

LABOR ADVOCATE

1811

CHIEF CLERK

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TORONTO, CANADA, JULY 3, 1901

UNITE FOR PRACTICAL WORK.

HOWEVER widely the various sects and classes of Labor Reformers may differ in their views as to the ideal state of society and dispute over the question of Individualism vs. Socialism as the ultimate goal to be striven for, a substantial unanimity can nearly always be arrived at on any question of practical action. On the subjects, for instance of the improvement of the suffrage laws so as to give the masses greater power over legislation, the shifting of the burden of taxation upon land values so as to stop speculation, national currency and government or civic ownership of natural monopolies, all genuine Labor Reformers can "and shoulder to shoulder. True, when they come to theorize about the future form which society ought to assume wide differences of opinion are developed, some holding that competition ought to have free play, others that it ought to be abolished, and another school going so far as to advocate dispensing with governments altogether.

The discussion on these different views of the future industrial commonwealth is interesting and beneficial as an intellectual exercise, but it need not, and ought not to prevent the heartiest co-operation for those objects which are of immediate practical import and possible of attainment in our day. Even the Anarchist must admit that as between government of the people's representatives and government by irresponsible and arbitrary monopolies such as new exists, the former is the least of two evils, and unless a hopeless crank, ought to be willing to aid in throwing off the yoke of capitalism by the most available means.

Our main business at present is not building castles in the air or dreaming of the future golden age when capitalism will seem like a hideous night mare and caste distinctions an out-worn and barbaric superstition, but grappling with the four abuses, which all of us recognize as intolerable under any system. The present generation of workers in the cause of humanity has abundant work out of it on lines upon which we in the main agree and of the question of the social organization of the future may well be left to our children.

We should seek to minimize rather than to emphasize theoretical differences and give our best energies to practical work.

A NEW RAILWAY DEAL

The representatives of the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific Railways in London, England have been conferring with the object of coming to a friendly agreement under which they can co-operate against American railroads. It is altogether probable that this is the first step in the direction of an amalgamation in one form or other of the two great Canadian systems. The tendency now a days is towards concentration in all kind of enterprises and whether it be brought about by the present move or not it is sure to come before many years. There are all of course, to be considerable kicking among the people who still retain the antiquated belief that competition in railroads is a good thing and a check upon the over-reaching propensities of monopolists. But experience has long since shown that it is an utterly inadequate remedy for the evils arising from corporate control of transportation enterprises. The quicker the two systems are merged into one the better, as amalgamation will simplify and hasten the next process of expropriation with a view to Government management.

THE POPE'S LABOR ENCYCLICAL

The first portion of the Pope's Encyclical on the labor question strongly condemning Socialism was read in the Catholic churches last Sunday. It bears great ignorance on the part of his Holiness as to what Socialism really is, and holds up to the detestation of the faithful a mere caricature of the system such as that employed for scare-crow purposes by the capitalist press. The Pope knows so little about the labor question that he seems to imagine that it can be settled by some sort of rearrangement between the employers and the employed, in which he is, of course, about a quarter of a century behind the age. As every body of any intelligence, who has really studied the problem, knows, the best feeling between employers and workmen would alter things very little for the better, as it is not in the power of the employer under the competitive system to give the worker what he craves, however much he might wish to do so. The time has gone by when men of any religion can be successfully appealed to and asked in the name of their faith "to suffer and to endure" in the hope of a reward in the next world evils of human indolence which it is in their power to remedy. The Pope's Encyclical will have no more effect upon Catholic Labor Reformers on this continent than had his fulminations against boycotting and the plan of campaign on the Irish Nationalists. Pope Leo is a well-meaning old gentleman but he is a lack number.

SECULAR EDUCATION.

REV. DR. McGLYNN'S lecture on the school question brings up the subject of the attitude which Labor Reformers should assume as regards the agitation against Separate Schools. We believe that education should be free, secular, and compulsory. But we cannot join in the anti-separate school crusade which has excited so much sectarian bitterness of late, and we feel sure that Dr. McGlynn would be the last man to wish to add fuel to the flame of religious discord. At the same time it would be a good thing for the community and would benefit to class more than the Roman Catholics themselves if Separate Schools could be abolished. But the very first thing to be done with that end in view is to do away with all semblance of religious teaching in our Public Schools and make them thoroughly secular. We cannot, with even a show of decency, ask Catholics to give up their Separate Schools and send their children to institutions where the Protestant Bible is read and religious exercises by Protestant teachers engaged in. We should despise them as spiritless trucklers if they consented to do so. When Bible-reading, prayer and religious teaching are relegated to what should be to the home, the Church and the Sunday-school, and the teachers confined to their legitimate business of

giving purely an instruction we can then, with consistency, ask Catholics to support our Public School system. Dr. McGlynn is, in all right There is too much clerical interference in educational matters and the way to get rid of it is to secularize the schools entirely—not to be amenable against any particular denomination.

