

British Columbia Topics

VANCOUVER, May 24, 1892
To the Editor of THE ECHO.

Since you were good enough to afford space for my last somewhat lengthy epistle, I am encouraged in trying it again. In doing so I will not trouble you with a recital of what Vancouver is going to do in the direction of celebrating Dominion Day, nor will I refer to more than one other matter agitating the minds of our citizens for the time being. On the contrary, I am only concerned, as is the whole city population just now, in regard to one particular subject—a subject that may, although perhaps in a remote way, call for a passing thought from our brothers further east. As I said before, it is our trouble to-day, but who can say that it may not be yours to-morrow or next day—and through the same channel. Moralize as people may, it is evident that that octopus, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, practically controls Canada to-day—it enjoys greater privileges and has more influence in Canada than has the Standard Oil Company in the several States of the neighboring Republic, and that is saying not a little. But, to cut it short, we have the smallpox in our midst and all tacitly agree that, besides many other evils, it has been introduced through filthy Chinese passengers on the Empress of Japan. But then, you see, the steamers of the C. P. R. must have passengers from China. Perhaps it is better to let the Daily Telegram of this city, of the 18th instant, give the details, as follows:

The "rumors of the discovery of smallpox in Vancouver have been found unfortunately to be but too well founded. At the present writing there are known to be three well defined cases in the city and another suspected case.

It is folly, or worse, to deny the existence of a disease which, unless checked by the adoption of proper precautions to prevent its spreading, may result in the decimation of our citizens and in the infliction of a serious set-back to the business interests of the city. Prevention will not be served by secrecy, but, on the contrary, from the absence of all warning of danger, any number of additional victims may become affected by the loathsome disease.

Almost equally wrong is it to magnify the danger or exaggerate the extent to which the disease may have spread. The proper way to deal with the matter is to tell the truth, and so provide against the spread of the plague by every means available.

The facts are as follows: In a shack on Alexander street, immediately behind the City Hall, lies a man named Reid who was employed as night watchman on the Empress of Japan. He is seriously ill with smallpox, and a yellow flag flies from the doorway.

In one of the furnished rooms on the corner of Cordova and Carrall streets Tupper Thompson lies a very sick man, and has been suffering with the disease for some days.

At No. 23 Dupont street, one of the female inmates is down with the disease, and is delirious.

In No. 125, on the same street, another woman is believed to be showing the first symptoms of the malady, and the house is kept under surveillance.

So far as can be ascertained these are absolutely all the cases, and as the authorities are taking every possible measure to stamp out the disease by isolating the victims, and adopting all conceivable means to prevent its spread, it is hoped and believed that merely a scare will be the result of the importation into the city of this loathsome and deadly disease.

That its appearance is the direct result of the reckless haste with which the Empress of Japan was released from quarantine by the authorities at Victoria after her coolie passengers had been landed at Albert Head, and before she had been thoroughly disinfected is clearly shown by the fact that the two first victims were the man Reid and another man, Hyde, now lying ill at Bowen Island, in Howe Sound, both of whom were employed as watchmen on the steamer.

The Health Committee met last evening to consider and decide what was best to be done in the circumstances, and with praiseworthy promptitude purchased Andy Linton's boathouse for a smallpox hospital, and made arrangements to have it towed out to a safe distance from the shore, where it will be anchored. The patients will be placed on board and attended to as speedily as possible.

Special officers were sworn in yesterday afternoon to relieve each other in guarding the houses where the stricken persons live, so that no one may leave or enter them meantime.

Dr. McGuigan was called on Monday to see the man Hyde on Bowen island and found him living with a family there, and suffering from an aggravated form of smallpox.

Alderman Cannon did yeoman service all day yesterday in pushing forward and superintending the preparation of the boathouse for the purpose for which it was intended to use it.

The mayor and other members of the council showed much commendable energy and activity in adopting the necessary measures for preventing the spread of the disease, and Chief McLaren and Health Officer Huntly rendered them every assistance. It is hoped that, in this way, the ravages of the disease will be confined to those already affected by it.

Last evening about 9 o'clock Mayor Cope telephoned to Chief McLaren to quarantine Dupont street from Carrall street to Westminster avenue, and to swear in whatever special constables might be necessary to carry the order into effect. This was promptly done and the street continued all

night, and probably will continue for some time, to be "no thoroughfare."

The chairman of the health committee, Dr. McGuigan, stated last night to a Telegram reporter that no time would be lost in transferring the patients to the floating hospital.

