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THE CONGRESS CONVENTION.

The thirty-fifth annual convention of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada is now a thing of history. It is difficult at this writing to judge as to the actual value of the gathering, but if volume of attendance is any indication as to what influence the convention will have, there is certainly no cause for discouragement. It was evident from the meagre dispatches to hand here, that there was nothing of a sensational nature about the convention. The moderate element of International Unionists seemed to have full control, under the guidance of President Moore and Secretary Draper. Ontario and Quebec supplied the bulk of delegates, almost two hundred representing Montreal unions alone. The One Big Union was repudiated absolutely by the convention and power given the executive to revoke charters of organizations with O.B.U. tendencies. Resolutions that passed the convention were more or less of a moderate nature, and probably represented the views of the rank and file of Canadian Unionists to a greater degree than if they had been more radical. Those who expected a shake-up in the administration or a radical revision of the Congress' policy were to say the least astray in their prediction, and the congress will continue in the even tenor of its way, relying more or less on a nibbling process to secure the ultimate aim of Canadian Organized Labor. The movement in Canada has shown a healthy progress during the past year. Secretary Draper in his report showed that there are now 248,000 Trades Unionists in Canada, 160,000 of whom are affiliated with the Congress. Six Trades and Labor Councils were organized during the year, and fifty-one charters granted by the Congress. Organization work is, after all, the main consideration and if the present administration can show results along that line it will cover a multitude of other shortcomings.

In the selection of officers for the coming year, President Moore and Secretary-Treasurer Draper were unanimously elected for another term. Showing quite plainly that Ontario and Quebec, who know them best, are satisfied in a great measure with the present administration. President Moore may not strike the average individual as a man who would carry great weight, but those who have crossed swords with him will testify to his shrewdness and quick wit in debate. A former Vice-President of the Congress, who while not agreeing with Mr. Moore's general policy, told the writer that Tom Moore was the best President the Congress had ever had, and one had only to step into his office to see that he conducted the affairs of the Congress in a business-like manner. Secretary Draper who was nominated by James Simpson has always been above reproach in so far as the performance of his secretarial duties are concerned. His popularity can best be judged by the fact that when he informed the convention that he would not run for office if the secretaryship was made a full time job, the delegates turned down the resolution to that effect. It has been charged that Mr. Draper cannot do effective work for the Congress while he remains an employe of the Government. A further appreciation of Messrs. Moore and Draper was given expression by increasing the salary of both officials.

A. Martel of Montreal was the only Vice-President who was re-elected, David Rees and Robert Baxter both going down to defeat. The new Vice-Presidents have not occupied heretofore a very prominent place in the Canadian movement, but are very much to the fore in their home cities. P. J. Halford is City Controller in Hamilton, Ont., while Mr. McAndrew is Vice-President of the Moose Jaw Maintenance of Way Employes' Union. Mr. Halford is an enthusiastic advocate of independent political action on Labor's part and is a leader in the Independent Labor Party of Ontario. Both of the new Vice-Presidents are of the moderate type and round out a truly moderate executive board.

Westerners will be disappointed at the choice of the convention city for 1920. It was hoped that the west might get the convention next year, and Moose Jaw made a vigorous bid for the honor of entertaining the Congress in 1920. Sydney, N.S. also invited the delegates to journey farther east next year, but it was finally decreed that Windsor, Ont., the border city, would be the convention place. It may seem like a tendency to be selfish on the part of the easterners, but at least one thing is evident, that the convention will be held in Ontario or Quebec just as often as Trades Unionists in those provinces desire to keep it there. They have the greater share of the membership and can at all times control the conventions. The annual gathering will only leave Ontario or Quebec when the majority of the delegates from those provinces have an irresistible desire to see what the rest of Canada looks like. However, we feel sure that if Mayor Clarke would accompany our delegates next year and extol the beauties and hospitality of Edmonton, we would have an opportunity to entertain the 1921 convention in this city.

AN ELEVENTH HOUR DISCOVERY.

It must strike policemen, and workers generally, that those who would shroud the bluecoats' job in a mysterious sort of sanctity, have been somewhat late in recognizing the sacred trust involved in the policeman's occupation. But while living costs have climbed steadily the wages of policemen have shown very little tendency to do likewise. Until, as an American contemporary puts it, "being a limb of the law has become a most unprofitable function." No one will dispute the importance of the policeman's position, but the landlord or butcher will hardly be agreeable to accepting that fact in lieu of payment for what the policeman must necessarily purchase. If the policeman's job is such a sacred trust why has not this appreciation been expressed in terms of dollars and cents?

