

Ontario Workman.

THE EQUALIZATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL SCALE SHOULD BE THE TRUE AIM OF CIVILIZATION.

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MR. LOWE AND TRADE UNIONS.

DEPUTATION TO THE HOME SECRETARY.

On Wednesday a deputation of members of the Parliamentary Committee waited upon Mr. Lowe at the Home Office. The deputation included Mr. Howell, secretary Parliamentary Committee; Mr. Macdonald president; Mr. Guile and Mr. Odger; they were accompanied by Mr. T. Hughes, M. P., Mr. Mundella, M. P., Mr. Palmer, M. P., and Mr. James Wedderburn.

Mr. Thomas Hughes, M. P., in introducing the deputation, said their object was to alter the law as to trade societies. They considered that recent legislation had made matters worse for them, though he and the members of Parliament who accompanied him through the unionists' position had been improved.

Mr. Howell said they represented between 700,000 and 800,000 trades-unionists. They did not want law made in favor of trades unionists, but they wanted it to be on a footing with other citizens. Trades unionists, for instance, were not allowed to summon a man in a district where the cause of offence arose unless they held property in that district, and thus the intention of the act was interfered with. He believed there was power vested in the Home Office to remedy this without going to Parliament. Then with regard to the Criminal Law Amendment Act, they wished that to be entirely repealed. They were not in the habit of condoning or palliating any of those offences against which the law was supposed to be levied, and they simply desired that those offences should be dealt with under the ordinary law of the country. That act had caused an amount of heart-burning that no other act had done, and they felt that none of the prosecutions under the act justified its continuance. Rattening and assaults could be dealt with the general law.

Mr. Lowe—You have mentioned rattening and assaults, what do you say about picketing?

Mr. Howell said that picketing itself was legal under the old combination laws which this act repealed. They did not consider it morally wrong or in any sense unlawful. Picketing was very much misunderstood. The object of picketing was to give information to workmen who came from a distance of the state of trade matters.

Mr. Lowe—Even where a large number of persons assembled where workmen had to pass, you would say that that is justifiable?

Mr. Howell—Perhaps we should scarcely say that we should justify such an act.

Mr. Mundella—We object to its being penalized.

Mr. Lowe instanced the case of the man who used to follow Miss Burdett Coutts with the object of forcing her to marry him. In that case the law had no remedy.

Mr. Mundella—There ought to be a remedy, and we want one for trades unionists.

Mr. Howell next referred to the Master and Servants Act, which made a breach of contract criminal. This was quite exceptional, and did not apply to any other contract between those who were not trade unionists. If a man broke his contract he was liable to be sent to prison as a common felon. Though there was power under the Mines Regulation Act to prosecute a master, it was impossible to do it, and yet the men were prosecuted criminally and sent to prison. With regard to the law of conspiracy they were content with the bill of last session which the Government supported. Mr. Harcourt's bill would prevent indictments for such offences as led to the conviction of the gas stokers.

Mr. Macdonald said that with regard to the law of master and servant they very strongly objected to the 14th clause, which gave power to a magistrate to assess damages without any restriction, and it frequently happened that such damages were imposed that the man was obliged to go to prison from inability to pay. The act was thus an instrument of oppression. He represented a society of 130,000 men who unanimously desired the repeal of the criminal portion of the Master and Servant Act, which had caused very great annoyance.

Mr. Lowe—Do you object to the justices as a tribunal?

Mr. Macdonald—Entirely.

Mr. Lowe—Supposing any question arose between an employer and employed would you object to the justice?

Mr. Macdonald—We prefer the county court judge or a stipendiary magistrate to a justice, but should like a stipendiary magistrate.

Mr. Mundella—The entire workmen are tired of justices' judgments.

Mr. Guile (of the Ironfounders' Society) having spoken.

Mr. Odger said there was one point of the Criminal Law Amendment Act that had not been touched, viz., that were he to go into a shop and tell them that they were working for less wages than elsewhere, and that they ought to have more, he might be convicted of coercing and molesting.

Mr. Lowe—Not by merely telling them this; there must be a case against which the act provides, viz., rattening and assaulting.

