

NOTICE.

We shall be pleased to receive items of interest pertaining to Trade Societies from all parts of the Dominion for publication. Officers of Trades Unions, Secretaries of Leagues, etc., are invited to send us news relating to their organizations, condition of trade, etc.

Our columns are open for the discussion of all questions affecting the working classes. All communications must be accompanied by the names of the writers, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

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J. S. WILLIAMS,
SUPERINTENDENT.

The Ontario Workman.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1872.

THE DUTY OF THE HOUR.

The occurrences of the past few weeks in connection with the labor movement, have been of peculiar importance and significance to the working classes, and their contemplation and consideration will tend to point out the path of duty which lies before them, not only in order to the attainment of a higher intelligence, but even for the preservation of their manhood.

The details connected with the movement that is now, to a very large extent, agitating almost the entire civilized world—the Short Time movement—are too fresh in the minds of our readers to need more than a passing notice; but, as far as the movement in Canada has been concerned, the question has not been argued upon its merits. The arguments have been all on one side. In league meeting, in mass meeting, and in every other conceivable form of meeting, the principles of the movement have been openly stated and advocated by the working classes; but, in no instance have those arguments been met by the employers. Instead of having been met fairly, a number of the employers have made the agitation of the question an opportunity of giving vent to their ill-concealed designs upon the Union principles of the men, thus rendering it, in Canada, not so much a question of short time, as a crusade against the rights and liberties held in so high estimation by men who have realized the benefits of unionism.

It has been before remarked that those same employers, in order to carry out their ends, employed the very principle which they refused to the men,—that of combination. Not alone in Toronto, but in Hamilton and elsewhere, its operations have been seen. Almost simultaneously a document has been presented to the men, with certain alternatives if they refuse—the signing of which would reduce the men to a position of serfdom. We grant it that employers may say what number of hours a man shall work in their employ, and the workman has an equal right to place his price upon his labor, and refuse to work such hours if he consider them detrimental to his interest; but no man, nor no body of men, has a right to dictate to another how he shall regulate his sympathies. And we are glad to know that this system of intimidation has failed—miserably failed—to accomplish its purpose, and has evidently produced quite a contrary effect from that expected. With very few exceptions, the approaches were spurned with indignation; and in the case of Hamilton and Brantford, the men have left their work rather than stultify their manhood in the manner demanded. We believe that a similar document has been presented to a number of the mechanics of this city, but matters have not yet been pushed to the extreme that some of the employers of Hamilton and

Brantford have adopted. Of course, not being in the confidence of the "masters" of this city, we cannot tell whether they will yield so ready obedience to the "wire puller of Bow Park" as those already named have done, but if the information which has reached us be correct, we think they will not. It is currently reported that rather than allow their business arrangements to suffer by the "locking out" and "squeezing" process that has been adopted with some success to the "chiefs" but so much disaster to the "squeezed," two large manufacturers in the iron trade, in this city, have turned their backs upon the "master's association" at a somewhat heavy money forfeit; and are determined henceforth—and wisely, we think—to have less "outside interference with the internal arrangement of their establishments."

The lesson to be learned is, still more perfect organization among the working classes. The least success of this anti-Reform movement has been made among those who have shown themselves to be thoroughly in accord and united, and *vice versa*. To a very great extent has this lesson been learned by the operative classes, for since the commencement of the crusade against the Typographical Union, more than a dozen bodies of men hitherto unorganized, have combined for the purpose of self-protection. This only is what is needed on the part of workingmen; and we hope the work will go on till Canada can show one of the finest and most complete system of organization extant.

One more thing remains for the workingmen of Toronto to do, and that is at an early day to hold a mass meeting to express sympathy for the men now "locked out," and to adopt some means of assistance. They deserve it—and we believe Toronto will not be behind in giving tangible tokens of sympathy. We trust the Trades' Assembly will see to this matter.

THAT AGREEMENT.

