THE LABOR ADVOCATE.

We Demand all the Reform that Justice can ask for, and all the Justice that Reform can give.

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WORK AND WAGES.

LABOR NOTES AND NEWS FROM ALL QUARTERS

Interesting Items Facts and Figures—A Bird-s-Eye View of the World of Industry.

CANADA.

THE Dominion Trades Congress will petition the Dominion Government to prohibit the importation of Chinese labor.

THE employing barbers of London agree to close their shops at eight o'clock on all evenings except Saturdays and those before a holiday.

THE Ottawa journeymen tailors went out on strike Monday morning, having been refused their demand for a 15 per cent. advance in wages.

A BRAKEMAN named Cronk was killed on the 11th near Rather Glen station on the C. P. R. He was on a freight train which became separated on a down grade, and he fell between the cars.

ONE of the largest American sewing machine companies, the Singer, has decided that the necessities of their trade demand the manufacture of the cabinet work in their wares in Canada. In pursuance of this policy they have awarded a five years' contract for the work to Messrs. Hay & Co., of Woodstock. The yearly outlay is estimated at $50,000.

THE Montreal Builders' Laborers Union held a very successful entertainment in the Seminary Hall on Friday evening, 10th inst., for the benefit of their accident fund, Mr. Easton took the chair. Mr. Geo. S. Warren and Mr A. Anderson delivered interesting addresses. Misses Cleary and Pierce and Messrs. O'Shea and Anderson deserve special mention for their creditable performances.

THE work of double-tracking the Grand Trunk between Toronto and Hamilton is progressing favorably and will be completed this year. The work between Toronto and Montreal is proceeding rapidly. Over 185 miles have already been completed, forty-three more are almost finished and another forty-three will be commenced this spring, leaving only about sixty-two miles of the entire distance untouched.

PETITIONS from the Sons of England Order and from the Knights of Labor, of Kingston and elsewhere have been forwarded to Sir John Macdonald urging the appointment of Mayor Drennan as brigade-mayor of the Kingston military district. Knights of Labor might easily be engaged in better business than having anything to do with the military system excepting to use their influence to destroy or weaken it.

EX-ALD. TOM ALLAN, a Hamilton contractor on city work, say: "I pay my men 15 cents an hour, have done so for years and will continue to do so. Other men who tender for city work pay their hands 12½ cents an hour and less. It is evident that we are not all on an equal footing, and that those who pay a decent wage are at a disadvantage. The clause in the resolution compelling contractors to pay not less than 15 cents an hour should have passed the committee."

THE Montreal and Sorel Railway has been seized by the employees, leagued as the officials say, with certain politicians who want to get a hold on the road under the $600 judgment on the commercial tax, which is still in the court and which the company is contesting. The men claim that wages are due them. The trouble began on the 14th, when a crowd broke into the engine house at Sorel, drew the water from the engines and took possession of the shed in which the engines are placed. The police were called to the assistance of the company and five of the men were arrested.

AT the session of the Quebec Superior Court, held at Aylmer last week, two cases involving liabilities of employers for injuries received by employees were decided. In the case of Deslauriers vs. The Dominion Phosphate Mining Company, the plaintiff brought action against the company for $5,000 damages, by reason of an accident caused by the fall of a plank while he was working in plaintiff's mine in Templeton, resulting in the loss of one of his legs. It was shown that the defendants had not taken due precautions and damages being estimated at $200, judgment for that amount was given with costs. McNeil vs. the Bristol Mining Company, was a similar action for injuries sustained by the plaintiff on the head and shoulders by being struck by a slip descending the company's track. Damages were estimated at $200, for which judgment was given with costs.

UNITED STATES.

THE conductors, engineers, firemen and brakemen of the Kansas Midland Railroad struck on Saturday for six months' back pay

TRADE for shoemakers is very dull in Detroit, Mich. Organizer Frank G. Davis has received instructions to proceed with the organization of a shoe council in Detroit.

SIX hundred of the 950 laborers engaged in grading Jackson Park, Chicago, for the World's Fair struck on Monday for an increase in wages from $1 50 to $1 75 per day.

THREE hundred coal heavers employed on the docks of Cleveland went on strike Monday. They want an increase from ten to thirteen cents per ton for handling coal

THE strike of 75,000 coal miners for an eight-hour day, which began May 1, will make the coal districts of Pennsylvania and the West the industrial storm centres during the next several weeks, and perhaps months.

THE Order of Railway Conductors in the States of Missouri, Kansas and Texas will meet on the 26th of this month at Kansas City, to consider the amalgamation with the Brotherhood of Railway Conductors, that they may join the Federal Railway Employes.

SEVERAL hundred Italians employed on a new railway at Lawrence Junction, near Newcastle, Pa., struck on Wednesday, and their places were filled by Americans. Later the Italians attacked the Americans driving them from their work and throwing the foreman into the river. A collision is expected.

