

The New Furnifoldian Times

-Since 1813-

March 25, 2017

Domestic

THE WATCHDOG- Worker's Plight in Furnifold Farms

- by David Rezendes

“Day in and day out, it’s always the same. I work for hours at a time, for barely enough food to feed my family, while my bosses get all the profits. It’s slavery.” This quote normally would be attributed here, but this is said across the Branwell Plains, as laborers face the highest income inequality for their field in Furnifold. Pittances are taken. And, with the number of exports to foreign nations expected to increase, they fear they will be worked harder and longer and still not retain fruits of their labor.

Furnifold has a nation-wide Gini Index of 65.2, putting it in the high-range of income inequality. Based on previous reporting and a new metric developed by Furnifold economists in Woolf, the Gini index in the agricultural sector is a whopping 78.1. This means that a small portion of the agricultural population own 78 percent of the wealth. With the new trade deals, there is no talk of increasing the wages of the workers, instead officials are putting their trust in the trickle-down effect. Trickle-down policies for agriculture, with generous tax breaks and subsidies, have increased the production of Furnifold’s agricultural sector tenfold, but has not resulted in the growth in wages we would expect.



“It’s on the agenda.”

The WATCHDOG asked the owners of the large farms about this discrepancy, and most refused to comment. One, who requested anonymity, attributed the disparity between owners and laborers due to competition. “There is a ceiling to this, if I pay my workers more money, there comes a point when production does not increase as the wages increase. I mean, workers are productive enough right now, why should I bother rocking the boat? Especially when other owners can produce at high quantities, it’s less money for my company. And with the trade deals in place, there is going to be so much money flowing through that paying workers more is going to be disruptive to everything.”

The WATCHDOG then went to officials in McLendal. “We can’t talk about ongoing trade negotiations until they are finalized, but we would expect to see revenues rise for all people.” Jackson Woolf, Foreign Secretary of Furnifold, said to reporters. “We are focusing on getting these deals worked out, and then we will convince legislators to attend to the matter of the workers.” “It’s on the agenda.” It should be noted that the agricultural industry has one of the strongest lobbying efforts in McLendal.

Lobbying.



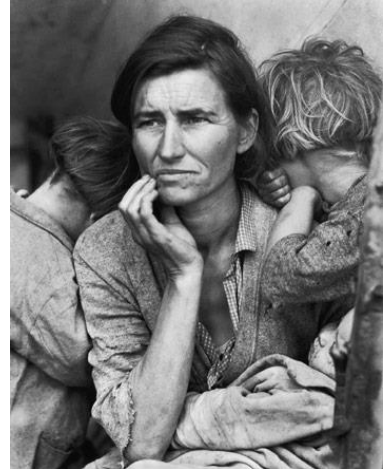
Wages have not risen in the agricultural industry since the previous government instituted a mandatory minimum wage for laborers, at 7.20 per hour. Businesses will tell anyone who listens that this wage hike has hurt them, and caused the closure of many small farms. It also has something to do with the efforts of the Furnifold Farm Bureau (FFB), the lobbying-arm of the agriculture sector. Years ago, this firm would lobby McLendal for increased subsidies towards small farms, but in recent years the lobbying efforts for small farms has stopped. Instead, the FFB has focused exclusively on large corporate farms, focusing on streamlining production capabilities and establishing freight lines to their silos. Financial experts estimate that the lobbying firm spends close to 300 million per year on these lobbying efforts. And in none of these talks are efforts to increase worker safety or have workers retain some of the profits these companies receive, but in these talks are efforts to increase length of hours worked and a move to abolish the previous minimum wage standard. Agricultural workers have no lobbying-arm to turn to.

“It’s all I know how to do.”

For the workers in these farms, they do not have many other opportunities. Their education system focuses on getting them through school, then after 10th grade they are encouraged to spend two to three years apprenticing in a trade, interning in business or government, or doing collegiate prep. For the youth in the Branwell Plains, the only two options are trade or eschew it altogether and go right into working on the fields. “It’s really quite sad, but there

just is not a system in place to help these children,” Frederick Strangfeld, CEO of Furnifold Works Institute in Woolf and Chonvor City, said. “The solutions at this point have to come through the legislative level, but good luck trying to get through the FFB and the current government.”