We welcome the news that the Trades and Labor Congress in Convention assembled has endorsed the formation of policemen's organizations and will grant a national charter to a Canadian Federation of policemen's Unions; a plan that was conceived by the Edmonton bluecoats' organization. The Congress has also entered a protest against any legislation that has for its object the discouragement of policemen in their desire for organization. The police are not organizing for the purpose of striking as some would have us believe, but that they might, through the means of collective bargaining, be able to secure a remuneration commensurate with the "sacred trust" involved in the policeman's job. In forty cities of the United States the policemen have become organized under the A.F. of L. while in practically every city of importance in Canada they are chartered by the Trades and Labor Congress. Even those who are most insistent in the belief that the police should not be permitted to organize, will be forced to admit that the policeman's job has been exalted in fancy phraseology to a remarkable degree since organization of the bluecoats became an actual fact. If the exaltation of the policeman and the eleventh hour discovery that his is a position of trust and importance in the community, will result in replenishing the family larder more effectually than heretofore, the policemen's unions will not have been organized in vain.

QUALITY IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITY.

Only about two months remain before the civic elections. The Labor Party in conjunction with the Trades and Labor Council are already at work on organization for the contest. It is the intention of those bodies to contest a number of seats that will become vacant this year, and both organizations are appealing for the enthusiastic support of trade unionists and others who are interested in securing Labor representation in the City Government and on the School Board.

The candidates who will carry Labor's banner have not yet been chosen, but it is necessary that they should soon be announced. Right here is where a great responsibility rests upon the executives of the Labor Party and the Trades' Council, and the members of those bodies who will finally ratify the choice of the executives. Mr. Tom Richardson, speaking in the city last week impressed his hearers with the necessity of securing men who had fitness and ability; but above all, said the British leader, men who are chosen to represent Labor in a public position should possess irreproachable character that would stand the test of any emergency. They should be men who would give their best thought and energy, not for personal aggrandizement but in the interests of those whom they were chosen to represent. The admonition of Mr. Richardson can well be applied to the choice of candidates for the coming elections. That there are many men in the Labor movement in this city who can qualify according to the standard quoted, can not be gainsaid. Whether or not they are chosen rests wholly with the members of the various unions in the city, and the Labor Party. Any Union man or member of the Labor Party may place in nomination the name of any other trade-unionist or member of the Party, who has the necessary property qualifications. Names should be submitted in writing to Rev. F. E. Mercer, together with the written consent of the member nominated.

The Edmonton Free Press sincerely hopes that every trade unionist in the city will make it his personal business, to preferably, become a member of the Labor Party, but at any rate to take an active interest in the selection of the proper type of men to carry Labor's standard in the coming civic elections. We heartily agree with another observation of the gentleman previously quoted herein, that quality rather than quantity should be our aim in securing Labor representation in public positions. But with the proper co-operation and the display of an active interest by the proper persons, there is no apparent reason why quality in sufficient quantity should not be secured.

CURE FOR RADICALISM.

"The best way to silence protestors against wrong is to right the wrong." So spoke President Wilson in one of his recent addresses. The President offered little encouragement to the man who prides himself on a conservatism that is blind to progress, and he said he did not intend to ask men to cease agitating against wrong while wrong existed. "As long as there is something to correct, I say, God speed to the men who are trying to correct it." "That is the only way to meet radicalism," said the President.

Radicalism is an inevitable by-product of a system of society which permits the many to be exploited by the few. Remove the cause of protest and the protest will cease.

THE BRITISH RAILWAY STRIKE

It is extremely difficult at this time to comment intelligently on the railway strike in Great Britain, for the reason that those who are opposed to the strikers control the news service, with the result that we are hearing only one side of the controversy through the regular news channels. We were at first led to believe that all the newspapers were hostile to the strikers. That has since been contradicted and we are told that "two of the most influential journals, The Manchester Guardian and the Westminster Gazette, support the men's wage demands as reasonable. Both these newspapers take the ground that the Government offer, considering the increased cost of living, which they say is likely to continue, give the men little more than they were paid before the war. They revert to a statement of Premier Lloyd George that railway wages then were disgracefully low. It will thus be seen that not every phase of the situation is contained in the newspaper headlines or the statements of the Premier.

A feature of the strike is the support the railwaymen are receiving from other unions. Indeed, it has been necessary to refuse offers of sympathetic strikes from all quarters. It is hard to reconcile the charge of the Premier that the strike is of a revolutionary nature, with the fact that the leader of the railwaymen, John Henry Thomas, is one of the most conservative of British Labor leaders. The London Daily Herald accuses the Government of inviting violence, and says: "Everything is done to give an air of violence to what on the men's part is a peaceful, lawful movement for better wages."