In asking the publication of all this, my main object is to still further enlist the active co-operation of our better organized and more numerous brethren in Eastern Canada to seek such legislation as will compel the C. P. R. Co. to respect the well-being of our Canadian people, let the result be what it may financially. In this connection let me, without being authorized, however, return our sincere thanks for the very prompt manner in which the several Trade and Labor Councils in Ontario and Quebec have responded to the solicitation of Vancouver's Trade and Labor Council in the matter of approving of, signing and forwarding to the House of Commons the petition in respect to Chinese immigration in the direction of restriction. Those who take an interest in the interest of those who work for wages out here appreciate what has been so far done in that particular—they expected what has been done, and have not been disappointed. The appeal may have no result, but material will be furnished—a rod in pickle, as it were, to warm up more than one member of Parliament when we reach another parliamentary election.

G. B.

LABOR AND WAGES.

AMERICAN.

Uncle Sam has 3,000 women printers. Philadelphia lathers are out for \$1.73 per day.

Tacoma, Washington, carpenters work eight hours.

Grand Rapids, Mich., brewers have won their strike.

Chicago girls are getting rapid in the right direction. They have a strong bindery union.

The Chicago Trades Building Council is the strongest organization of the kind in the world.

The Workingmen's General Benefit Union has 10,453 members and \$10,720.70 in its treasury.

Where is Willie Bill McKinley? Twenty one rolling mills in Ohio have removed or been abandoned.

Girls who work as waiters in the cheap luncheon places in New York City get \$6 a week and their meals.

The International Cigarmakers Union has 4,700 members on strike, and \$350,000 in the general treasury.

Eastern Pennsylvania farmers are looking for emigrants to assist them, home labor being impossible to obtain.

Terrible mortality among the protected cotton industry down South. Twenty-two mills not running or assigned.

Eight hundred workmen are idle in Decatur, Ill., as a result of a strike of carpenters to gain 27½ cents per hour pay.

Three of the Rochester scab clothing firms have thrown up the sponge and quit business. They couldn't stand the pace.

Governor Flower of New York has signed the bill providing that mines must have two entrances for the safety of workmen.

At Manistee, Mich., 150 Poles have been discharged by their bosses for, it is alleged, refusing to vote for the republican ticket.

The cigarmakers of Wheeling, W. Va., demanded nine hours' work at ten hours' pay, and it was conceded by every manufacturer in the city inside of two hours.

The Trades and Labor Council of St. Paul, Minn., have gone into politics. They nominated four of their members for city council, and they are going to elect them.

The big street car strike in New Orleans, which has been carried on for some time past, resulted in a collision with the police. Both sides used revolvers, but nobody hurt. They have now agreed to arbitrate.

Ah, ha! The editors and reporters on a German morning paper struck the other day in New York City. The Count de Bum, who managed the sheet, refused to treat with them on the ground that they had degraded themselves to the level of common laborers!

How can a man preserve his dignity as a free citizen if he is compelled to work at starvation wages, crawling before the whip of the stage driver? And yet the "dignity" of more than fifty millions of Americans is to be maintained at the rate of about one dollar a day. What a propitious state of affairs in this grand and growing republic! —K. of L. Journal.

Lo, the great work of education goes on. Now 150,000 men are receiving an object lesson in the manner in which the workers are fleeced of the products of their toil. According to the official report of the National Labor Bureau, from figures gathered from the manufacturers, the product of the granite industry for 1889 was \$14,500,000;

the amount paid in wages \$9,600,000, leaving over \$4,000,000 for the non-producers.

EUROPEAN.

Artisans in Italy receive thirty to forty cents a day and are not regularly employed at that.

A combination of the leading houses in all branches of the Bohemian glass industry has been formed with the object of regulating output and prices.

The Central London Railway, England, is to run three workmen's trains daily, the fare being only two cents for six miles, the cheapest railway fare in the world.

It is not uncommon in Northumberland, England, for a farmer to allow any of his laborers who wish for it the keep of a cow as part payment of wages, greatly to the benefit of their families.

Three hundred and fifty thousand union men were represented at the national convention held at Halberstadt, Germany. It looks as though the Dutch might capture Germany as well as Holland.

The union of textile workers has just held its first general congress in Ebersfeld, Germany. There were 41 delegates representing a membership of 7,000 in twenty different towns. The chief business of the meeting was the drawing up of a constitution. The chief office of the union is to be in Berlin.

