

its own members. It will help more powerful classes to discover what they must give up and what they must achieve for the benefit of the improved social and economic activity of their less fortunate class competitors.

Because the Progressivism of 1924 is more of an instinctive class movement than that of 1912 and less the creation of ideas, its platform is an inferior expression of its meaning. The new Progressivism is projecting an extremely radical redistribution of American economic and political power. It would be preposterous to claim that, if its leaders win the election, they would assume office equipped with a well-considered practical program which they know enough to realize in legislation. But surely no voter who believes in the need of broadening the distribution of American economic and political power should attach much importance to this disability. The only way in which the Farmer-Labor groups can ever find out how to use the powers of the American government for the benefit of their projects, is to start an agitation for the capture of that government. The agitation will necessarily begin by behaving somewhat roughly and by betraying some ineptitude in practising the art of politics. Yet rough and inept as the new Farmer-Labor party must begin by being, a sincere Progressive should be willing cordially to support a promising political agitation which proposes by orderly methods to dislocate the existing line-up of social classes. For it is only as a consequence of such dislocation that those who cherish the hope of individual and social amelioration can jolt the rulers of the American commonwealth into a conscious search for a more flexible and humane adjustment of class activities.

Is Wheat Republican?

WILL the hopes of La Follette be buried in an avalanche of American wheat, selling anywhere from 30 to 100 percent higher than a year ago? Will the corn growers and hog raisers, rejoicing in a similar rise in their products, forget their former troubles and thank the Republican party for prosperity by a few million votes for Coolidge? Will the agricultural population, with billions of extra dollars from the sale of crops, come careering into the market and disburse the purchasing power necessary to resuscitate manufacturing industry?

Those who, watching the wheat pit and the stock-yards, have decided that the farmers' grievances have vanished, might profitably cast their eyes a little further before making a final decision. Exchange quotations for wheat have, it is true, risen from the neighborhood of the dollar of a year ago to over \$1.30, while corn and other crops have gone up in like proportion. But most of these quotations are for "futures," and only a minor part of the crops has yet been delivered. There is still un-

certainty as to what may happen in the future.

The rise of wheat is due to a combination of reports dealing with the relationship of probable American supply and probable foreign demand. The estimate of the American carryover is about the same as last year. The estimate of the new crop is the same as last year. But the estimate for the Canadian crop, which is one of our chief competitors in the European market, ranges between 200 million and 300 million bushels, against 450 million last year. There is a rumor that the Russians will have less to export than a year ago. And there is an estimate, doubted in informed quarters, that the European crops were so short last year that the importing nations will need 125 million more bushels this year than last.

One trouble with these reports is the unreliability and shifting character of estimates. Accurate statistical information is not always available even after the crop is fully harvested. The difficulty of securing advance estimates even when statistical machinery is good is illustrated by the difference of 100 million bushels between the highest and lowest guesses as to the present Canadian crop. And the liability of estimates to shift is shown by the fact that a recent report of one day's rain in Canada was enough to drive down the price six cents on the market. The predicted shortage in the northern hemisphere may be as high as 10 percent of the normal crop, it may fall to 5 percent, it may disappear entirely. American wheat may turn out a smaller yield than is now expected. Any such accident might rob the farmers of their gain before the greater part of the crop ever reaches the elevators.

Even more fundamental difficulties arise in the economics of the international market. It may possibly be true that the European nations which import grain will this year be 125 million bushels short of last year's supply. If so, that fact is not being registered in current exportations from North America. Wheat flowing out of this continent (excluding that small part shipped from Vancouver) tallied 20½ million bushels between July 1 and July 26, 1924, against over 22 million bushels for the same period of last year. In spite of any needs, the purchasing power of European nations is low, especially those of continental Europe, where any unusual domestic shortage would chiefly be registered. These countries have greatly reduced exports of manufactures with which to buy food. The rates of exchange make America their most costly source of supply. Presumably Great Britain, by far our largest customer, has not allowed her stocks of grain to get too low, and her domestic crop is never of much importance. Europe will, of course, buy from us as much as is absolutely necessary to make up a severe shortage, but no more than that, because she can get grain much cheaper from Argentina, Australia and other sources of supply in the southern hemisphere which will begin to come into the market before the year is over. This tendency to

wait for the southern crops will be emphasized by the fact that in recent years British and European importers have developed the habit of allowing Americans to carry the grain until they need it, buying from hand to mouth, on account of the necessity of limiting foreign indebtedness.