EDITOR'S NOTES.

Attention Delegates!! Trades' Council meeting Monday.

The Trades' Congress Convention report as well as other important business will occupy the attention of those present.

It seems somewhat incredible, but we must confess that we have not as yet heard the Steel Workers' strike termed a revolution.

About fifteen local unions will meet next week. Is it too much to ask that your paper may be permitted to publish a report of your meeting? Let's have it.

And even when the usual charge of being an I.W.W., Bolshevik, etc., was laid against the Secretary of the National Committee of Steel Workers' organizations, the charge was so obviously ridiculous that the Senate Committee refused to entertain it.

We would suggest the 5th chapter of Nehemiah as a passage of scripture that might give Borden, Wilson, Lloyd-George, et al, some inspiration as to how to deal with present day profiteers. (Wipe the dust off the family Bible and peruse it yourself, reader).

The election which takes place in Ontario this month is something in the nature of a free-for-all. Labor, the farmers, and the two old line parties are all very active. The make-up of the New Provincial legislature may require the shifting of benches as in our own fair province.

Now we know why the Steel Trust fights Unionism. It is a question of "morals." Here's the evidence: "Following a statement by John Fitzpatrick, director-general of the strike, that the walkout could be ended immediately if the United States Steel Corporation would agree to arbitrate, Elbert H. Gary, directing head of the corporation, gave it as his personal opinion that because of "moral principles" involved in the struggle the directors could not deal with the union labor leaders."

WINNIPEG STREET RAILWAY MEN ACCEPT AWARD

The shop and barn men of the Winnipeg Electric Railway have decided to accept the award of the Mathers arbitration board with the proviso that the agreement should be retroactive to July 1st and that the agreement of the gas fitters and repair men should terminate May 1st, the same date as the shopmen's schedule.

A strong recommendation in the form of a motion, was made to the board that the wages of laborers in the employ of the railway company be raised, at least to the same level as is laid down by the Manitoba Fair Wage board: 40 cents an hour to laborers, which is less, it was said, than that paid to laborers employed on public works.

This body of men formerly belonged to the Machinists' Association, local No. 457 but are now making application to the International Association of Machinists for a charter.

Good judgment is often a lucky guess.

FIREMEN RAPIDLY ORGANIZING IN U.S. AND CANADA

The members of the San Francisco fire department are rapidly signing the roll of the new union of Fire Fighters of America; while only about 50 per cent of the firemen have been invited to join the new union, 340 members of the department are now enrolled in the organization.

The Labor Council sent a letter to every fire house in the city inviting the firemen to attend a meeting of the new union in the Labor Temple, when the organization was completed and formal application made to the American Federation of Labor for a charter.

Reports show that there are now 105 local unions of the Fire Fighters of America in the United States and Canada, and that they have all been chartered within the past eighteen months.

Trade union organization is reported to have been greatly advanced among French women during the period of the war.

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DELEGATE TO TRADES' CONGRESS HAS RETURNED

Harry Clark, who represented the Trades and Labor Council at the Congress Convention in Hamilton, returned to the city late Wednesday evening. Mr. Clark's report which will be presented to the Council on Monday evening, will be published in full in the next issue of the Free Press.

MANITOBA TEACHERS WILL DEMAND A MINIMUM WAGE

At a meeting of the executive of the Manitoba Teachers' federation to be held on October 21st, a movement will be started to have a definite minimum wage fixed for teachers in the public schools of the province, H. W. Huntley, president, stated. It is said that for second class teachers this will be at least \$900 per annum.

The darkest hours come just before the dawn. The future has been dark enough in Ireland for the past four years, but the gleam that now appears may well presage the sunrise. Strangely enough, and yet most logically, it comes from Ulster.

GARMENT WORKERS GET CONCESSIONS AT GRAND RAPIDS

Garment Workers' Union No. 260, Grand Rapids, Mich., has settled its strike with the shirt firms in this city, securing reduced hours and a wage increase. The new conditions provide for 44-hour week, time and a half for overtime, double time for Sundays and an increase of 7 1/2 percent. Hereafter needles and thread will be furnished free, wages of time workers will be advanced \$2 per week, and a minimum wage of \$30 for cutters.

N.Y. PAINTERS GET \$1 AN HOUR AND 5-DAY WEEK

The District council of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paper-hangers at New York, has won its fight for the 5-day week and \$1 an hour. When a settlement was reached with about fifty contractors composing the United Contractors' Association the end had come. The representatives of the district council refused to sign any agreement with the Association of Master Painters, as they chose to term themselves. The painters alleged that that body violated all its agreements with the district and will be given no recognition hereafter.

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