In looking back over the history of our race, and glancing our mind's eye upon that period of our history in which the masses lay in the darkest ignorance, subject to the wills of the fewest monopolists, despots, chieftains, lordlings, or by what ever name they may have been known, we stand aghast at the enormous mass of ignorance and apparently non-progressive elements composing the producing classes that lay before us, and we feel half inclined to exclaim, can those degraded menials ever occupy a more elevated position? Poor fellows, apparently dead to all but the lowest animal sensations, eat, drink, sleep and toil. But travel with us, and view as you pass along the gradual development of the nobler natures inherent, but latent from various causes in our race, and note the means by which the progress that is now enjoyed by the progeny of an oppressed and degraded ancestry was achieved, and you will find two words prominent,—we might call them the watch words of progress as they pass from generation to generation, ever mighty in effecting the reforms that we, who live in this the nineteenth century, have reason to be thankful for,—we will call those words *Union* and *agitation*; and whether we view the operations of the principles conveyed by those two mighty vocabularies in wrenching from a despot the ground work of British liberty, guaranteed by an Act of *Magna Charta*, or the grand uprising of the industrial classes against oppressive measures, under the leadership of Watt Tyler, and the innumerable instances that mark every page in the record of progress down to the successful passage of the great English Reform Bill, we find the same grand results have attended unity and agitation. And although those two ideas are not of recent origin, but as old as humanity itself, shall we, because of their age, or because they have proved mighty engines of progress in the hands of our fathers, give them up because all has been gained that we, as reasonable beings, can desire by those who fought the fight of liberty so well and effectively in the time past? Unworthy, cowardly creature, who would for a moment entertain the thought! Yet in the face of all this, there are those who, by a freak of fortune, have come into possession of more money than brains, and have a claim to the *genus homo* that would at this stage of the world's progress deprive those who produce the wealth of the nation the right to unite and agitate for a reform, that of all reforms at the present day is claiming the attention of the ablest thinkers

in the civilized world—that of labor reform. Men of superior advantages, men who claim to be the elite of society, men who would feel the least infringement on their liberties very keenly; and yet with all these acquirements and feelings, those very men say to those whose productive energies keep them in affluence, you shall not have the privilege of eating your bread in the sweat of your face in my employment, and if I can kinder you elsewhere, if you do not sign away your right to unite with those of your fellow-men whose interests you consider to be identical with yours, or agitate for any reform that may be of benefit to you or your fellow-man. This is the substance of an agreement that a portion of the employers of labor in Ontario agreed to enforce upon their employees, and we are glad to know that the workmen of Ontario are sufficiently enlightened to understand when they are insulted, and know how to appreciate their liberties, and have the courage to hurl such an advance back upon the miserable, shallow brains that gave it birth. And as a result, hundreds of natures noblemen are refused leave to toil by their lordly fellow-workmen. Truly, must the sanguinary fight of freedom still be fought—those who are noblest, suffering in the van. But in the words of Erin's sweetest poet, let us remember,—

That it is sweeter to bleed for an age,
Than to dwell for a moment in chains.

And let us remember that man's power to make his fellow mourn and suffer will not always exist. Those very troubles that we all so much abhor, and that no one feels with so much severity as the workman, known as lock-outs and strikes, may be but a school through which the masses are passing to a fairer and more just system of labor, when the middle man known as master shall cease to stand between the producer and consumer, and those who do the work reap the full value of their toil, and those who consume receive a just equivalent for their exchange.

THE POLICE DIFFICULTY.

The internal eruptions that have, during the last few months, occurred in our midst cannot fail to call forth manifestations of wonder and astonishment from a people so long accustomed to enjoy the rich and inestimable blessings flowing from the Christian spirit of peace and contentment, which has hitherto been the prized possession of all Canadian subjects. The history of the world, however, furnishes us with many deplorable instances, where undue advantage has been taken of this Christian virtue, expressed by those who had been long characterized by a laudable disposition to glide along the stream of time under a calm and peaceful breeze that invariably finds its outlet from the genial sky created by the concentration of love which encircles the hearts of loyal citizens. It would be difficult to find, in the annals of British history, an example that could in the least degree be compared with the exhibitions of tyrannical despotism which the inhabitants of this country have lately been called upon to witness.

The latest, and, perhaps, the most notorious, that has engaged the attention of the public is the unmerited usage to which the police force of Toronto have for some time been subjected, and which has had the effect of arousing that most respectable body of public servants to realize the necessity of lifting up their voice against the harsh discipline and silly dogmatic treatment which a few of their number have undergone. There is doubtless no class of men engaged in the civic service that possesses a greater share of public confidence than our police constables, and if expressions of public sympathy will avail them anything in improving their present condition, we have no doubt but it will be abundantly lavished upon them.

