

at that time were based on Prison labor at 50 cents per day. In addition to this, The Brandon Manufacturing Company agreed to pay the Government the sum of \$6,500 per year to cover the salaries of the Government employees engaged upon the industries. When this contract came before the Legislature for ratification in March, 1890, it was strongly opposed as being unfair and unjust to both manufacturers and labor. Owing to the opposition offered, Sir Oliver Mowat decided to appoint a Commission to enquire into the whole system of the management of Prison labor. This Commission was appointed and reported at a later date, and as a result of such report, the **Contract System** was abolished, and a different system was adopted.

TURNING THE HANDS BACK.

The present Government, however, on the 20th day of July, 1905, without advertising and without notice to the public, secretly entered into a contract with Ellen Charlotte Taylor, of the City of Toronto, trading under the firm name of Taylor, Scott & Company, for the manufacture of woodenware at the Central Prison. A deputation representing manufacturers and labor unions waited upon the Government, placed their position in writing in a document addressed to the Honorable Provincial Secretary, and dated May 25th, 1906.

After recalling the steps taken to abolish the Contract System under the Mowat Government, the document contained the following:

"Now, after this long lapse of time, although the cost of living has greatly increased and the wages of all classes of mechanics have materially advanced—in most cases from 50 to 75 per cent.—and the cost of the manufacturer for paid labor has in consequence greatly increased, yet prison labor is now hired out under the present agreement at a very much lower rate than it was fifteen years ago, it now being based on only **30 cents per day instead of 50 cents, as formerly.** Surely prison labor, if it is to compete with paid labor, ought to bring the same proportionate increase in value.

"We are very strongly of the opinion that the present system of equipping the prison industries with the latest improved machinery and hiring out prison labor at such ridiculously low rates is wrong in principle, and should be stopped. If the object sought to be obtained by such a system is to give employ-