The outlook for corn and hogs is even more doubtful. The rise in the price of corn is due almost wholly to the poor condition of the crop and the fear that on account of its lateness much of it may be ruined by early frosts. If the high prices continue, those who happen to have good corn crops may profit, but many others will suffer. If the crop turns out better than expected, the price will fall. In either case the value of the total crop cannot rise very high. And corn is for the most part not sold, but fed to hogs. That is the chief reason for the rising price of hogs. But hogs cannot continue to rise unless there is a strong demand for hog products. It looks as if Europe were prepared to use less of these than last year.

In addition, we must not overlook the bearing of the home market. Manufacturing employment is about 12 percent less than last year at this time, and the purchasing power of those who are employed averages some 4 percent less. Miners and many classes of railroad employes are suffering still more. There is no positive assurance of any upturn in business before 1925. What will be the result when this diminished purchasing power collides with higher prices of food products? Scarcely as large a domestic demand as last year.

The Department of Agriculture is wise in setting up an estimate of a \$100,000,000 to \$200,000,000 gain in value of this year's American wheat crop against the wild guess of \$1,000,000,000 which has appeared elsewhere. The farmer is, tangibly, a little better off already, and will probably remain so until after election. But hardly enough, we believe, to make him forget the experience of the past few years.

The farmer will be wise if he fails to reward the Republicans for a windfall for which they cannot claim the slightest measure of responsibility. For if the salvation of the American farmer is to depend on temporary poor crops in other countries, he will never long be saved. He still needs all the fundamental market, transportation, credit, and other reforms which could have done him any good before black rust attacked the wheat of Canada.

Moral Novelty

SPECULATION about the morals of the future would be a more amusing sport if our imaginations were not machined to mesh with the morals of the past, so that whatever reality our moral inventions have is the substantial stuff of established practice.

Do circumstances present us with a new situation? We promptly fill in the characters, the

lines and the scenery from the old drama and achieve a happily familiar ending.

Thus there was much big talk of polygamy, during the war. The proportions of the sexes having been altered, public policy and the interests of women would force plural marriages. The idea was that the plural wife would be tacked on to the existing family. The triangle would replace the present bilateral Eden. An additional member was to be added to the cast without alteration of the lines: three chairs at the hearth instead of two; three hearts that beat as one. The tired husband, worn out by the struggle to fill three mouths in Anglo-Saxon respectability, sinks into the Morris chair and two wives bearing each a carpet slipper step up to relieve his aching feet. An easy and obvious development of the familiar scene! And yet no intelligent young patriot ever presented himself at church with a piously veiled lady on either arm. All of which is an absurdity, of course.

But it is not a more glaring misappropriation of moral realities than the notion that there is anything novel in contemporary "freedom of the sexes." What particular banality people have in mind when they talk about the new freedom is always difficult to discover. Often they seem to be laboring under the impression that if the behavior of a stenographer in an office differs in any respect from that of a matron in a drawing room that is to be set down to the credit of the business Miss as a great moral achievement. The fact of the matter is, of course, that the young lady of business does make her appearance, her manners and her general rule of conduct approximate just as closely to what she conceives drawing room behavior to be as she can possibly achieve; indeed, notoriously so. She does sit in an office alone with her male employer for hours at a time, something which would be inappropriate in social life. But office life is not social life. The absence of a protecting aunt at the office does not mark the accomplishment of a great moral victory over an established tradition of aunts in offices. Neither does it mean that the function of aunts has disappeared. On the contrary, the place of the chaperone is in the home. The office, being an entirely new stage setting, furnished with typewriters instead of tea tables, might have suggested a wholly new line of action. The amazing thing is not that offices are so unlike parlors—they were bound to differ much in any case—but that so much of the accepted formality of sexual propriety could make its way in so new and foreign an environment.

In short, the wonder is not that women ride unescorted on the railways. Railways are a mechanical, not a moral, invention, and if they abrogate the formalities of stage coach and inn they do so by virtue of mechanical necessity, not of moral innovation. The wonder is that in the bowels of the iron Molochs women are still the recipients of an antique chivalry, and that they can somehow contrive to pass the night on the shelves of a Pullman car with