We regret that the extra pressure upon our space prevents us entering so minutely into the nature and peculiar features of the present difficulty as we would have desired, and while reserving for a future opportunity the privilege of putting on record the evil results arising from the incompetency of some wooden officials, we would, in the meantime, express a desire that our policeman may continue to display that same forbearance and patient endurance which they have hitherto exhibited until some effectual means be adopted to secure for them the fair share of justice which they are surely entitled to.

CABINET AND CHAIRMAKER'S UNION.

On Saturday evening last a number of the employees of Hay & Co. met in the Temperance Hall, for the purpose of organizing a Union, in connection with their trade. Mr. D. McMurray occupied the chair, and efficiently conducted the business of the meeting. After suitable remarks from the chairman and others, the work of organizing proceeded, and the following officers were elected:—

Mr. D. McMurray, President.
C. Coles, Vice-President.
Geo. Jeffrey, Treasurer.
J. Beatty, Rec. Sec.
Shirley, Fin. Sec.
Wm. Humphrey, Tyler.

Committee—Messrs. Dell, Kisner, Findley, Munton and Prior.
At the next meeting of the new union, to be held on call of the executive, the constitution and by-laws will be submitted.

TRADES' ASSEMBLY.

An adjourned meeting of the Trades' Assembly, will be held in the Hall, on Tuesday evening next, at half-past seven o'clock. An invitation has been extended to all officers of the various Unions to be in attendance, as matters of importance will be submitted. We trust that every delegate will be present, and also all to whom the invitation has been extended.

A RIGHT STEP.

WORKINGMEN'S PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL PARTY.

The working classes of London, Ont., have taken a step in the right direction. On Monday night the third meeting of the Workingmen's Progressive Political Party was held at the Forest City Lodge Room, at 8 o'clock. After the minutes of the previous meeting were read and adopted, the following officers were elected:

P. B. Flanagan (tanner), President.
Wm. Wood (cooper), Vice-President.
B. Bryan (Ed. *Western Workman*), Sec.
John Skerritt (shoemaker), Treas.

Messrs. Geo. Dickson, J. W. Kearns and John Maybank, Executive Committee.

After the enrollment of a large number of members, the Executive Committee were instructed to secure a Hall, to be devoted exclusively to the business of the society, and open every night for the instruction and edification of the working classes. Various means are to be devised to make the meetings interesting and beneficial to the laboring man, and to make them a source of enticement to allure him from the many temptations that beset his leisure hours.

The Executive Committee were instructed to draft a constitution for the Society.

The meeting then adjourned, to meet again on Friday next.

THE CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES.

In the House of Commons on Monday evening, Mr. Gladstone made his promised explanation of negotiations regarding indirect claims, and of the position taken by the Government.

Mr. Gladstone on rising was greeted with cheers. He said in order to allow an opportunity for discussion on statements he was about to make, he would bring a formal motion for an adjournment of the House. After alluding in terms of praise to the forbearance shown by Parliament during the controversy, he said he would commence his narrative of its progress with the 18th of January, when it became known to him that the claims for indirect damages had been presented at Geneva as the American case. Her Majesty's Government protested on the 3rd of February, that the indirect claims were not within the scope of the Treaty of Washington, nor within the intention of either party to the Treaty. Secretary Fish replied in April, that he thought the Geneva Board ought to decide the whole question. The tone of Mr. Fish's despatch was most courteous. In the meantime a communication was received from Gen. Schenck, American Minister, suggesting another course, which would be acceptable to England and America. This was to interchange notes, setting forth the views, terms and conditions whereon both would agree to proceed to arbitration. We accepted this suggestion, continued Mr. Gladstone, and carried on correspondence altogether by telegraph. On Wednesday, the 8th inst., President Grant submitted a proposition to the United States Senate. On Thursday, we ascertained that that proposition was not precisely as we understood it should be, because of the brevity of the cable despatch on which it was based. On Friday, a draft, conveying letters of our views, was forwarded to Minister Schenck, and, although lengthy, was immediately telegraphed by him to Washington on Saturday. General Schenck informed Lord Granville that the President had accepted, and the Senate entertained that draft. He (Mr. Gladstone) thought this fact was almost equivalent to a ratification. He begged for a further forbearance of the House, now that the question was approaching a satisfactory issue, honourable alike to both nations. If successful in this negotiation, Her Majesty's Government, had a right to exact praise for settling such a momentous question. The last proposal on the part of Great Britain sustained the position taken by the Government in the Queen's speech at the beginning of the present session. Mr. Gladstone, in conclusion, said he thought he was not too sanguine in predicting that the negotiations would result in a settlement which would redound to the credit of both parties.