Mr. Odger—I need not use threatening words.

Mr. Lowe—I think so.

Mr. Macdonald said the masters had introduced the discharge note in certain places, which had the same effect of preventing men from working as coercive picketing, and no law could reach the masters.

Mr. Mundella said that the Criminal Law Amendment Act should be absolutely repealed. The act was very abstruse, and having consulted the ablest lawyers, to say nothing of magistrates, they confessed that it was most difficult to bring all the contingencies of the act together so as to deal out justice. The more likely thing to occur to lay magistrates was to leave out of consideration certain things and convict upon one item. The very first conviction under the act was at Bolton, and it was overruled at very great expense to the workmen. Then another case was that of distributing bills, which was appealed against, and the case was withdrawn. The Chipping Norton case was familiar to them; and then there was the case where seven women were sent to prison because a man heard them say "Bah" to a workman. There were other cases. But there was no use in pretending that there was equality in the law in this respect. Anybody might cry "Bah" to him for his political opinions or the color of his hat, and no notice would be taken of it. But with respect to those who came under the Criminal Law Amendment Act it was far otherwise. The law against these offences instead of applying to the whole community applied only to trade unionists, and not to the masters. In business they were accustomed to threats, and he could name several men in the House of Commons at the head of large firms who were told that if they did not cease to supply goods to co-operative stores the senders would cease to trade with them. What was that but a threat? And rather than resist the weak man had been compelled to give way. He had also seen letters from employers stating that so many men had struck work, giving the names of the men. The employers who received those letters knew that they had not to employ those men so named, and that was just a counterpart of the action of the men.

Mr. Lowe—There is no threat in the case you have stated.

Mr. Mundella—But the man is punished on the other side if he does anything to hinder a man from accepting employment.

Mr. Lowe—No; he must have assaulted or molested.

Mr. H. Palmer—But the cases are construed against the workman.

Mr. Lowe—Whether this is combination in a criminal case I am not prepared to say.

Mr. Mundella—Now I come to one serious offence in the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Rattening means either malicious injury to property or the hiding of property. Why should it not come under the general law, and not appertain to one class of the whole community only? There is the Malicious Injury to Property Act.

Mr. Lowe—The hiding of property would not come under that act.

Mr. Mundella—I think it would. There is no reason for the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

Mr. Palmer—I have moved for certain returns showing the number of committals and offences both as regards masters and men. I believe you will find the committals against the masters blank.

Mr. Lowe—I am acquainted with all the cases against the men, and there is not one against the masters I think. I have listened with great interest and great profit, and I must express my thanks for the clearness and brevity with which you have given me your views. It shows that you knew your case, and have well considered it. I can assure you that this subject has engaged my very serious attention, and the subjects brought before me are well worthy the consideration of

the Government. I will consider to the best of my ability the statements which have been made to me, and I hope to come to some conclusion which may be satisfactory to you. At present I am not able to say more than this, that I shall give the matter my best consideration.

The deputation then withdrew thanking the right hon. gentleman for his courtesy.

MR. DISRAELI ON THE NINE HOURS' BILL.

A delegation of representatives from nearly all the Factory Act Associations in Scotland waited on Mr. Disraeli on Thursday afternoon in M'Lean's Hotel for the purpose of presenting him with an address thanking him for past efforts in the cause of reducing the hours of labor in mills and factories, and asking his support for Mr. Mundella's Nine Hours' Bill. The following towns were represented on the occasion—Glasgow, Paisley, Barrhead, Pollockshaw, Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose, Forfar, and Brechin.

Mr. Bremner, Secretary to the Glasgow Association, commenced by an address in which he stated that the working people of the country were anxiously looking for the right hon. gentleman's favorable consideration of any measure which had for its object a legitimate reduction of the hours of labor and improvement in the moral, social, and domestic condition of the women and children employed in mills and factories throughout the realms.

Mr. Cullen then presented the following address to Mr. Disraeli:

To the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, M.P.

