

These Men Know It— Why Conceal It?

“CAPITAL,” says Newton D. Baker in writing to Samuel Gompers, “is but the stored-up products of labor, available for further production by continued co-operation with labor.” Correct! But Newton and Samuel both know, very well, that there is another factor besides Labor and Capital entering into the production and distribution of Wealth. This factor—Land—both studiously refrain from mentioning. Why? The United Steel Corporation is a bigger landowner than it is a Capitalist. It is private monopoly of land and transportation which makes the struggle for chances to work for wages, and to use capital, so keen. And these men know it, for they have read “Progress and Poverty.” Neither one, however, can be induced to mention the fundamental cause of industrial troubles. Why? —HOWARD M. HOLMES, in *Cleveland Citizen*.

BOOK NOTICES

THE AGRICULTURAL BLOC*

The story of the formation of what is popularly known as the “farm bloc” in the United States Senate is clearly and concisely told in this volume by Senator Arthur Capper, of Kansas. The attempt to secure representation in Congress for the farming interests has attracted nationwide attention, both on account of the breaking up of strict party lines, and the manifest power of a small aggressive body of Senators to dictate terms to that conservative and generally reactionary body. The forces of privilege and monopoly that for so many years controlled Congress have cared little about the character of the Representatives in the House. So long as they owned the party leaders in the Senate there was little danger of legislation that would interfere with their well-adjusted system of plundering the wealth producers. Suddenly there appeared the “farm bloc,” an apparent effort of honest though ill-advised Senators to upset the established order under which bills in the interest of the public were either killed in committee or talked to death on the Senate floor.

Urged by their farmer constituents the “bloc” Senators hastened to propose various measures for the relief of the great basic agricultural industry, which was in a deplorable condition as the result of the collapse of the war inflation. None of the bills submitted were of a radical nature; most of them could bring no relief to the poverty-stricken farmers, but the fact that they received respectful consideration showed that the old-time Senatorial bosses had lost control of the machine, and that another power than the party caucus must be reckoned with.

The origin of the farmer's efforts to shape national legislation is to be found in the conditions arising out of the ill-fated Canadian Reciprocity Act of 1911. The Republican Party, repudiated by the country at the Congressional election of 1910, foresaw inevitable defeat facing it in 1912, and in a desperate attempt to control public sentiment its leaders entered into an agreement with representatives of the great newspapers by which the latter were to have duty-free print paper in return for support of an arrangement under which Canadian farm products were to be put on the free list. This action of the Republican leaders was regarded as a betrayal of the farmers, who had been deluded for 50 years into voting for high duties on manufactures under the promise of building up the “home market,” and their resentment was shown when President Taft in 1912 carried only the two petty States of Utah and Vermont. From that time the organized farmers realized that they could not secure fair treatment from the old party

organizations, and took action looking to the election of Senators and Representatives who would protect their interests. It was this sentiment that led to the choice of the Senators who formed the “bloc,” and that is largely responsible for the changed attitude of Congress toward the farming interests.

Senator Capper tells a plain unvarnished story of the malign forces that have operated to impoverish and oppress the fundamental industry upon which the prosperity of all other industries, and commerce, depends. He shows how high freight rates, exorbitant interest charges, and high costs of everything the farmer buys, have brought ruin and distress to millions of those engaged in agriculture. He sees that the great increase in farm land values during the war period was of no benefit to the working farmer, but rather an injury, as it raised the assessed values on which taxes are paid. He points to the increasing number of tenant farmers, and the greatly increased indebtedness of the farmers in general, as proof that something is fundamentally wrong with conditions under which most of the producers of wealth from the soil can barely make a living. Yet when he comes to make suggestions for remedies he is pitifully weak. He favors a protective tariff, although he must know that for every dollar's benefit the average farmer gets from the tariff he loses at least 50 dollars in the added cost of what he buys. He says that the first thing to be done to promote the welfare of the farmers is the financing of agriculture by the government; that the government must provide for making loans and a better credit system. The government has no money. The government has no credit. The people have the money and the credit. If the government would stop stealing the farmers' money by oppressive taxes their credit would be all right, and they would not need to pay high interest charges to a band of exploiting financiers.

To the “farm bloc” leaders in Congress the Federal government evidently appears as a Lady Bountiful, with rich stores of wealth to help the poor people who have to work on the land. Until they realize that the way to restore prosperity to agriculture is to put an end to the hordes of parasites who live off the farmers' toil, they can do nothing to bring about better conditions for the industry they represent.

* The Agricultural Bloc. By U. S. Senator Arthur Capper. Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York City.

THE FARMERS IN POLITICS*

The story of the “Farmer's Group” political movement in Canada, that in a few years has given the farmers control of several Provincial Parliaments, and has sent more than sixty members to the Dominion House of Commons, is told by one who has been an active participant in the development of a sentiment favorable to independent action by the Canadian farmers. In cutting loose from the two old political parties, both of which made promises to protect the farmer's interests that were never kept, the Canadian farmers have shown a much broader vision and clearer knowledge of fundamental economics, than the well-meaning but mistaken leaders of the farmer's bloc in this country. Practically all the Canadian farm leaders are free traders, and many of them outspoken advocates of the Single Tax. There is little of Socialism, and no evidence that the “cheap money” notions that prevail in many farm regions of the United States have afflicted their northern neighbors. If the Canadian farmers will follow the counsels of such leaders as Crerar, Drury and Irvine, they will go far to establish a commonwealth based on essential Christian principles of liberty, justice and equality of opportunity in which the producers of wealth will receive the full value of their product.

* The Farmers in Politics. By William Irvine. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, Canada.

THE NEW THRIFT

We are glad to welcome a new and revised edition of Bolton Hall's “The New Thrift” from the press of B. W. Huebsch, of this city. It seems to us one of the best things Mr. Hall has done.