THE CHURCHES AND THE LABOR QUESTION

The attitude of the various Protestant churches on the memorial submitted to them on behalf of the labor and social reform organizations of this city is a matter of more ordinary significance. The growing discontent among the poor has frequently been formed the subject of pulpit discourse. The alienation of the working class from the religious bodies to which they or their fathers belonged has often been deplored by church gatherings and religious journals, and all sorts of remedies suggested. It might have been supposed therefore that when the bodies representing the working people of Toronto of their own accord approached the churches with the request that they would investigate concerning the relation of Christianity to the social problem, the opportunity would have been gladly welcomed as a means of strengthening the waning influence of the ministers over the people.

Surely if ever there was a cause for rejoicing among the ministers, here it was. "Here are the laboring masses," they should have said, "in whose welfare we feel such interest, coming to an inquiry meeting, they wish to learn about this religion that we would lay down our lives to teach them."

Well, how was this inquiry received? With congratulations sincere and loud! Hardly, on the whole. The Anglicans read the memorial to a very small house, and did the least they could possibly do, simply acknowledged its receipt. The Presbyterians did better. They passed a kindly worded but non-committal resolution. The Congregationalists, however, acted nobly, like wise men. A committee was appointed to report on the matter at their next meeting. Rev. J. Burton, who is personally a strong advocate of Labor Reform, was asked to prepare a paper on the subject, and the Union went so far as to express a desire to hear the secretary of the joint committee.

The Methodists, however, pursued an extraordinary course. This is the Church that prided itself on being the Church of the masses, the Church that had its birth in the classic fields of Oxford, but which in the Moorfields, the Foundry, the colliery regions of Kingswood, and among the lowest and poorest of the nation won its grandest triumphs. But this Church has passed through a vast change. It has become wealthy, and its founder might truly fail to recognize his child, just as Grip portrayed some time ago. The memorial committee recommended

"that no action be taken at the present time," for the following reasons: (1) They had not been sent to Conference to deal with such economic, scientific or political questions; (2) because the Church was organized for the attainment of spiritual ends, and, as the history of the past has demonstrated, the more carefully she guarded against entanglements of this kind from without, the more effective she was likely to be; (3) because civil government, no less than ecclesiastical, was an ordinance of God, and evil was likely to result from the subordination of the former to the latter; the preservation of all personal liberty depending upon confining these as rigidly as possible to their respective spheres; (4) because the Church could contribute most effectively toward the grand end of beneficent social reform on the principle of Christianity—love, by concentrating her energies upon the salvation of men and making them the partners of the Divine Spirit.

In all the four Gospels we don't remember anything quite so wise as this. The nearest parallel we remember was a story told with wonderful pathos and dramatic skill, of a priest and a Levite on a journey, who drew up a memorial report that "the church was organized for spiritual ends, and the history of the past had demon-

strated, the more carefully she guarded against entanglements of attending to the wants of men by the way side, the more effective she was likely to be."

In the month of June, 1891, will high twenty centuries after the founding of Christianity, a question of vital welfare to the progress of humanity was submitted to the Methodist Church, and in language skillfully diplomatic she declares "This is none of our business, righteousness and justice are not ours to deal with."

But that is not all. The Christian Guardian has rendered itself so famous for its hostility to labor reform, and, of course, could not let the occasion pass. In a discussion of the Conference it says—

There is also an undue disposition on the part of outside organizations to consult the Conferences and Synods on their particular schemes or methods. We do not hesitate to say that, in our opinion, the Conferences and Synods of the churches to which appeals are made on behalf of special interests, are engaged in the promotion of every good work, and as well informed on the needs of the Church and the world, as those who are so anxious to tell them what they ought to do.

The saddest commentary on Christianity we know of is the fact that its "Evidences" have so often to be sought in the pages of the text books, and that they are so wanting in the only place where they are of any value—namely, personal character. The united committee sent an inquiry courteous and respectful, and the "Christian" Guardian treats them to a coarse snub, and an intimation that their correspondence is not desired. We commend this extract to the careful reading of the Methodist public as a sample of the strange courtesy of their chosen editor. It may be that the Knights of Labor, the Single Tax Association, the Women's Enfranchisement Association, the Eight Hour League, the Nationalist Association, and the Trades and Labor Council, do not include many of the great and mighty of the earth, but we believe they have sufficient nobility and self-respect to save them from ever falling into the error of taking the Christian Guardian as a model of Christian courtesy. Galileo, still the truth in the recesses of your soul and the gloom of the dungeon, don't trouble the Conferences and Synods with your new-fangled teachings! And, why dare to speak on Mars' Hill, you are a pestiferous fellow, to have the audacity to bring anything superior to the wisdom of the Greek!

