

FARMERS UNDER HEAVY BURDENS IN BOB'S STATE

Child Labor Record Is Equally Poor

By JAY LOVESTONE.

(Eighth Article.)

In Wisconsin, as in every other state where the financial and industrial interests are the rulers, the farmers are groaning under burdensome taxes, are oppressed by ever more enormous mortgages, sinking into hopeless debt, and are being robbed of their land by the investing class.

And despite all the applause given its much-heralded system of social legislation by the political honesty-hunters of the country, LaFollette's "Model Commonwealth," Wisconsin, does not present a bright picture of social conditions.

Last year saw a more rapid rise in industrial accidents in Wisconsin than in many states far less reputed for their reform laws. With all its voluminous noise about educating the workers, the LaFollette state government is, comparatively speaking, paying altogether too little attention to the education of the children of the working class. Nor can Wisconsin have cause to be proud of its mortality rates. Even its weak sanitary laws are not lived up to by the bosses. The extent of child labor in this state is distinctly unsatisfactory.

LaFollette Program Fails Farmers.

Just as Wisconsin ranks very low in the wages paid its industrial workers, so it does in the wages paid its agricultural laborers.

Our analysis of the December, 1923, issue of Weather, Crops and Markets, published by the department of agriculture, reveals that there were at least fourteen states paying higher average monthly wages to their farm laborers in 1923 than Wisconsin did. This is the pay for rural laborers without board.

For the average monthly pay to farm laborers with board, our investigation shows that in 1923, in at least thirteen states, the workers received higher remuneration than they did in Wisconsin.

Farmers in Hole.

And the farmers, whose special friend LaFollette says he is, have met with continued adversity in Wisconsin.

On Aug. 5, 1924, Edward Nordman, Wisconsin state commissioner of markets, delivered an address before the State Retailers' Association, in which he made the following significant remarks: "Agricultural land is rapidly passing out of the ownership of the dirt farmer and into the hands of the men who use it as a safe place to invest their money. This practice forces the independent farm owner to settle on poorer land or in out-of-the-way places."

Our analysis of the 1920 United States census findings on agriculture discloses how the farming masses of Wisconsin are being driven to adversity at an even faster pace than the farmers of the country as a whole.

Farm Mortgages Increase.

From 1910 to 1920 the proportion of farms free from mortgages in the United States as a whole declined from 65.6 per cent to 52.8 per cent. At the same time the Wisconsin

(Continued on page 2)

FARMERS' BURDENS ARE HEAVY

(Continued from page 1)

farms free from mortgages declined from 48.3 per cent to 36.2 per cent in 1920.

But here is a matter of serious concern to the farmers in LaFollette's state. In the decade 1910 to 1920 the proportion of mortgaged farms in the country as a whole rose from 33.2 per cent to 37.2 per cent. In the same period the proportion of mortgaged farms in Wisconsin rose from 51.1 per cent in 1910 to 59.9 per cent in 1920. Thus we see that the proportion of farms free from mortgages is much smaller in Wisconsin than in the country as a whole, and that the proportion of mortgaged farms is much greater in Wisconsin than it is in the country as a whole.

Further light on the increasing hardships of the Wisconsin farmers is shed by the findings of the 1920 census as to farm debts. For the United States as a whole, the proportion of debt to the value of the farm increased from 27.3 per cent in 1910 to 29.1 per cent in 1920. But in Wisconsin the ratio of debt to the value of the farm increased from 34.3 per cent in 1910 to 37.8 per cent in 1920. It is evident that the Wisconsin farmers are falling into debt more rapidly and are today in relatively greater debt than the farmers of the country as a whole.

Mortgage Debt Rises.

The total amount of mortgage debt for Wisconsin farmers rose from about \$150,000,000 in 1910 to more than \$350,000,000 in 1920.

The farming masses of this great "model commonwealth" are also paying an exorbitant price for these difficult conditions in the form of oppressive taxes. From a tax study made in twenty-six states for the year 1919 by the department of agriculture, we find that the part of the net cash rent from the farms paid out in taxes by the Wisconsin farmers is higher than in twenty-four of the twenty-six states investigated. Only one state, Pennsylvania, shows a higher proportion of the net cash rent being devoured by taxes than does Wisconsin.

"Since that year taxes have generally increased, while rents have been reduced," says the department of agriculture in its summary of the investigation.

Social Conditions Unsatisfactory.