Why don't these workers move? “My family has been here for a couple hundred years,” one said. “We can't just pack up and leave, especially since farming is all I know how to do. My kids will grow up in this life, and we will get by. We always do.” That's the attitude of the worker in the Branwell Plains. The work is essentially slavery, but they get by. They always do.



International

Foreign Affairs Office Announces Trade Deals with Nations (Updated)

- by Adam Bly

**Previously we ran a story about the trade deals with foreign nations. We are re-running the story, with additions of the economic costs and benefits as well as new trade deals announced.*

The Foreign Secretary announced a series of trade deals that he says will benefit the growth of Furnifold's economy. Jackson Woolf, Foreign Secretary of Furnifold, has brokered deals with the nations of Blueacia, Chianski, Kuthernburg, The Oan Isles, Tivot, and Tuvaltastan. Mr. Woolf offered a very rosy take on the announced deals. "These deals will propel Furnifold into growth that will be almost unimaginable for our people, and I am confident that with our partners, everyone will see drastic improvement in their lives. In addition, all deals include a visa program, so citizens from these nations are allowed entry into our great country, and vice versa for our genial travelers."

The agreement with Blueacia: Blueacia will sponsor a branch of sports betting in Furnifold, valued at [insert deal amount here]. In addition, Furnifold will provide the Womp Desert for the Furnifold Rally Raid, a leg of an off-road competition sponsored by Blueacia. Furnifold will keep the revenues from ad buys and tickets, while Blueacia will keep the earnings from sponsorships. Furnifold will also pay the prize winnings of the race.

The agreement with Chianski: Furnifold will contract out a DSL company in Chainski for 130 million ISD, to establish internet lines in the southwest of Furnifold. In addition, agricultural exports to the nation will increase. This trade deal is expected to bring 200 million ISD in export revenue per year.

The agreement with Kuthernburg: Furnifold will contact various agricultural producers to set up a "farmers market" of sorts in the nation, to allow the citizens of Kuthernburg to

sample the goods Furnifold produces. It will last one week, and upon demand may be expanded. In addition, Furnifold will attempt to find contracts in Kuthernburg to fund military production in Furnifold. The nations also announced a joint agreement to produce 150 V-22 Osprey's in Furnifold, a deal valued at 15 billion ISD over 10 years. These are combat helicopters, primarily used for medivac and transportation events. Kurthernburg is also giving a direct investment of 1 billion ISD into transit for the movement of Furnifoldian industrial goods. Finally, Furnifold has opened its nation for joint training exercises with the special forces of Kurthernburg, to simulate different environmental scenarios these forces may be presented with. In sum, the deals produced will bring in a total of 2.5 billion ISD to Furnifold.

The Agreement with the Oan Isles: Oancom Ltd. will buy out a Furnifold dial-up provider, valued at 100 million ISD, to provide transition services from dial-up to DSL for 18 percent of the population. The Oan Isles will provide 5 billion ISD over ten years to produce ground penetrating radar equipment, LiDAR services, and air-detection radar. Furnifold will also export its agricultural products to the Isles, valued at 220 million ISD. The Oan Isles will send a detachment of special forces to Furnifold, for training exercises. Furnifold Works Institute, a staffing non-profit located in Chonvor City and Woolf, will receive 22 million ISD over two years to train students in healthcare and government services.

The agreement with Tivot: Furnifold will sell agricultural products to the nation, Tivot will in turn of sell the products on the world market. The revenues of the goods will be retained by Tivot. Those goods that do not sell in Tivot's market will be collected by Furnifold refunded. In addition, Furnifold will have priority to bid on contracts in Tivot's marketplace and pursue investment opportunities in Furnifold. Estimates for this deal range between 50 million ISD and 600 million ISD, given the volatility of the marketplace.

The agreement with Tuvaltastan: Furnifold will send agricultural products to the nation at a bargain, enough to cover shipping costs, and in return, Tuvaltastan will contract mining companies to survey and explore some of the potential lode sites in Furnifold. Upon discovery, companies will receive a five-year claim to the production of that site. Depending on what these companies find, this deal will be valued at least at 150 million ISD.