In Staffordshire, England, there are still about 20,000 coal miners locked out, the reason alleged by the employers being that they have to support one of their own class in a dispute, but the real reason given by the workers is that the masters desire to break up the union. The lockout in the Lancashire button trade has been settled by a compromise, the terms of which are rather more favorable to the workers than to the bosses.

CANADIAN.

James McDermott and S. F. Stevens, two Hamilton, Ont., moulders, are suing J. H. Grant, of Grimsby, for \$1,000 damages, alleging false arrest. They left his employment and he caused their arrest on the ground that they agreed to work for a certain time.

A clerk in the Department of Marine, Ottawa, on arriving at work Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock registered in the book as arriving at 9.30. The Minister happened to arrive just behind the unfortunate clerk and, looking in the book, saw the deceit. He went into his room, summoned the clerk, asked him what time he had arrived—was answered half-past nine, and then said to the clerk, "You are discharged; this department does not keep liars."

MISCELLANEOUS.

The supply of good stenographers in Australia is far below the demand.

Government farms are to be established in New Zealand for people out of employment.

The Union Pacific Railroad, which has been handed by vote over to the Gould management, includes, with its branches, 8,000 miles of road. It also has \$17,500 debt to every mile of road. Its earnings are \$40,000,000 a year. It has more than twice as much debt as capital.

The Lancaster Caramel Company, it is reported, cleared \$90,000 the past year. With the establishment filled with girls and boys at wages barely sufficient to keep body and soul together, such a profit is easily accounted for. The proprietors are to be congratulated on their success and on their foresight in locating their factory "in the cheapest labor market in the United States."—Lancaster (Pa.) Labor Leader.

When workmen combine for their own protection, the employers are greatly exercised over the individual freedom of their laborers, who, by the unions, are prevented from making their own contracts; as they put it. But these generous and liberty-loving bosses gladly give up their own individual rights when combining with others of their ilk to fight the organizations of labor. Combination and organization appear to be a good thing after all.—Louisville New Era.

EDWARD ATKINSON.

The baked bean and codfish civilization of Boston has produced no more degenerate specimen than Edward Atkinson. He is an active flea in the hair of the corporation dog, ceaselessly at work to demonstrate how low wages can be reduced and still keep the protesting souls of workmen in their famishing bodies. This fawningsycophant, this aristocratic boot licker, is never so much in "his element" as when advising workmen to submit to slavish conditions, and in pointing out the life-giving qualities garbage, when submitted to scientific cooking, aided by his patent range, which, taking a shin bone of a steer, potato peelings, a little salt and water, constitutes the basis of a square meal, upon which a man and family can, for a nickel, grow sleek and fat, and in a few years, at seventy-five cents a day, become a millionaire.

This Edward Atkinson is of the opinion

that the "personal liberty" of American workmen requires of them to try any method which science, so-called, may devise to get them down to the eating level of scavenger Italians, Hungarians, Poles and other riff raff of Europe, who, after centuries of degradation, have learned to live like vagabond dogs. These unfortunate victims of autocratic oppression illustrate Atkinson's idea of "personal liberty," because when they reach our shores they contract to do for fifty cents what an American workman has received one dollar and fifty cents for doing; and Mr. Atkinson, observing that labor organizations prevent the wholesale degradation of workmen by employers, asks:

"May it not be judicious to put an end to the continual attempts of sentimentalists, pseudo reformers and unenlightened workmen, to impair the personal liberty of adult men and women and to take from them their right of free contract, by an appeal to the courts of highest jurisdiction?"

The question which Atkinson puts might be changed without doing any violence to the purpose in view, to read, "May it not be judicious to appeal to the courts of highest jurisdiction to suppress labor organizations?"—the object being not the personal liberty of men, but their degradation.

Edward Atkinson is, doubtless, the most venomous enemy of workmen to be found in the country. As a statistician he makes his figures lie, and his arguments, based on his statistics are always specious, vicious and essentially false. He has earned the contempt of all enlightened workmen and we doubt not, a large share of scorn from those who are the beneficiaries of his exceedingly dirty work. —Locomotive Firemen's Magazine.

The lockout of the moulders of the Victoria stove works, Kingston, continues and is becoming interesting. On Wednesday two Frenchmen from Montreal arrived and were given employment in the works. The local men offered them \$25; free passes out of the city and free admission to the union. They refused, and have to be escorted to and from work by policemen.

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