

# THE ECHO.

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## MEETINGS.

### CENTRAL TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL OF MONTREAL.

LOUIS Z. BOUDREAU, - - - PRESIDENT  
J. B. DUBOIS, - - - VICE-PRESIDENT  
P. J. RYAN, - - - ENGLISH REC. SECRETARY  
P. DEGUIRE, - - - FRENCH REC. SECRETARY  
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JOS. RENAUD, - - - COR. SECRETARY  
JOS. CORBELL, - - - TREASURER  
JOS. PAQUETTE, - - - SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Meets in the Ville-Marie Hall, 1623 Notre Dame street, the first and third Thursdays of the month. Communications to be addressed to Jos. RENAUD, Corresponding Secretary, 198 Amherst street.

### RIVER FRONT ASSEMBLY,

No. 7628.  
Rooms K. of L. Hall, Chaboullé square. Next meeting Sunday, Dec. 6, at 7.30. Address all correspondence to J. WARREN, Rec. Sec., P. O. Box 1456.

### DOMINION ASSEMBLY,

No. 2496 K. of L.  
Meets every Friday evening at eight o'clock in the K. of L. Hall, Chaboullé square. Address all communications to H. J. BRINDLE, R.S., No. 11 St. Monique street.

### PROGRESS ASSEMBLY,

No. 3852, K. of L.  
Meets every First and Third Tuesday at Lomas' Hall, Point St. Charles.

### BUILDERS' LABORERS' UNION.

Meets in Ville Marie Hall, 1623 Notre Dame street, every TUESDAY at 8 P. M. Address all communications to WM. JARVIS, Secretary, 111 St. Dominique street.

### BLACK DIAMOND ASSEMBLY

1711, K. of L.  
Meets next Sunday, in the K. of L. Hall, Chaboullé square, at 2 o'clock. Address all communications to WM. ROBERTSON, 7 Archambault street.

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## LABOR AND CAPITAL

An old, old topic, yet one ever interesting to the student of economical problems, the statesman, the artisan, and the millionaire. These two leading factors in the world's progress are indissolubly united. Together, they are the forces which move the world. They annihilate space by fashioning steamships and steam engines, which plough the oceans or pierce the rock-ribbed hills, uniting not only states but worlds. Every material benefit which the world enjoys may be traced to the beneficent co-operative association of these two forces in industrial activity. Despite the splendid results of this benign partnership, what a sad record is to be found in the pages whereon are chronicled the innumerable battles in which these two powers have engaged, each apparently oblivious of the relationship existing between them, and desirous only of injuring the other, in order that both might share the loss which this unnatural strife entailed. The story of capital's arrogance and labor's folly forms one of the saddest pages in the world's history. It is full of suffering, misery, tears and death upon the side of labor and of financial loss, heart-anker and drying up of the well springs of human sympathy on the side of the partner, who, in the first place, should remember that it owes its all to the very cause which it seeks to antagonize, in many cases by pursuing a policy of miserly greed. The folly of labor has been exhibited times out of number in the wild talk of hot headed would-be leaders of their kind, and the heedless following of a blind leader by blind adherents.

It seems extraordinary to a degree that, notwithstanding all the progress made during the last fifty years, the great problem how to regulate the relations between capital and labor, so as to curb, on the part of the former, the quick desire to use its strength unjustly and to inoculate in labor a sensible view of its duties, has not been solved in some way so as to render periodical warfare between them, if not impossible, at least more difficult of attainment. The greatest factor in bridging over the chasm has undoubtedly been the organizations which have grown up in the ranks of both the capitalists and the workmen. These associations have done a great deal to the situation. As powerful nations, with standing armies and the best equipments which modern science can supply, dread to take the first offensive step which may precipitate a war in which horror upon horror's head would accumulate in consequence of the art of war having been "improved" until it has become a dreadful science of systemized slaughter, so the organizations representing the interests of the capitalists and the different classes of labor have served to prevent strikes by adding new stings to them. But these organizations have done more than this. Upon the side of the wage earners they have gained peaceably from the employers many great concessions which could never have been obtained without a battle royal did not such organizations exist. These concessions relate both to a lessening of the hours of labor and an increase in the rates of pay in the different industries. Some faint reflection of the benefits secured in this direction is shown by a return recently made to the British House of Commons. The trade union is a strongly developed institution in England, almost every trade supporting an organization.