Furnifold Royal Air Force Fighter Jet Crashes During Exhibition in Kuthernburg

- by F.T. Morison

During the Kuthernburg-sponsored Purple Flag Training Exercise, an F-22 Raptor experienced electrical failure and was forced to crash mid-exercise. The pilot was able to successfully eject, and nobody was seriously injured. The scrap from the plane is currently being transported back to Furnifold. In the meantime, Foreign Affairs Secretary Jackson Woolf has called for an investigation into what went wrong with the aircraft, and a halt to the joint training exercises in Furnifold between each nation's special forces. "We value and respect our relationship with Kuthernburg, but we need to first take a look



at all that went wrong in the exercise. We expect that, once the business has concluded, we will resume the joint training in Furnifold.”

An F-22 Raptor is the most current fighter jet Furnifold owns. Each jet costs an average of 110 million USD to produce. Furnifold currently owns 11 jets, but no word as of yet what the RAF is going to do to replace this jet.

Business

Manleh Cousins Releases IPO for Global Furnifold Commodities Market

- by Uche Markopolos

Manleh Cousins, Furnifold’s largest financial services firm and the flagship investment service of the Global Furnifold Commodities Market (GFCM) in the Miyapo World Trade building in Kuthernberg, has released the price of Furnifold commodities on the GFCM. In the initial public offering (IPO), which will be the first price of the commodities per unit before the market opens, it has set its commodities prices. “We are extremely excited about this opportunity to release commodities to the world, and especially at these prices too. We encourage all nations to look at our portfolio, and consider investing through the GFCM,” a spokesperson for Manleh Cousins said in an email response to reporters. Manleh Cousins is extremely confident in the growth of these commodities, citing the trade deals that Furnifold has bartered that will increase demand for products. They are all but assuring that prices will double for commodities in a single day. “With these numbers and that outlook, it would make financial sense to buy commodities, but I am concerned about the eventual drop in prices when market demand evens out,” Furnifold economist Maynard Lewis said. “It will do one of two things, bottom out to market level, or it will stabilize gradually. If it bottoms out, investors are in trouble, and depending on the magnitude of the bottoming, Furnifold itself may be in trouble.” It remains to be seen what the impact of the GFCM will be on Furnifold, but we will surely know when the first day of trading begins on April 8th.

Sports

Furnifold Announces New Rally Raid in Womp Desert

- by Gwen Scott

Furnifold announced in a press release today that the nation would be featuring a leg of a rally raid from the nation of Blueacia. The Furnifold Rally Raid will be held in the Womp Desert, and it will be a week-long 1,200-kilometer race through the desert. There will be two classes of vehicle to race in, motorbike and all-terrain-vehicle (ATV), and officials expect around 100 competitors. A rally raid is a long off-road sports marathon, and besides

having a vibrant underground racing scene, Furnifold has never held an official race in its borders.

Reaction has been mixed. Supporters are praising the race due to the exposure and chance to introduce a new sport into Furnifold. “The Womp Desert is just empty space without any purpose, at least this will give it purpose,” a citizen in nearby Kwolek said to this reporter. Opposition has attracted conservationists and a more conservative audience together. “This race represents the sort of danger and debauchery that we should not promote here in Furnifold,” Shontelle Williams, spokesperson for Furnifold Family Values, said in a statement. “Furthermore, there will almost certainly be gambling and betting brought into the race, and gambling is an addiction that leads to depression and suicide.” “While my reasons are not the same as Ms. Williams, I do agree that Furnifold should not hold this race,” Dr. Margaret Mendes, head of the Furnifold Audubon Society, said in a media release. “There are several endemic animal species that will surely be disturbed and in-danger due to this race, and I have not heard anything about how a race of this magnitude will be regulated.”

Officials in Furnifold refused to comment, but Giovanni Bianchi-Lefèvre, heir of Blueacia and member of the organizing committee was reached for comment. “Well they [Furnifold] knew we wanted to organize a rally through a desert area, but... Blueacia doesn’t have a desert. So, that’s why Furnifold and Blueacia joined forces.” He also stated that Blueacia is using this rally to get



attention for its nation, and for manufacturers to test out their cars in a grueling environment. He is confident that racers from all over the world will register and compete, and the citizens of Furnifold will be enthralled by the level of intensity in the rally.

There is still no scheduled date yet for the Furnifold Rally Raid, and with support not as high as Furnifold officials likely wished for, they will be facing an uphill battle to make it successful.