Right Hon. Sir.—We are representatives of the factory workers of the manufacturing districts of Scotland, and we hail with profound satisfaction your visit to this our ancient city. We avail ourselves of your presence amongst us to tender the most grateful and heartfelt thanks of the factory workers for the service you have rendered in promoting successful factory legislation, from the results of which so many blessings, socially, mentally, and physically, have been conferred upon the women and children employed in that branch of our national industry. We are not unmindful of the hearty co-operation and valuable aid you gave our cause in early life, nor of the active assistance you have always rendered in more mature years. It is to gentlemen like yourself, who espoused our cause when it was unpopular to do so, that the working people are most indebted, and to whom the gratitude is more especially due. Permit us therefore once more to offer you our well-earned thanks and congratulations for the past, and to express a hope that in all our future efforts still further to improve the condition of the female and children portion of our fellow-laborers you will give any legislative measure having for its object a further reduction of the hours of labor a favorable consideration, so far as it appears consistent with the best interests of the employers and employed, whose welfare we believe to be identical, and whose future prosperity depends upon the extension of the textile trade of this nation.

(Signed)
JAMES LYNCH, Pres. Glasgow Assn.
JOHN MIDDLETON, Pres. Dundee Assn.
Nov. 20, 1873.]

Mr. Disraeli, in replying, said—Gentlemen, I remember my support of the Ten Hours' Bill as one of the most satisfactory incidents of my life, and therefore I need not say that I sympathize generally with the subject you bring before me. The measure was opposed by persons of great influence and by many parties in the State, and at one time it seemed impossible that it could have succeeded, because then neither of the two great parties avowedly upheld it. But as time advanced it was successful in its progress, and I am glad to say that those with whom I act generally in public life uniformly and unanimously upheld it, and they have been repaid for the great effort which they made—because it was not made without much sacrifice—by the results, which in this case have been quite satisfactory. It has tended to the elevation of the working classes which depends upon two causes. If their wages rise and their daily toil diminishes they are placed in a favorable position, and if they don't avail themselves of that position they only prove they are unworthy of it. (Hear, hear.) With regard to the first point—the financial considerations—

with respect to wages, no Legislature can interfere. (Hear, hear.) The rate of wages must be left to those inexorable principles of political economy to which we all bow. They must depend upon demand and supply. But when you come to the hours of labor, you leave financial considerations and enter into social ones, and there a Legislature can interfere, and, if with discretion and with wisdom, no doubt to the advantage of the country and of the working classes. With regard to the particular point which you have brought before me, it is not for the first time under my consideration. Two years ago, in the centre of British industry, and in the great county of Lancashire—the glory of England—I received many communications and many deputations on that subject. I said at that time that it was unnecessary for me to state that I was favorable to the general policy requested by the working classes of the country. I had proved it, and therefore it was quite unnecessary to dilate upon the subject; but that as regards the details of the particular measure which was brought before me, I requested that I should have sufficient confidence placed in me by the working classes that they would allow me to consider those details when they were brought before the House of Parliament in the shape of a measure. I could not of course pledge myself beyond a general sympathy with their cause. Since that time I have omitted no opportunity of making myself acquainted with all the details connected with the subject which you have brought before me to-day. I have communicated with great employers of labor. I have received from them much information, and I have made myself acquainted with their views; and all I can tell you now is that the result of my deliberations and the result of my researches are favorable to the views you uphold. (Applause.) But I reserve to myself my right—for your interest as much as for my own—that whenever the subject is discussed I must be considered perfectly free as to all the details and as to the general condition under which any change can be made. I should be opposed to any change in which the general sympathies of the employers were not with the employed. I believe myself that, with calm and dispassionate discussion, and with those inquiries pursued in the impartial spirit to which I referred, the result will be—at least I hope the result will be—that there will be very little difference of opinion between the working classes generally and their employers; but I am satisfied myself that it is unwise to make any alteration of this kind unless there is a general concurrence of sentiment. I only wish to make one reference to an observation which has been made by one of my friends who has aided me, and who has spoken to the interest of my party. If I uphold these views, I assure you, although the expression of my opinions may be different to what you are accustomed, it is quite an error in any of you in supposing that in upholding your interests I look to the interests of a party. (Hear, hear.) My views upon this subject were formed long before I was in the prominent position which I now have the honor to occupy with respect to one of the great parties in the State. These opinions have never changed. It is to me a subject of great gratification that the large majority of the gentlemen with whom I act in public life have the same opinions on the subject as myself; but I could not for a moment take any step in this question with reference to the interests of a political party. I believe it is for the interest of the country that the position of the workers of the country should be such that they may rise as I wish to see them rise, and as I think they are rising in social and political considerations. I have confidence in the working classes. I do not know any body of men or any order of men who are so interested, to my mind, in the glory and greatness of our country as the working people of England; and I have long been of opinion that if that state is brought about in their condition which I think is fast accomplishing, and which I hope will be accomplished—when, in addition to adequate remuneration for their toil, they have a reasonable diminution of their labor—there really will be no class in the country placed in a more happy position than the intelligent and educated working classes of the community. It is only by labor and constant employment that life is really endurable. It is delightful with occupation; without it it is intolerable, and you ought to be aware of that. It ought to be impressed upon you that your life is a life which ought to be one of happiness so long as your labor is not so excessive that you cannot cultivate your

