

NEW IDEAS ARE BEING MOLDED IN WAR'S CRUCIBLE

Social Welfare Is Forcing Its Demands to the At- tention of Men

The Greatest Tragedy of Human History May Bring Forth Good

A notable change in outlook, especially on political and economic questions, has been effected since the war began, observes the Alberta Non-Partisan, Calgary. Although a few men in high places still retain their individualistic circumscribed notions, it may be truly said that the masses of the people have completely changed their views in respect to many matters of fundamental importance. Slowly but surely the collective ideas are being recast in the minds of a new age. Organization is taking the place of the wasteful, haphazard methods of the commercial period now drawing to a close; co-operation is gradually superseding competition; the social welfare, even now, looms larger in the public eye than individualism; and service is becoming the slogan and end of industry instead of the selfish end of private profit. These are at least the noticeable tendencies which throw a ray of light across the dark sky which hangs over the modern world.

It is not likely that there will be a greater transformation in any department of our national life than that which is likely to be brought about in economics, and the character of public business resting thereon. It is generally acknowledged that these are questions of fundamental importance, forming as they do, the basis and function of every social institution.

The greatest tragedy of human history may become that school of necessity which never fails to drive its lessons home so forceful as to make a lasting impression. There are two important factors which make possible the continuation of the wholesale destruction of a modern war. The first of these is stored-up wealth and the second is organization. For three years the world has set itself to destroy; sixty millions of men have been withdrawn from productive labor and sent to kill each other and destroy property which represents generations of toil. But for the stored wealth on hand at the outbreak of war this could not have been done. But this wealth which became the capital invested in war, belonged to a favored few in each nation. These men lent the wealth to the people who created it, at a high rate of interest. While this capital has been destroyed in so far as the people are concerned, yet it will, for generations, continue to flow back to the capitalists and to their successors, while the people struggle to get back to the state of prosperity at which we were when war began.

Now the people of each nation, and humanity in general, would stand to gain were the claims of every capitalist waived after the war. That will be the moment to clean the slate of the civilized world. This capital represents the surplus earnings of the toiling masses, wrested from their toil-worn hands by a most iniquitous system. There is no longer any adequate reason why the war loans should be paid back. Conscription of men has robbed the financial kings of their last vestige of an excuse for demanding repayment. We can never replace the human life invested in this struggle; why repay with interest, the loans of money dishonestly acquired by those who lend? Will we start afresh in Canada after the war? How would it do to send a telegram announcing to every capitalist, the demise of his hoarded coin, and offer him in return the amount we pay our Canadian widows? Do this and war will stop automatically, immediately and forever.

The capitalist who has saved his skin at the cost of his wealth may consider himself particularly fortunate. We will do him a great favor by balancing the books and calling it square. This is one of the changes in public opinion brought about by the war, and if acted upon will enable us to begin the reconstruction of society on a new basis.

The second great factor making continued destruction possible has been organization for a definite and common purpose. This lesson will surely be valuable after the war when we start afresh on the problem of civilizing our civilization. Having ceased to destroy, and being free from a war debt by repudiating it as non-existent we could organize for national prosperity. What could be accomplished were we to employ the organization now devoted to destruction, in bringing about happiness and prosperity? To contemplate this makes the millenium look a common place and the most idealistic society a probability. Suppose that in the next twenty years we spend as much money in education, in building houses, roads and improvement of all public utilities as we have spent in war in three years. Couple with this the same genius for organization directed toward a nobler end, and we have possibilities of human well-being that stagger the imagination.

This must become the real freedom, the real democracy and the real civilization for which our men have died. We will begin on a new basis of equality of service and organize the nation for human well-being and general prosperity. This is the way to

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