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JOINT COUNCIL IN BLD'G TRADES HAS SPLENDID EFFECT

Bridge and Iron Firms Only Source of Trouble in Building Industry in Toronto

The Industrial Banner reports that there never was time in the city of Toronto when the outlook has been so bright for a busy season in the building industry, undisturbed by strikes or lockouts as at the present moment. The recent formation of the Joint Industrial Council, composed of the representatives of the employers' associations and the labor unions in the building trades has had a splendid effect in bringing the representatives of the employers and employees in closer touch and developing a real desire for both to work in closer co-operation than has ever been the case before.

With but a single exception, every one of the 19 building trades unions and employers' associations in the city have endorsed the Joint Industrial Council. From present indications with the one exception referred to it is now practically certain that every one of the building trades will reach agreements in regard to wage-scales, hours of labor and work conditions through the medium of peaceable negotiations.

In several cases new agreements have already been signed to go into effect on May the first, in others negotiations are now proceeding satisfactorily. It is a fact that on both sides there exists a belief that through the medium of the Joint Industrial Council it is possible to maintain friendly relations and that the best time to settle strikes and lockouts is before they actually take place, and it is this feeling, that through co-operation and a determination to meet the other fellow half way, industrial strife and bickering may largely be averted.

The one "fly in the ointment" and what is the only source that threatens to involve the building industry in strife is the determination of the Bridge and Structural Iron firms to have no dealing with the Structural Iron Workers' Union, or to recognize its representatives in any shape or form. These firms have not had the courtesy to reply to communications from the Structural Iron Workers to confer with them in regard to wage agreements, a policy that is the exact reverse of that which has the sanction of the employers in all the other building trades.

The Bridge and Iron corporations deny the right of collective bargaining and declare they will allow the workers no voice whatever as to what wages they shall receive or the number of hours they shall labor. In other words they believe in the spirit of Prussianism in Canadian industry.

These facts should be made public, says the Industrial Banner, as it is too serious a matter to let drift for it may spell disaster to building operations in that city.

That "Peep into the Future"

By "The Critic"

In one of the excellent editorials of the Free Press of last week, there was a discussion of the make-up of the future cabinets of the country. At the summit of the discussion, after changing the cabinet into an executive, it was declared: "The executive so elected would then proceed to carry on the work of the government, just as the executive board of a union or other organization would do." Now is this really possible? I venture to suggest that the idea is neither reasonable nor commonsense, nor democratic.

The executive of a union or any other organization is elected to carry out the affairs of that single organization. The purposes of the organization are generally well-known and all members of the organization are in agreement with these purposes. It may be wise in the case of an executive of a union to elect a proportional representation of the conservatives and radicals within the organization, but these men or women, after election, all have the same job to do, i.e., to carry out the general policy of the union.

The cabinet or executive of a country has very different work. The interests of a union are simple, the interests of a country are complex. Each member of the cabinet is the head of a very important department of state as well as being a member of the united body. The cabinet must contain specialists in these various departments, whether foreign affairs, the interior, commerce, labor, education, etc., etc. Their joint policy must be dictated by the various influences which come from these very varied spheres of work. They must have a joint policy and at the same time be specialists in departments.

With the statement that the new group system of political parties seems assured, I am in agreement. If in the U.S.A. Finance and Steel are the two really important forces, then the leaders in the realm of finance and steel should be, at least, in the Senate. What is the use of being governed by second raters? Put Pierpont Morgan and Schwab and Gary into their proper places and let the Unsean Hand be seen at last. By all means, if it is true that farming is the basic industry of Canada, then let the farmers form a real group at Ottawa instead of being part of a very mixed sixteen on the cross benches. If it is true that Laborers number about two-fifths of our population, let them also have a group in the parliament and legislature. Let the educationalist group do the same.

But now the editorial suggests, that, having got these various groups fairly represented in parliament by the method of proportional representation, the country would then be pleased to see these members select an executive to carry on the cabinet work of the government by the proportional representation scheme, "thus assuring representation of each group." What would be the result? The Executive might be formed of, one Manufacturer, one Educationalist, two Soldier members, four Farmers, two Laborers. The groups of electing their representatives on to the Executive would choose the strongest men to put forward the policy of the group. When the executive assembled it would be found that there was no one capable or willing to take the department of Foreign Affairs; the Manufacturers' representative might desire the office of "Customs and Commerce" but it would be fatal to the interests of the farming group that he should hold it; the Labor representative might desire the Ministry of Labor but again the policy of the other groups would oppose his selection. As a result of the election by P. R. from the respective groups, the executive would include few experts of any kind in public affairs and would break up immediately over the selection of heads of departments. The executive would have no common policy; it could not even nationalize the Canadian National Railroad.

In the country where "group representation" is in strongest vogue, i.e., in Russia, the cabinet of the country is selected after a long series of electoral colleges. The people elect the local soviet executive, the local soviet executive sends its representative to the District Soviet, the District Soviet elects its representatives to the All Russian Council of Soviets, this All Russian Council elects a smaller executive, and this smaller executive elects the People's Commissars. Therefore it is possible to make sure that each of the People's Commissars is an expert at the work of which he is made chief. He is not made a Commissar because he represents a group but because he is an expert in the opinions of men elected by men, who in their turn were elected by other especially chosen men, to select the best administration. This elaborate system is typically Bolshevik and typically objectionable to democrats but it proves that under a group system of government, the cabinet must be selected from specially skilled managers rather than specially skilled leaders of special interests.

The retirement of Mr. Barnes from

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BILL TO OUTLAW UNION LABOR IN COLO. PROPOSED

Officers of the Colorado State Federation of Labor have notified affiliates to prepare to meet an advertising campaign of anti-union employers who are determined to secure the passage of legislation that would outlaw unions in that state.

The act is known as the Booth-Fincher Bill. It passed the state senate but was defeated in the house. It is the purpose of the employers' association to carry the bill in the shape of an advertisement in all the papers of the state until the fall election with the heading "Do not vote for a member of the legislature not pledged to support this bill."

FIVE CITY OFFICIALS ARE ARRESTED ON CHARGE OF MOBING

Four city detectives and one policeman at Nashville, Tenn., have been arrested on the charge of kidnaping J. R. Lawson, international representative of the organized street car men. The warrants were sworn out by Lawson, who states that on November 9 last he was forcibly taken by the five officers, under threats of death, in an automobile to Springfield, Tenn., and then forced to buy a ticket to Chicago. He was warned if he returned to Nashville he would be killed.

Sensational disclosures are promised when these mobbers are placed on trial. It is hinted that others will be implicated.

The British cabinet is a sign of the impossibility of agreement between a Churchill and a Hodge. They must be on different sides of the House, because they represent absolutely opposite theories of government. The cabinet of the editorial might abide a cabinet for ever especially if a contrary vote in the House did not affect its stability. But it could do nothing. Between the sessions of the House the country would have the interesting spectacle of the Labor minister working out the nationalization of the mines and railroads, while the Finance Minister, representing the capitalists, would be lending the public wealth to private adventurers. And so on. In the end nothing would be done. And Parliament could not remove the Executive of All Stars. Even in the case of a general election, there would only be a shuffling of stars. The members of the Executive would be seeing stars after their fights between themselves.

If we are to get progress through Parliament, there must be a real party with a programme in power. If the group system comes, the party in power must be formed by union of groups favoring a similar policy; those groups which oppose the policy must oppose the government and not expect seats on the cabinet. There might be some reason to support the All Star idea for city government or even for provincial administration but surely, if there are men thinking of such a system at Ottawa, they are peeping into the past and not into the future.



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