The hours of labor have been materially lessened in a score of trades. A summary of these gains on the part of organized labor, taken from the report above referred to, will not be without interest to American workmen: In the painting and decorating trade in London thirty years ago sixty hours a week was the rule all round. That was also the rule with plasterers, who now work only fifty-two and a half hours in summer and forty seven hours in winter. Slaters used to work sixty one hours a week; they now work fifty hours. Stone masons vary in their hours. In London their work consists of fifty six and a half hours, but stone carvers only work forty seven hours. The hours in the cabinet making trade have since 1850 fallen from sixty and seventy a week to fifty six, but in chemical works they still stand at sixty in the week. In London the hours in the tobacco factories were in 1850 from fifty four to fifty eight a week; they are now from forty eight to fifty four. The engineers have in the same period cut down their hours from sixty to fifty four in the week. In Northumberland

the coal miners used to work sixty hours a week; they now work thirty eight hours. The boys have reduced their hours from seventy two to thirty two and a half. The pumping engine men work sixty six per week, but then in 1850 they worked seventy two. The firemen still work eighty four hours a week, as in 1850; in fact the hours of surface men at collieries seem longer than in any other trade in the country. In Lancashire the miners since 1850 have reduced their hours from seventy two per week to fifty seven and a half; in Staffordshire from sixty to forty eight. In Yorkshire sixty hours used to be the rule. These miners now usually work only forty eight hours a week. In Wales the hours are fifty four a week, and the same holds good of Scotland. In the printing trade hours have been reduced from sixty a week in 1850 to fifty four in 1890.

Turning to the advantage which has accrued to associated capitalists, it is at once evident that organization has placed them in a vastly better position to resist unreasonable demands of their employees and to discuss matters of difference with the leaders of the opposition forces, thus narrowing down the issue which singly they could not hope to adjust without fighting it out on the lines of a strike or a lock-out. It must, however, be conceded that with or without organization on either side labor has not an equal chance with capital when the gauge of battle is cast. The logic of an empty stomach is irresistible, and this is a fact well known to the employers of labor. Said Mr. Carnegie, who has, perhaps, given his employees more cause for dissatisfaction than any other single employer of labor on a large scale: "Organized capital can beat organized labor." It would be just as clear and indisputable to state the proposition thus: "A man with a full purse can live longer without begging than a one-dollar capitalist." Happily, however, all employers are not Carnegies. It is also safe to say if there were fewer Carnegies there would be fewer strikes.—American Artisan.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY CHARTER.

### The Property Qualification for Alderman—Reduced Representation.

The Board of Chairmen held a meeting on Tuesday night, and discussed several proposed amendments to the city charter. Amongst those under consideration was the present property qualification for aldermen, which came up for discussion on the reading of a petition from the Central Trades and Labor Council, calling for its abolition.

Ald. Rolland was of opinion that the property qualification should be raised.

Ald. Thompson said that he wished to be candid and honest in regard to the matter. He was pledged to support the petition.

Ald. Prefontaine also favored the change, provided the candidate lived in the city for at least two years and paid taxes; \$2,000 was only a sham.

Ald. Stephens thought that it would be the greatest mistake possible. The Trades and Labor Council had no business to write impertinent resolutions to the papers. If they did not have property qualification the city would be run by irresponsible parties. It was finally decided to send the question to the Council to be dealt with.

The proposition to reduce the ward representation from three to two and to compensate the members for their services with a fine for non-attendance was also discussed.

It was agreed that the matter should be tested by popular vote in 1893.

We may choose to look at the masses in the gross as subjects for statistics and, when possible, of profits. There is One above who knows every thirst, and ache, and sorrow, and temptation of each slattern, and gin drinker, and street child. The day will come when He will require an account of these neglects of ours—not in the gross.—Charles Kingsley.

A large and influential meeting of tax payers took place at the rooms of the Chambre de Commerce last night. They discussed what they considered the present extravagant administration of municipal affairs and the enormous debt of the city, and a committee was formed for the purpose of drawing up a constitution and by-laws. It is proposed to organize an association in every ward for the purpose of watching over the interests of the taxpayer, and primarily to elect good men to the Council.

## LIFE IN SIBERIA.

### Experience of an Exile in the Russian Polar Regions.

The following extract is from a letter in Free Russia. It was written from Sredue Kolymsk, and dated May 25, 1890.

"Our costume, for both summer and winter is a hideous mixture of native and European dress. The European part has generally been made in prison out of pieces of prison cloth, and the native part always consists of rags, as it is very difficult to obtain clothing at all. You can hardly imagine what an endless worry it is to make caps, mittens, stockings, and all such small things! We have to do it all ourselves, and often cannot get either cloth or fur. Our worst trouble, however, is want of food. However hard we work at our fishing, however careful we are never to lose a chance of obtaining any kind of meat—all the same, in summer there are times when we have to actually starve, for in summer there is absolutely no meat to be got, and to live constantly and exclusively on fish not only affects one with nausea, but with some people produces actual fish-poisoning. We have all come to the conclusion that a sudden change from ordinary food to an exclusive fish diet results in a peculiar form of poisoning, not yet known to science. In winter, when there is meat as well, we all eat the fish; but in summer the mere sight of boiled fish affects many with nausea and vomiting. In summer we live on a very small quantity of flour, a little milk from our own cows, wild berries, and the indigestible fish. The worst time of the year is the beginning of the autumn, when large quantities of food have to be stored up, and the roads are not properly frozen. The cows leave off giving milk, neither carcasses nor live cattle are brought in—the only way out of the difficulty would be to go to sleep for three weeks, like the bears. But even at the best season of the year we never have really enough to eat; we are too poor for that—and even if we were rich it would not help us—there is not enough food in the place. You can imagine how delightful it must be to lie down hungry at night, to wake up the next morning still hungrier, to wait anxiously for the half-rations that go by the name of dinner—after dinner to go into the kitchen and carefully gather up all the bits—all the scrapings of pots and pans; then to strap one's belt tighter for hunger and wait for supper . . . and so on, day after day. It is like the life of half-starved sailors, wrecked on a desert island.

