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Angus MacInnis Papers

MacMillan "Exposes" Free Enterprise

From an unexpected quarter the CCF has received support in its exposure of the anti-social effects of "free enterprise." At the annual dinner of the Vancouver Board of Trade, H. R. MacMillan made a slashing attack on free enterprise, showing its detrimental effects on the economy of this province. Of course Mr. MacMillan did not refer to free enterprise as such. His fire was directed against the use made by eastern industrialists of their relatively stronger competitive position.

It is doubtful if either Mr. MacMillan or his dinner guests were aware that he was laying bare the inescapable consequences of competitive capitalism. The burden of his tirade was that British Columbia's industries are put at a disadvantage because of discriminatory freight rates and high tariffs designed to protect eastern industries. What Mr. MacMillan failed to tell his listeners was that there is no such thing as free competition—that is, competition among equals. In any kind of competition, some will have an advantage over the others in size, strength, cunning, ruthlessness or some other quality. The benefits of the advantage are cumulative: that is, with every success, the strong grow stronger, the big, bigger, and the ruthless, more ruthless. This truth is evident to anyone who cares to look. All one has to do is to observe the growth of the H. R. MacMillan interests in B.C.

It was rather unkind of Mr. MacMillan to refer to "the shiny new factories of the East." The fact that these factories are new indicates that they have been built during the war, and built either with money supplied by the government or money made out of the war. There is a feeling abroad that Mr. MacMillan hasn't done so badly out of the war himself. By the same token he is no more likely to give up any of the gains or advantages acquired during the war than the industrialists of the east are likely to give up their shiny new factories.

The difficulties of British Columbia's industries do not arise basically from high tariffs and discriminatory freight rates. These factors are results rather than causes. They have been created by the stronger competitors to protect and improve their position. Eastern capitalists in this respect are not different from western capitalists. They just got there first and they are bigger. Indeed, Canadian industrialists, east and west, are no different from American industrialists, British industrialists, European or Asiatic industrialists. In a competitive economy—the kind of economy to which Mr. MacMillan and the Board of Trade give lip-service—every commercial interest works to eliminate competition and create a monopoly for itself.

This sort of thing, on a world-wide scale, leads to restriction of production, high prices, scarcity and hunger in the midst of plenty and, ultimately, war. We sincerely hope that Mr. MacMillan will continue his attacks on the effects of the free enterprise system. If he does persevere, some day his listeners may wake up and abolish the cause.

Editorial, CCF NEWS, February 1/45.

By Angus MacInnis.

Jingoist LPP Attitude On Racial Minority Problem

CCF NEWS, Jan. 4/45.

In British Columbia the Labor-Progressive party has given lie to its pretensions as an opponent of racial discrimination. At the December annual convention of the former communist party its provincial leader, Fergus McKean, called for the exclusion of Japanese Canadians from the Pacific Coast after the war.

"We propose in the interests of military security of Canada's Pacific Coast, and in the interests of the Japanese Canadians themselves," The Vancouver Daily Province reported Mr. McKean as saying, "that all persons of Japanese extraction be barred from the coastal defense zone of British Columbia in the postwar period."

The Labor-Progressive party is the first public body to urge the exclusion of the Japanese Canadians from the coastal area in the postwar period on grounds of military security.

Individual Liberals and Conservatives have joined in the racist hue and cry against the Canadian Japanese, but neither the Liberal nor the Conservative party has adopted the extreme, reactionary policy now advocated by McKean. Both the Liberal and the Conservative parties have declined to pander to the B.C. "Jap-haters" in the

measure now adopted by the Labor-Progressive party. Only the LPP has advocated that in the postwar period Japanese Canadians be denied the freedom of movement within Canada enjoyed by all other sections of the population.

Mr. McKean charged that the CCF "did our country a disservice and rendered the solution of the Japanese problem more difficult by raising the slogan of votes for Japanese in Canada while our country was still at war with Japan."

McKean did not congratulate the CCF on refusing to be stampeded by war hysteria into approval of a double standard of Canada citizenship, with voting and non-voting races. Neither did he congratulate the CCF for proposing a constructive solution of the Japanese problem consistent with socialist equalitarian traditions which the Labor-Progressive party professes to uphold.

The 1943 convention of the CCF in B.C. pointed out the dangers involved in a sudden return of an impoverished Japanese community to the Pacific Coast area, seeking re-establishment as a racial group at a time and under conditions provocative of disturbances. It urged "that Japanese be now assisted to obtain productive and permanent employment outside the protected area, and in other provinces at prevailing rates of pay to protect labor standards, and under conditions enabling them to resettle with their families."

The convention declared that "the Japanese question is but a part of the problem of all racial minorities in Canada" and that its solution "can only come about through the elimination for all Canadians of economic insecurity which is the underlying cause of all racial antagonisms."

This policy was reaffirmed by the 1944 B.C.-Yukon convention of the CCF and adopted by the CCF National Convention at Montreal early last month.

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Communist party members have become tactical changes during the past twenty-seven years can now take diametrically opposed positions within the party. On the one hand they are fighting for unity of progressive forces and oppose the only political party in Canada. On the other hand they are fighting reaction and co-operate with some of the actionaries in Canada.

Capitalism

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