Current Comment

Hugh Robinson is meeting with grand success in his eastern tour. He has organized a local of the tailors in St. John and one in Halifax. Nine stores in St. John signed the bill. Hughie is going as far as St. John's, Newfoundland, before he returns this way again.

✦ ✦

The electrical workers have succeeded in their demands for an increase in wage, and the new scale went into effect on June 1st.

✦ ✦

The brickmakers returned to work after being out a little over a week. Their decision was no doubt the wisest course under the circumstances. They were badly prepared for trouble, and the experience of this short trouble will be a good lesson for future action.

✦ ✦

The Austrian Federation of Labor represents all the unions in the empire. They added 30,000 members last year and have now 220,000. This seems small, but is really a good showing in view of the governmental restriction. The federation has twenty organizers in the field.

✦ ✦

According to the Washington Labor Bureau there have been 22,000 strikes during the past twenty years, involving a loss of $4,000,000,000, of which two-thirds was borne by the employees.

✦ ✦

During 1903 the railways of the United States paid dividends amounting to $194,000,000, in addition to untold millions of interest paid on bonds. The total railway mileage at the beginning of this year was nearly 210,000 miles of track.

✦ ✦

A bill for the establishment of wage board has been introduced in the English Parliament. The object is to fix minimum wages to be paid in particular trades.

✦ ✦

The Commercial Telegraphers' International Convention will open May 18, the anniversary of the last great strike.

✦ ✦

A new international union is to be formed by the Carpet Workers' Union in large cities, to be composed of carpet layers, cutters, measuring men and sewers.

✦ ✦

Referring to the system of the San Francisco structural iron workers, President Frank Buchanan says it has the best system in the country. No union is allowed to demand improved conditions without giving three months' notice, and it is positively laid down that no new demands can be made from the time work has commenced on one building until it is concluded. Further, the president says, when reports reached there of depression in the East the central body of all unions at the Golden Gate ordered that no unions ask for improved conditions until all evidences of this depression had disappeared.

✦ ✦

United States cotton manufacturers want to be left alone by Congress, so far as child labor is concerned, . . . fox devouring a chicken also wants to be left alone—except the chicken.

✦ ✦

The Rhode Island House of Representatives has passed a bill making it unlawful for employers to prevent workmen from joining labor unions or to discharge employees who are union members. An effort was made to insert a provision penalizing labor unions if they force non-union men out of employment, but it was defeated.

✦ ✦

Belgium has three large farms to which men are sent if they are out of work. On the largest of these farms there are on the average 4,000 men in summer and 3,000 in winter. There are workshops on the farms, so that city mechanics are not compelled to work outdoors if they are not used to farm work. The colonists make their own clothes, shoes, furniture, etc. They are nearly self supporting.

✦ ✦

At present there are 1,900,000 unionists in Britain, and the following in the rest of Europe: Germany, 800,000 members; France, nearly 500,000; Austria, more than 157,000; Denmark, nearly 100,000; Hungary, over 64,000; Sweden, about 40,000; Norway, 24,000; Switzerland, about 50,000; Belgium, between 65,000 and 70,000; Spain, more than 41,000.

✦ ✦

Retail clerks at Detroit, Mich., are planning to start a club house with a restaurant in connection therewith.

✦ ✦

Since the inception of the State Female Registry Office of New South Wales 3,081 have obtained employment out of 3,585 persons registered.

✦ ✦

In Russia all wages have to be paid in cash. Employers cannot discharge workmen contrary to the terms of their contract, nor impose fines except in accordance with the rules of the Department of Labor.

✦ ✦

A movement is on foot to combine the nine bricklayers unions in Manhattan and the Bronx; 9,000 men are involved.

Vassili Verestchagin, the Russian artist who went down on the Petropavlosk, was probably the greatest battle painter of any age. His work was epoch making. He was a teacher; he preached the beauty of Peace through the horror of war. On his canvases war has none of the "glory" with which the poets and romancers and the press of the war-making capitalists have invested it. Verestchagin stripped it of its halo and its tinsel gaud, and held it up to execration for the noisome, cowardly thing it is. And Verestchagin perishes and the Grand Duke escapes! Is Fate a toady, too?