IT is stated that the Pennsylvania lines will accept no flat cars loaded with lumber unless there is left a space of at least eighteen inches for the brakeman to work the brake. The officials claim that thus loading flat cars prevents many men from being injured both in coupling cars and in working the brakes.

THE New York eight-hour conference is making arrangements for the great demonstration on May 1. The speakers will be A. W. Wright, of the Knights of Labor, W. H. Owen, H. G. Wilshire, Thaddeus B. Wakeman, Lucien Sanial, Alexander Jones, George E. Lloyd, D. E. Harris and several others. It is expected that at least fifty organizations will march with music and their flags flying, making it the grandest eight-hour demonstration ever seen in any American city.

SAMUEL GOMPERS, president of the American Federation of Labor, was interviewed in Chicago regarding the eight-hour demand. He said: "I have been travelling constantly for ten weeks. I have consulted with representative labor men in every section of the country, and in every instance I have been assured that if the miners throughout the country are not granted the eight-hour day by May 1 the laboring people from the Atlantic to the Pacific will render us all the financial assistance needed to win the expected strike. There are 190,000 men in our organization and the miners can rely upon every one of them for assistance if the threatened strike should occur."

GREAT BRITAIN

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH in the House of Commons on the 20th, replying to a question in regard to Michael Davitt not being made a member of the Royal Labor Commission, said Davitt's evidence before the Parnell special commission, with the fact that he had been convicted of treason and felony, unfitted him to sit on the commission.

THE London *Engineer* shows that over seventy per cent. of the freight engines are on duty over twelve hours at a time. On several lines all engineers and firemen are on duty over twelve hours at a time. It is also stated that a large percentage of men who are on duty over twelve hours return to their posts after less than eight hours of rest. In many instances men are required to be on duty eighteen hours at a time and legislation has been enacted against this practice.

THE London County Council has taken two important steps in the direction of municipal Socialism. The first was a decision to make the Government an offer for the site of Millbank Prison with a view to the erection of an artisans' dwellings thereon. The other was a resolution to call on the London Street Tramways Company to sell its undertakings to the country. This is not a bad record for a single day, but in the Socialist race London is still far behind many of the provincial towns.

GEN. BOOTH, Commander-in-Chief of the Salvation Army, has agreed to pay £10,000 for 600 acres of land near Southend, upon which he will establish his farm colony—one of the agencies by which he expects to reform "Darkest England." He will from time to time buy additional land, and will spend from £15,000 to £20,000 in buildings, drainage and other improvements. The taxes on the property will be £24 per year. The land is badly situated, and in the judgment of experts the price paid is absurdly high.

Two large cages or cars used for hoisting and lowering men and material in the colliery in the Longton (Staffordshire) coal district, while one was being hoisted and the other lowered, came into violent collision and were smashed. The shaft was badly damaged and choked up, cutting off communication with 200 miners below. For fourteen hours the miners were shut up in the mine. This was a period of terrible suspense to their families and friends, eventually a small hole was pierced through the mass of wreckage, further work enabled the men engaged in the rescue to hand the 200 sufferers one by one out of the mine.

THE striking weavers of Bradford held an immense mass meeting on the 19th, without interference on the part of the police, although it had been previously announced that no gathering of the strikers would be permitted. The speakers addressed the crowd from three platforms which had been erected in different parts of the Town Hall square. Resolutions were adopted protesting against the action of the municipal authorities in forbidding meetings of the strikers. The assembly was quite orderly. Large forces of military and police were held in readiness for action, but were kept out of sight in order not to irritate the strikers.

EUROPEAN AND GENERAL.

TWENTY thousand Knights of Labor employed in the Charleroi, Belgium, coal basin have decided to strike on May Day.

THE German Reichstag has rejected the first part of the Socialists bill, which provided that the maximum work day be immediately fixed at ten hours, that the maximum be reduced to nine hours in 1894, and to eight hours in 1898.

STATISTICS show that the average term of an iron moulder's productive capacity is fourteen and one-half years. At the end of that time spent in the foundry, the average moulder must retire. This fact in itself is an argument for a fair rate of wages in the moulding trade.

THE Berlin police are investigating a case in which it is charged that the employees of a corset factory in the suburbs are cruelly overworked. The hands are with few exceptions girls from the country, who have been lured into Berlin by promising advertisements, and upon accepting work are given low wages with board and lodging in the factory. This places them entirely in the hands of their employers, who never permit them to leave the premises. They are said to be kept at work fourteen hours a day and that the whip and other forms of punishment are freely used. One girl who managed to make her escape is at present detained by the police, and her evidence, it is expected, will be very damaging.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us a report of the Socialist work of the State in the Grand Duchy of Baden by the payment of the supernumeraries due to its aged citizens up to the end of February. The whole sum paid in Baden amounted to 119,716 marks 89 pfennige, nearly £6,000 of our money. The number of applicants for "Alterszulen" was 1196; 916 claims were paid, 72 were refused payment, and 209 were under consideration. The oldest recipient was eighty-seven, the youngest seventy years old. About 900 new claims will be presented during the month of March. It is estimated that the total number of old folks who will be liberated from anxiety as to the security of their daily bread in this little State will be about 4,000. When will our great and rich State begin to turn itself into a common-wealth, in the honest sense of the word, by elevating the pauper into a citizen *emeritus?*—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

EIGHT HOURS.