An excellent letter from our esteemed friend and our former correspondent, Mr. Charles Durand, on the street railway, originally published in the World, appears in another column. Mr. Durand seldom loses an opportunity to denounce Socialism, but like many others, he is apparently a good deal of a Socialist himself without knowing it. He'll get there if he lives long enough.

AFTER all the talk about Sir John Macdonald having died a "poor man" it now turns out that he leaves an estate valued at between \$50,000 and \$60,000 in addition to the Earlscliff mansion. This may be the idea which monopolists and corrupt partisans who have realized millions by means of vicious legislation and political expediency of poverty, but it would be a fortune to many a man who has done vastly more service to the community than ever Sir John did.

DR. SPRELL, M.P., has introduced into the Dominion Parliament a bill for the regulation of commercial agencies that certainly ought to pass. It compels all private detectives to take out licenses, and to keep their books open for the inspection of all whose names are entered therein, makes it unlawful to enter the name of a business man without his consent, and compels all private detectives to keep a sum of money on deposit in the hands of the Finance Minister to meet any judgments against them. A still better enactment would be one abolishing the whole rascally business. Private detectives of any sort are an unmitigated

nuisance and fraud, and ought not to be tolerated. But we fear the little chance of the measure has a law.

LOCAL NEWS

The employees of the Laminum Manufacturing Company went across the bay to Lewisville last Friday on the Oshawa for an annual excursion and picnic.

The Toronto branch of the Amalgamated Tailors Union on Monday elected Mr. George Pringle as delegate to the convention of the union at St. Louis in July.

The letter forwarded by the Joint Committee of the labor and social reform organizations to the Street Railway Committee is left over until next week, assuming to lack of space.

The Cigar-makers Union held a special meeting in Temperance Hall last Friday night to discuss matters connected with the trade relation to the effect in the business of the new tariff.

RICHARD SCOTT, an employee in Kemp Bros tin works at the corner of River and Gerrard streets, had three fingers crushed in a machine last Friday. The fingers were amputated in the hospital.

The Toronto branch of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners elected the following officers on the evening of the 23rd of June: President, T. Joyce, vice-president, M. J. Bulger, recording secretary, F. F. Tavish; financial secretary, D. P. McNeill; treasurer, William Moran; warden, R. McClurkin; conductor, Sydney Jones; trustees, John Bulger, John Cameron, Miles McDonald.

On Monday evening a meeting of the workers was held at Richmond Hall, for the purpose of forming a trade organization, about fifty being present. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Robert Bell, of Detroit, organizer of the International Brotherhood of Brassworkers, and a branch of that organization formed under the title of Local Brotherhood No. 23, forty-five members signing the roll. On Tuesday Mr. Bell left for Hamilton where he will endeavor to organize the brassworkers of that city. The International Brotherhood holds its annual convention at Pittsburg August 18th.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Public Library Board was held last Friday afternoon. Dr. Payne reported that D. Cassidy, Mr. Pearson and himself had waited upon the mayor, the chairman of the executive committee and the city treasurer, and requested them to use their influence with the city council to have \$3,000 added to the estimates for the current year. They promised to do so as requested, and asked the board to delay closing the three branch libraries till the next meeting of the city council. A resolution in accordance with this proposal was unanimously carried.

At the weekly meeting of the Single Tax Association last Friday, a number of letters from ministers denouncing the objects of the Association were read. The question of the closing of the branch free libraries came up, and after some discussion a committee was appointed to enquire into the usefulness of these institutions in order that the Association might be able to pass an intelligent opinion upon the proposal to discontinue them. The remainder of the evening was occupied by a general discussion as to the difference between the value of land and that of the products of labor.

REV. DR. McGLYNN, of New York, has been delivering lectures to large audiences in the Auditorium. On Thursday last week he spoke on "The Common Schools and their Enemies" strongly denouncing clerical interference with public school education. On Saturday evening his subject was "Religion and Equal Rights," giving the latter item its broadest interpretation as including the right of women to access to the land and natural monopolies, and urging the adoption of the Single Tax. On Sunday evening he prescribed a brilliant sermon on "The Philosophy of Prayer."

REV. DR. WITT, on Sunday evening last, spoke strongly in favor of the closing of the street railways. He referred to the access of civic control thereto, and believed that the present condition of affairs offered an excellent opportunity for Toronto to make the experiment. "Let us see if we can run it properly," he said, "let us