✦ ✦

One thousand school teachers of Pittsburg, Pa., have effected an organization for the purpose of demanding an increase of wages.

✦ ✦

New Zealand Times of April 7th refers to the "extraordinary story" going the rounds of the Australian capitalist press, to the effect that the flocking of men to New Zealand in search of work betrayed an unemployed difficulty, and that the Government had been compelled to establish relief works. The Times publishes an official statement flatly contradicting the yarn, which is stigmatized as "part of an organized attempt to depreciate the colony." In proof that there are none, or very few genuine unemployed in New Zealand, the Secretary of the Department of Labor points out that the department had some difficulty recently in securing 150 men for railway construction work.

✦ ✦

The report of the statistical department of the British Board of Trade states that 1903 was distinguished by the large European immigration movement to Canada and South Africa. Canada received 99,582, also 53,000 more British and Irish immigrants than in 1902. The four months ending April 30 show a decrease in foreigners passing through British ports for Canada of 6,000, in consequence of the C. P. R. refusing foreign immigrants.

✦ ✦

Extended experiments in Paris, France, show that in a given period of labor the total quantity produced is increased by intervals of rest, especially when short resting intervals are multiplied. Rest acts as a stimulant.

✦ ✦

Victorian Minister for Mines Murray told a deputation recently that he considered mining at a depth of 3,500 feet nothing but slow suicide, and if he had the power he'd stop it.

✦ ✦

The New York Central has effected the largest reduction of men in its shops and repair works that it has ever made. Fifteen per cent. of its working force have been laid off. This is in addition to the reduction of 10 per cent. made last fall.

✦ ✦

China has had trade unions 4,000 years.

✦ ✦

There are 11,000 members in 19 negro labor unions in New Orleans.

✦ ✦

Boston's two photo engravers' unions will amalgamate next Sunday.

✦ ✦

The American Brotherhood of Cement Workers will convene at St. Louis, Mo., June 14th.

✦ ✦

Chicago Laundry Owners' Association (38) conceded nearly about 4000 employees (some conceded not upon the United Laundrymen's Association (68 firms, with 3000 employees) demands, the latter insist upon running their own business; to the extent of endeavoring to agree not with the Laundry Drivers' Union for the "union shop."

✦ ✦

TORONTO DISTRICT LABOR COUNCIL.

The action taken at the last meeting of the District Labor Council, Thursday evening, May 26th, when dealing with the report of the Metal Trades Section, will be noted with more than usual interest by central bodies throughout the American continent. It will have its bearing in the present heated question of trade autonomy. The report dealt with a grievance of the brewery workers against the stationary engineers. The council, after a two hours' discussion, expelled the stationary engineers, by a vote of 81 to 6, and acquiesced in the action of the firemen.

The report from the Building Trades Section was received. Bills covering the expense of special committees elected by and for special business pertaining to the section were referred back to be borne by the section.

The Legislative Report, containing results of interview with Premier Ross was ordered to be printed in full.

Four delegates, representing three organizations were obligated and seated.

Press Committee.

✦ ✦

REPORT OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE.