intelligence, and have the advantage of those delights of existence which the working classes to a very great degree at present possess, and which certainly fifty years ago they did not enjoy. I can only say in answer to your address to-day that I, of course, will not pledge myself to every minute detail or to everything that you request; and I am sure that you on reflection will feel that it is best to leave me—having given you, I think, in the course of my life some pledges of my sympathy with your class and your condition—that you will permit me whenever the subject is brought before the House to take that course which I think is best for the interests of the country and for your advantage.

Mr. Logan then thanked the right hon. gentleman for his courtesy in having received the deputation. He begged to say, in regard to the statement made by Mr. Middleton referring to the advisability of the right hon. gentleman supporting the measure from party motives, that he, for his own part, entirely repudiated that statement. He could be no party to any such statement. He again thanked Mr. Disraeli for the reception accorded the deputation.

NUMBER AND CONDITION OF THE UNEMPLOYED.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO EXAMINE INTO THE NUMBER AND CONDITION OF THE UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE OF NEW YORK.

First—We would state that we have investigated the condition of the working classes in order to learn as nearly as possible the number of idle men and women, also to learn if their idleness be enforced or voluntary.

Second—We should report that there are at this time 10,000 idle people walking our streets, seeking employment or charity by day and sleeping in charitable institutions, station-houses, stables, carts, and hallways at night, all of whom are involuntary idlers. We also find that in this whole city of a million human beings that there are only 1,200 so-called vagrants outside of almshouses. We also find that only about 85 free beds are furnished in the whole city, and that 60 of these are provided by a private citizen at 510 Pearl street, the most of the balance being furnished by the Young Men's Christian Association. We further learn that 11 trades in this city usually employing 26,200 men only employ 5,960 at this time, leaving 20,250 industrious men in enforced idleness. We also find that there are to-day 182,000 men, members of various organizations, seeking work, not charity, in this State, and that in the United States, among mechanics and blacksmiths alone, 82,000 are demanding labor. The number of unskilled workmen and unemployed women it is impossible to learn. We also find that 600,000 people live in tenement houses in the city; 100,000 females who earn their own living. We would state also that this number of 182,000 men idle in the State of New York represents nearly a million human souls entirely dependent upon them. And we find also that 2,000 men and women are turned away nightly from our station-houses, and that these places are reeking with filth and vermin, and have become living charnel-houses, and that those who find shelter in them are worse provided for than the criminals under the same roof. We learned from the Commissioners of Charity that more than 200 respectable poor persons find lodgings each night upon the floor of our overcrowded almshouses, and that no more can be admitted under present provisions. We learn, further, that from the various lodging-houses for women and girls about 100 per night are turned away to the mercies of the street, and that many helpless women, widows, and children find themselves on the streets for non-payment of rent, and totally unable to provide themselves with food, and that the average wages of 38,000 working women and children in this city is \$3 34 per week, even when work is furnished them. We learned from the branch office of the Young Men's Christian

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