

MARITIME MINING RECORD

Vol. 13, No. 17. Stellarton, N. S., March 8th. 1911. New Series

PRESSING PROBLEMS

"Teddy" is not much in evidence these days. It is sad to think that when a man is not active in politics he is all but dead to the community. The following was spoken by Roosevelt a while ago, before his retirement into temporary (perhaps) seclusion:

"The most pressing problems that confront the present century are not concerned with the material production of wealth, but with its distribution. The demands of progress now deal not so much with the material as with the moral and ethical factors of civilization. Our basic problem is to see that the marvelously augmented powers of production bequeathed to us by the 19th century shall in the 20th be made to administer to the needs of the many rather than be exploited for the profit of the few.

"It is true of wage-workers, as of all other citizens, that most of their progress must depend upon their own initiative and their own efforts. Nevertheless, there are three different factors in this progress. There is, first, the share which the man's own individual qualities must determine. This is the most important of all, for nothing can supply the place of individual capacity. Yet there are two other factors also of prime importance; namely, what can be done for the wage-workers in co-operation with one another; and what can be done by Government—that is by the instrument through which all the people work collectively.

"Wages and other most important conditions of employment must remain largely outside of Government control; must be left for adjustment by free contract between employers and wage-earners, subject to legislation which will prevent conditions which compel man or woman to accept wages representing less than will insure decent living.

"But to attempt to leave this merely to individual action means the absolute destruction of individualism; for where the individual is so weak that he, perforce, has to accept whatever a strongly organized body chooses to give him, his individual liberty becomes a mere sham and mockery. It is indispensably necessary in order to preserve to the largest degree our system of individualism, that there should be effective and organized collective action.

"I believe this practice of collective bargaining, effective only through such organizations as the trade unions, to have been one of the most potent forces in the past century in promoting the progress of the wage-earners and in securing larger social progress for humanity wherever there is organized capital on a considerable scale.

"Strikes are sometimes necessary and proper; sometimes they represent the only way in which, after all

other methods have been exhausted, it is possible for the laboring man to stand for his rights; but it must be clearly understood that a strike is a matter of last resort, and of course violence, lawlessness and mob rule must be promptly and sternly dealt with, no matter what the cause may be that excites them.

"Where men and women are worked under harsh and intolerable conditions, and can secure no relief without a strike, or, indeed, where the strike is clearly undertaken for things which are vitally necessary—and then only as a last resort—the public sympathy will favor the wage-workers; but it will not favor them unless such conditions as these are fulfilled, and it will condemn them if they resort to lawless violence.

"Therefore it is becoming more than ever important that the labor movement should combine steady, far-seeing leadership, with discipline and control of its ranks. Dishonest leadership is a curse anywhere in American life, and nowhere is it a greater curse than in the labor movement.

"It is not merely the duty of the wage-earner, but it is also the duty of the general public, to see that he has safe and healthy conditions under which to carry on his work. No worker should be compelled, as a condition of earning his daily bread, to risk his life and limb, or be deprived of his health, or have to work under dangerous and bad surroundings.

"This opens a vitally important field of legislation to the national Government and to the State alike. It is humiliating to think how far we of this country are behind most of the other countries in such matters."

MR. BAILLIE ON LABOR TROUBLES

PROFOUND SUGGESTIONS

From his place in parliament the leader of the opposition gave the following prescription as a sure cure for and a positive preventive of labor troubles. Hats off:

"Paragraph three deals with the continued prosperity of our people, the prosperity that has been enjoyed by all parts of Canada. The prosperity can be attributed to a season remarkably favorable to the growth and harvesting of an abundant crop. Mention is made of the unfortunate labor troubles that did exist in the province and do exist to a certain extent still. Now, Mr. Speaker, no one can deplore this situation more than I do. I suppose these situations are hard to deal with, but it should not be impossible to deal with them. Fortunately the trouble in Cape Breton has been settled, whether permanently or not I do not know, at all events