For the last fiscal year industrial accidents showed a startling increase in the United States. The American Association for Labor Legislation recently made an investigation of this tendency. Its findings, after hearing from one-half the compensation states, indicate that in 1923 the increase in industrial accidents in Wisconsin was 27.4 per cent. Wisconsin had a higher rate of industrial accident increase than eleven other states investigated. All in all, only nineteen states replied to the queries of the American Association for Labor Legislation.

From the summary of the provisional birth and mortality figures for 1923, recently issued by the department of commerce, we learn that Wisconsin has little to be proud of in this field. No less than twenty states show at least as good a record as, and eighteen of these show an even better record than Wisconsin for the last year in the death rates, in the proportion of deaths per one thousand of the population. Wisconsin is one of the twenty-five states in which death rates for 1923 were higher than for 1922.

Workers Beat Out of Studies.

Wisconsin has always boasted of its great educational system. But the workers have enjoyed very little of the advantages afforded by LaFollette's generosity in this respect. From the "Instruction in Wisconsin Schools; Report of the General Executive Board," 1920 convention of the State Federation of Labor, we learn that:

"For 7,200 university students the state of Wisconsin in 1919-1920 spent \$4,000,000. For more than 20,000 employed children between the ages of 14 and 17 the state spent one-eighth as much."

This extreme disproportion certainly does not betray a whole-hearted interest on the part of the LaFollette machine in the education of the workers.

Unsanitary Labor Conditions.

Nor are the sanitary conditions of employment even up to the mark set for them by the various state laws. So conservative a paper as the Milwaukee Journal in its issue of De-

cember 1, 1920, tells us that: "Wisconsin factories are not living up to the state sanitary safety code, according to a statement by Mr. George P. Hambrecht, chairman of the Wisconsin industrial commission, following complaints from Milwaukee workers that unsanitary conditions prevail in some workshops."

In the Wisconsin labor camps the conditions are even more deplorable, as has been shown in the investigation made by the Wisconsin industrial commission, "Labor Camps in Wisconsin."

Child Labor Record Poor.

Wisconsin's child labor record is poor. Tho it is the tenth state in the number of men gainfully engaged in manufacturing industries, it is the fifth state in the total number of children under sixteen years of age employed in these industries. New York state which has the greatest number employed in manufacturing industries has only 6,288 children working in these industries, while Wisconsin has 6,906. Incidentally, the total number of gainfully employed in manufacturing industries in New York is more than four times the total number employed in these industries in Wisconsin.

From 1910 to 1920, according to the latest investigation prepared by the Department of Commerce, entitled "Children in Gainful Occupations" the number employed in the country as a whole (ten to fifteen years of age) decreased 46.7 per cent. At the same time the decrease in the total number of children ten to fifteen years of age, engaged in these gainful occupations in Wisconsin, was only 34.4 per cent.

Wisconsin Has More.

In the East North Central group of states in which Wisconsin falls, the average decrease of children employed in gainful occupations was 42.8 per cent, or greater than it was in LaFollette's own state. In thirty-three states the rate of decrease of children gainfully employed in all occupations was greater in the last decade than it was in Wisconsin.

The percentage of the total children employed between the years of ten and seventeen is greater in Wisconsin than in twenty-seven other states.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin's industrial center, is among the cities having a hundred thousand or more inhabitants, and ten per cent more of their child population ten to fifteen years of age is gainfully employed.

LaFollette a Fraud.

Obviously LaFollette's much overestimated "Wisconsin plan" has proved a signal failure insofar as its effectiveness to remove the inherent evils of capitalism is concerned.

Pennsylvania Comrades Attention.

The Workers Party of Pennsylvania calls upon all its members and sympathizers to immediately communicate with Israel Blankenstein, acting District Organizer of Pittsburgh, to get copies of a list of instructions to voters for the coming elections.

Unless these instructions are carefully studied and the rules complied with a good many voters will find themselves deprived of the right to vote.

Get in touch with Israel Blankenstein at once. Address 805 James St., N. S. Pittsburgh.

DARROW IN PLEA FOR MERCY TO SLAYERS OF ROBERT FRANKS

In a final appeal to the court, Clarence Darrow, attorney in the defense of the killers of Robert Franks, pleaded that Leopold and Loeb be dealt with mercifully.

Eloquently outlining his position, Darrow called for a denial of the plea of the prosecution that the young men occupy the inner circle of a noose. The plea of the defense is based on the assumption that the accused are cuckoo and that the hanging of the murderers has no precedent in Chicago. Besides their elimination from the earth will not bring back Robert Franks to life.

A decision is shortly expected.

Distribute a bundle of the DAILY WORKER'S first Special Campaign Edition, dated Saturday, August 30.