HOW THE SYSTEM HAS WORKED IN AUSTRALIA—A MARKED IMPROVEMENT IN HOME LIFE—NO DIMINUTION IN PRODUCTION.

THE new number of Professor Edgeworth's *Economic Review* contains an article by Mr. John Rae, in which he endeavors to get at the truth about the eight hours day in Victoria, Australia. The experiment has now been tried for a quarter of a century in Victoria, and it has been applied to such a great variety of industries—industries with and without capital, skilled and unskilled, indoor and outdoor—and over such a wide range of population, that the results of its working may be taken as conclusive by business men.

"The history of the movement in Victoria," writes Mr. Rae, "is just the history of the successive ripening of an eight-hours opinion among the working-class, trade by trade. It appears that in Victoria the eight-hours' day spreads by the contagion of opinion. Whenever one trade gets it the more intelligent men in other trades go about saying, "We who work longer hours are actually suffering for our neighbors' short day," and the result is more agitation for shorter hours.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION.

has never been much favored by the Victorian trades as a means of getting the short day. In 1882 the engine-drivers and bakers, who worked cruelly long hours, certainly did tell the Shop Hours Commission that nothing but legislation could help them. Yet, oddly enough, they found themselves the very next year gaily walking in the annual eight-hours trades' procession with a triumphal banner bearing the legend, "They who would be free themselves must strike the blow." The eight hours system in Victoria was not won nor is it maintained by law. Mr. Rae indeed proves that the short day has not reduced wages in Victoria, it has, in fact neither raised nor reduced them. The wages in the building trade, for example, remained exactly as they were after adopting the short day in 1856, and the sharp fall in 1860 was neither averted nor caused by short hours, for it was due to the sudden decline of the goldfields. Wages are, indeed, nominally lower now than in 1856; but this is not due to short hours, but to the fall in the cost of living. The man who in 1851 earned 30s. a-day with ten hours work, and had to spend £7 0s. 3½d. a week, had obviously less real wages than the eight-hours man who in 1861 could well afford to take 12s a-day, because he only had to spend £2 7s. 4d. a week. Mr. Rae further shows that shortening hours has had no appreciable effect in reducing the numbers of the unemployed in Victoria. They are as embarrassing now as ever to the colony—perhaps more so. An eight-hours day is no ren edy against the "sundowner," who goes about all his life, as Mr. Rae says, "looking for work, and generally possessing not to obtain it." As to agitation, the "experienced Victorian" is that the short day tends occasionally to the diminution of establishments for a while, but not to any diminution in gross produce. In fact Mr. Rae's figures show that production gradually increases, and that, too, even where, as in the case of the Melbourne saddlers, the adoption of the eight-hours day was followed by a steady reduction year by year in the number of hands, from 636 in 1884 to 465 in 1888.

AMONG THE BOOTMAKERS

we find the short day suddenly reduced establishments—though, by 'he way, we learn that they are again increasing—as well as hands. But Mr. Rae cites an overwhelming consensus of testimony and statistics to prove that an increase in production, as a rule, follows the short day, and that it is due to both masters and men being "put on their mettle"—the masters to provide better and more economical management, the men to give better work. One point we desire to make with great emphasis.

MR. RAE DEMOLISHING THE THEORY

that shorter hours will only lead to more drinking. If it did that, he asks, how are we to account for the superior efficiency, intelligence, "go," and vigor, which everybody says has characterized the Victorian workman since he got the eight-hours day? The first effect of it was indeed a marked improvement in the homes and family life of the working class in Melbourne. The second, says Mr. Rae, was the sudden increase in mechanics' institutes, night-schools, popular lectures, and garden allotments all over the colony. Lastly, if the eight-hours system meant more dissipation, it is odd that the most virulent opposition to it has always come, not from employers in Victoria, but from the publicans. It is also significant that though we need one policeman for every three hundred and fifty people in London, and one for every four hundred and forty in Manchester, in spite of our nine and ten and twelve hour-days, in Melbourne, under the eight-hours system, one policeman for every seven hundred people is enough to keep order. Mr. Sidney Webb, a rival theorist, holds that the eight hours day will increase wages and diminish the number of the unemployed at the expense of profits. By the simple process of going to find out what the short day actually has done in Victoria during a quarter of a century, Mr. Rae, it seems to us, proves that both these opposing doctrinaires have been quite "off the scent."

A MAN at Shreveport, La., sold his moustache, "a large and fine one," to a friend for $2.

ELECTRIC motors are now being extensively introduced for the purpose of running independently the machinery on different floors of mills, thus doing away with the necessity of long lines of shafting and expensive belting, besides adding greatly to the convenience of starting and controlling the machines.

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