"I have not spoken of a thousand other conveniences of life; for instance, artificial light, which with us is now the burning question of the moment. It has been a bad year, so that the cattle are very lean, and we cannot get any tallow to make candles. We have already bought up and used nearly all the candles there were in the town, and now, in one more fortnight, we must expect to be left candleless in the unbroken night of December. It is the same with everything. All our life is made up of a thousand pitiable wants and hardships. Altogether, our housekeeping is very original; on the one hand, an out-of-the-way Arctic hole where we are nobody's business and nobody cares what we do or how we manage; on the other, our stern jailor, nature, who forces us to live quite in prison style, to sleep in general barracks, to eat at a general mess, and so on. If we did not submit to this, we should all have died of cold and hunger before now. Another feature of our life is the hard manual labor—labor as of a beast of burden—such as even the all enduring Russian peasant has no idea of. For instance, for two persons to drag a loaded barge along with towing ropes for forty miles is regarded here as the merest trifle, and as there are no sails here, hauling and rowing are the only means of navigation. Then there is the autumn fishing, standing knee-deep in the water and floating ice, and pulling at a frozen rope that cuts your hands till the blood comes; then moving in the deep swamp mud at the mercy of the mosquito, often without any food or any drink but the water from the bog pools; then, again, the hewing of trees in winter, and in summer the towing of rafts for forty miles or more; and so on, indefinitely.

"Our intellectual life is no better. Fortunately we have books in various languages. Almost all of us read a good deal; many spend whole months in reading; some even study seriously. But there is no life, no encouragement in it all; nothing to animate the dull, mechanical 'cramping up' of English words or solving of mathematical problems. The

real interest of our intellectual life gathers round quite another center. For us the first of all things is the arrival of news from the outer world. Once in three or four months the district post brings us a bundle or two. Some of the letters are lost, the packages are broken open, many things are missing, the books torn and soiled, at least a third of the pages are gone from the newspapers and magazine; but what does that matter! The post brings, at least, a few numbers of periodicals with "fresh" news or a few new books; it brings to each of us half-a-dozen letters from our relatives and friends. If you people in Europe could only know with what agitation we wait for the coming of the post—how morbidly impatient we grow during the last month of expectation—with what nervous anxiety we count the hours, and minutes! The arrival of the post is a positive epoch in our life. It is a piteous sight when some unfortunate gets nothing: the way his lips will begin to quiver, and the convulsive efforts he will make to force a smile and not break down. There is a great difference in the way that people read their letters. Some rush up, seize upon their prey and hurriedly escape, as though afraid that some one would snatch it from them; others collect all their letters, examine the envelopes and seem afraid to open them; others, again, are regular epicures; they open their letters, look at the handwriting, through a passage here and there and finally hide them until they can get alone in their own rooms and in the meantime try to pick up scraps of other people's news.

## A BIG LABOR COMBINE.

### An Attempt to Combine all the Organizations in the U. S.

An important movement in the interest of organized labor has been inaugurated in St. Louis. A meeting was held in the Mercantile Club between the president, directors and various committees of the club and committee representing the different industrial organizations of the United States. The result of the meeting was that on Feb. 22, 1892, there will meet in St. Louis a convention the representatives of the labor organizations of the country.

Their purpose is to accomplish the federation of all the labor organizations in the Union. Delegates will be present from industrial organizations of all the large cities in the country. The National Executive Committee of the People's party will also be present. Between 300 and 400 representatives of the National Reform Association, representing 1,400 papers, will attend the convention.

The importance of this convention can only be appreciated when it is considered that this will be the first time in the history of labor circles that an attempt will be made to federate the labor organizations of the United States.

## A Man With Three Thousand Wives.

Polygamy is practiced to an extravagant degree in Ashantee. The more wives a man has the higher his social importance. The number which a man in private life may have is limited by his ability to purchase and support them; but the number which a king may have is limited by law—limited to the modest number of three hundred and thirty-three, and it is said that usually does not exceed that limit.

At any rate he must have more wives than any of his subjects, or his respectability will suffer. The present king has actually the allotted number, and he has hundred children.

All the king has to do to get a wife is to choose any female he pleases, no matter how young she may be. Girls are chosen when less than ten years old, and such cases they are left with their mothers until of a mature age, at which time they are taken to join the rest of the three hundred and thirty-three.

No man is ever allowed to see any of the king's wives, and should he even accidentally see one his punishment is death. The wives during the working season attend the king's plantations, but the rest of the time they live at Coomassie, the Ashantee capital, where they occupy two long streets.

When they go out for a walk in the city as is often the case, they are preceded by a number of eunuchs, who herald their coming, that all men may disappear and looking upon them. When this is impossible they must fall upon their faces and grovel.

If a white man happens to be there who does not understand the law, the eunuchs turn his face away from the advance of the women.