As Mr. Gladstone took his seat, there was loud and repeated cheering from all parts of the House.

Two whales, respectively 75 and 80 feet in length, were driven ashore by ice and captured at Cape Breton, a few days since.

Communications.

THE NINE HOUR MOVEMENT.

To the Editor of the Ontario Workman.

SIR,—The firm and united manner in which the workingmen of Canada have persisted in their just and reasonable demand for a reduction of one hour per day from the hours of labor, has induced some of the employers to resort to all sorts of schemes and dodges to evade—for the time—this important question, which aims at the social elevation of the workingmen of the Dominion. One firm in this city have offered to advance the wages of their men twenty-five cents per day of ten hours, while another has proposed to divide ten per cent. of their profits among their men on condition that they continue to work ten hours per day. It is sincerely to be hoped that no workingman in Canada will be induced to accept either of these offers in lieu of one hour per day for recreation and mental improvement, for, in obtaining a reduction in the hours of labor, we are ascending in the scale of social elevation to a height which we could not attain by any other means. It has been urged by some that, shortening the hours of labor will render the condition of the workingmen worse than it is now, as it will give them more time to spend in drinking and other vicious practices. Such an assertion is a base calumny on those against whom it is uttered, and if any argument is required to refute such a statement, I would refer those who make use of it, to the intelligent, forcible, and logical character of the speeches which the *bona fide* workingmen of Canada, with the limited time at their disposal, have made in support of their claim, and which have elicited the admiration of some of our professional men. It is said that those speeches are all one sided. This is to a certain extent true, but the responsibility of that rests with the employers and not with the workmen, for all the meetings held by the workmen were public, and were duly announced, and free alike to the employer and the employed, to discuss this great question fairly and openly on its merits. But with scarcely a solitary exception did the employers come forward in an honorable and manly way to meet their workmen, but, on the contrary, they resorted to the mean and cowardly action of discharging those who were prominent in agitating for, or dared even to mention the Nine Hours, besides endeavoring to crush unionism among the workmen, the want of which they (the employers) had so much cause to deprecate did not exist among themselves in order to enable them to carry out their selfish and tyrannical intentions. It is impossible almost to over-estimate the value of Mr. Beatty conceding the Nine Hours' system at the very commencement of the agitation, for besides being the Leader in that respect he was also the Leader in generously opening the columns of his journal to the free and impartial discussion of the great question, to which all other journals in the city had been closed, particularly the *Globe*, whose only reform consists in abusing every public servant who is not guided by its dictation, and in getting its own party to occupy the treasury benches. It has been said that it was policy that induced Mr. Beatty to act as he did; be that as it may, it is a policy that is working immense good for the workingmen of this Dominion, and it is a policy that embodies something holy—yea, more, it is fulfilling the Divine command, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." It has been said also that it is premature to urge the adoption of the Nine Hours system in Canada. Alas! for the toiler, everything is premature with a certain class that tends to ameliorate his condition, or to raise him from the thralldom of unscrupulous capitalists, to which he has so long been subject. Is it premature for Canada to aspire to have her railway system, her telegraph system, her merchant fleet, her public institutions? and last, but not least, the dwellings of her capitalists equal to those of older and wealthier nations? No! Then neither is it premature for the mass of her citizens to rise in the scale of social elevation; and we have the success of our kinsmen in Britain to stimulate us to fight manfully and determinedly for the attainment of our purpose. Let us endeavor to emulate them in this respect, and prove ourselves to be worthy descendants of our race, in battling for social elevation, as we have already proved ourselves to be when called upon to repeal from our shores the invading marauders from a foreign country. As we will soon be in the midst of a general election, it behoves the workingmen of Canada to bestir themselves to select suitable candidates to represent them in Parliament; men who will legislate for the benefit and elevation of the toiling thousands. We must not permit ourselves to be deluded by the honeyed words of those who come to seek our suffrages, but we must be guided by their past actions, and two important planks in our political platform should be *Vote by Ballot* and *Free Libraries*. We will have no difficulty in carrying any election in the cities or towns, and we will be enabled, by a system of organization, to at least direct those in the rural districts. By pursuing this course we will shew our opponents that we are the power, and that we are determined to use our power for the advancement and improvement of the masses, which should be the aim and purpose of every true and loyal citizen in this fair Dominion.

Yours truly,
SOCIAL ELEVATION.

Toronto, 11th May, 1872.