if they had proper medical attention; that 300 children die in this province each year who would not die if they had medical care. Surely that is serious enough to warrant a better policy. A loss of 1200 people each year who could be saved is worse than the Alberta casualty list during the Great War. And think of the loss of 300 children annually. Who knows but some among them might have the brain to help solve the human problems of the modern world.

Premature death for lack of medical care is a disgrace to any community today. This matter of health ser-

vices is first a humane act. We cannot sit idly by while 1200 of our fellows perish each year when it is within our power to save them. Then of course there is the tremendous economic loss through illness, much of which could be prevented.

For these reasons the C.C.F. believes that adequate health services is a social responsibility. This service will be carried on under two main branches. The one preventive, the other curative. As to the first, if a state assumes responsibility for the health of its citizens it should see to it that each person is in possession of the indispensable prerequisites of health, namely, adequate diet and sanitary, comfortable homes. What would be the use of administering state medicine to a patient who had contracted or induced disease through malnutrition? To undertake preventive measures in a thorough way will most surely bring to the front the question of food and may lead to a national policy of food supply. Then in respect to curative measures that must be made available to every person without direct cost to the individual, the C.C.F. pledges itself to this twofold health program: preventive measures carried out rigidly and comprehensively under the highest available medical skill, and free medical attention for all who require it. The provincial government is to finance and control the entire health services of the people.

The benefits of a State medical system were well summarized in a speech by Dr. Hugh MacLean when he said:

"The objective of a State Medical system should be to prevent disease and promote physical and mental health, and thus increase human efficiency, effectiveness and happiness. Prevention should be the foremost endeavor of any system because by it there will undoubtedly be a limitation of disease and its severity. Through this there will ultimately be a lessening in the financial cost to the state and an increase in the efficiency and well-being of the individual. The Province could be divided into health

units. Each unit should have a Health Preventive Group, consisting of doctors, nurses and others necessary, who would be experts in this branch of service. Sanitation could be taken care of. Schools could be visited and the health of the children checked up. Innoculations and vaccinations could be undertaken. Disease or proneness to disease could be discovered at its source and measures undertaken before any advancement of ill-health began. Here also the curative side of practice could be undertaken with the hospital as the centre. The doctor could then do the work for which he is best suited and especially trained and then he could devote his energies not to the competition of securing a living, but to the striving after better results in his work. The nurse could also be employed, when the necessity of the patient requiring special attention is the reason for her employment, and not the financial position of the patient irrespective of the need. Other branches of medical service, such as dentists, druggists, physio-therapists, etc., could be utilized. Of course, this arrangement may not be put into force immediately, but this could be the ultimate object aimed at. In the meantime, Socialized Medicine could guarantee to every individual any and all necessary benefits of medical service."

WHAT IS THE PLACE OF THE CO-OPERATIVES?

Co-operative organizations whether among producers or consumers are welcomed by the C.C.F. For in the Co-operative Commonwealth of our objective such co-operatives will play an important part. In this matter we believe that Sweden and other Scandinavian countries may be safely and profitably followed. When all the agencies of wealth production and distribution which should belong to the public are finally brought under public ownership, co-operatives will in all probability be the chief method of management and operation. No doubt there will be public corporations to handle such industries as a transportation system. There will be services like the post office under

direct government control, but in the great field of distribution it is likely that co-operatives will be the method of the future. For this reason a C.C.F. government would take care to encourage this movement by providing the necessary legislation, by assisting financially and in every other way possible to assist in building up the co-operatives. They are an indispensable part of the coming Co-operative Commonwealth.

SHOULD POLITICIANS PLAY FAST AND LOOSE WITH THE CIVIL SERVICE?

The C.C.F. unhesitatingly opposes political patronage in the Civil Service no matter by which party it may be practised. Civil Servants who are on the permanent staff and who are efficient should feel that they are safe in their positions as long as they perform their duties with honesty and efficiency. There is no other basis upon which it is possible to build an efficient service.

During the past three years in particular the Civil Service has been wantonly wrecked and demoralized by the interference of politicians where they have no business to interfere. The C.C.F. pledges itself to purge the Civil Service of Alberta from political patronage and under a Civil Service Commission to model the Civil Service of Alberta after that of Great Britain.

The discharging of experienced civil servants and even heads of departments without cause and their replacement by inexperienced political henchmen has been a common practice in recent years in this province. Indeed political interference has extended even to reputable magistrates in the discharge of their duties in the administration of justice. These are practices which are as dangerous as they are obnoxious and the C.C.F. means to put an end to them.

IS DEMOCRACY IN DANGER?

Democracy is endangered whenever there is an attempt to interfere with the private citizen within the

sphere of his acknowledged liberties. Freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of the press, and freedom in religious conviction must not be tampered with. The Licensing Act, the Press Act, the Act to Deprive Certain Citizens of their Civil Rights and the amendments to the Judicature Act, all passed by the present government in Alberta sought to curtail that liberty of the citizen by which alone democracy can survive. The C.C.F. protests against these fascist tendencies and will protect democracy by safeguarding the liberties on which it rests.

CAN TAXATION BE REDUCED?

The present government in Alberta did not fulfill one promise made to the people prior to the last election. But they did the very opposite to that which they promised in several important instances. Taxation is one of these instances. We were to have taxes reduced and eventually no taxes at all. The fact is, however, that taxation in this province has never been as high as it is now.

Taxation in some form can never be done away with as long as the public want services. We believe, however, that taxation in Alberta could be reduced very considerably by the simple expedient of honest and efficient administration. The conditions revealed by the Lunney investigation into the building of highways may be taken as typical of that careless inefficiency which characterizes the administration.

The C.C.F. would rigidly adhere to the principle of imposing taxation according to ability to pay. This would mean in Alberta at the present time that a very much higher income tax would be imposed in the higher income brackets than is now the case. Those for example who receive incomes as high as cabinet ministers would pay very much more income tax than a clerk or stenographer with an income of say \$100 per month. We would reverse the practice of the present government which took a much greater percentage of the income of the lower paid citi-

zens than of those with larger incomes when the income tax was last raised. A C.C.F. government would expect in time to receive considerable revenue from publicly owned industries such as oil, power, packing plants and liquor. And income tax would be reduced as incomes from such publicly owned enterprises increased.

For the above platform the C.C.F. solicits the support of the electorate of Alberta. The task of the C.C.F. is to take the power to rule the country out of the hands of the few who by hook or crook lay claim to the ownership of the country. We must have power. Power is the way to prosperity, to justice and to peace. And that power is in your ballot. All that the C.C.F. asks is that the voters of Alberta use their ballots in their own best interests. For if they do they will vote C.C.F.

If you are interested in the C.C.F., you may obtain information about membership, etc., by writing to—

PROVINCIAL SECRETARY, C.C.F.
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