Your Legislative Committee assembled at the Parliament building at 7.45 Monday evening, also Mr. L. W. Smith, representing the Farmers' Alliance. After a preliminary skirmish with the reporters we effected an entrance into the Premier's reception, No. 1 Elmby place. Our worthy chairman having introduced the deputation, Mr. Smith presented an address, pointing out the immense sums of money paid out of the taxes to the railway companies as bounties and subsidies, also the immense tracts of land diverted from the wealth of the nation and given over to private corporations for which in return the nation gets extortionate freight and passenger rates, virtually amounting to a heavy tax on the manufactures, by which we earn our living and the necessities of of life which we daily consume. We also have the consciousness that though contributing so much money to the building of these railways, our government has barely bartered the nation's proprietary rights, and this condition of things has to continue until Canadians can develop enough patriotic grit and unity of purpose to do, as all the other colonies in the empire have done—nationalize our railways. After our venerable Premier had read the address, with notes and commentations, a general conversation followed. The farmers' delegate advocated Government railways from a farmer's point of view—low freight rates. And quoted the low rates charged by the Intercolonial, as compared with the high rates charged by private railway companies. To this Mr. Ross objected that the Government pays the annual interest on the Intercolonial bonds, and the receipts of that railway simply pay the running expenses, plus the surplus that it makes in recent years. The members of your committee discussed the question from a trades union standpoint. We told the Premier that whatever might have been the condition of society 75 or 100 years ago when trades unionism commenced its long struggle for the betterment of labor, to-day we are fully aware of the fact, that our great and most important struggle is with the financial and political power of the great corporations. We instanced the United States Steel Trust reducing their wage bill fifteen million dollars only a few months ago, and the coal barons of Pennsylvania bleeding us to the tune of $12 a ton for coal, because the State supported them in their unfair and greedy methods of working their coal miners. We stated that the fluctuations of the market were largely caused by stock gambling on Wall street, as in the price of cotton, which has brought much hard times to the cotton operatives in Lancashire, and we ventured to say that if by the nationalization of our railways they were wrenched from private ownership, the bottom would be knocked out of Wall street gambling, an opinion with which the Premier was inclined to agree. We told him, and furnished the evidence, that these powerful corporations carry their unscrupulous methods even into our legislative halls and corrupt and bribe the Judases in what should be our national sources of justice and righteousness.

The Premier objected that the opportunity for national railways was gone past, the enormous cost and the vast administration involved made it most difficult, if not impossible, for the Government to take over the railways.

To this the deputation replied that the rights and privileges of Canadians, their millions of unborn descendants and the incoming tide of homeseekers cannot and must not be sacrificed for the aggrandisement of a few hundred capitalists. We told him that if crooked financiers chose to built railways on watered stock so doubling the cost of construction, the nation is not bound by any such villainous transaction. We quoted the boodling councillors of St. Louis, U.S., their sale of municipal franchises was a fraudulent transaction, but the rights of the people were still paramount. We told him that a clear-headed government could own and operate railways or any other enterprise just as well as a private corporation, as was evidenced by the wonderful success of Glasgow and other cities, also by the erection of our own Parliament buildings by the late Mr. Hardy for the contract price of $700,000, extras and all being well within the million. We quoted the Sandon Payystreak, B.C., to the effect that only five years ago Sir Wilfrid Laurier could have gone into the open market and purchased a controlling interest in the C. P. R. for twenty-five million dollars, could have raised a popular loan for that amount at 3 p.c. and their half interest in the revenue derived from land sales in the Northwest would have paid the whole interest on that twenty-five million and left an annual balance of $750,000. So that this Dominion might have owned more than half of the C. P. R. without raising our taxes one cent. The Premier admitted the truth of this statement.

Conversation then turned on the conditions of labor in farm life and town life, and we discussed ways whereby farm life might be made more attractive for the toiler, to relieving the labor market in the cities. We referred to the non-enforcement of the Factory Act, though the Premier emphatically promised to have remedied. After thanking the Premier for his kind reception of our deputation we took our departure, feeling convinced that 3,000 ballots marked for Jimmy Simpson at our next Ontario election will do a lot more good for the cause of labor than all our deputation pattering with the Ontario Government. All of which is respectfully submitted by your Legislative Committee.

WM. HENDERSON,
Chairman.
J. B. REEKS,
Secretary.

✦ ✦

ADDRESS ON RAILWAY SUBSIDIES.

To the Hon. G. W. Ross, Premier of Ontario.

The undersigned, representing the District Labor Council of Toronto and the Farmers' Association, desire to submit the following memorandum.

Railway promoters have received from the people of Canada upwards of 60,000,000 acres in land grants. To this total the Province of Ontario has contributed some 8,750,000 acres. The land grants made by Canada as a whole are equal to three times the area of resident lands in the Province. The grants by the Provincial Government are equal to almost one-third the resident area of Ontario.

In addition to this, up to the end of 1902, there had, according to the Canadian Year Book, been granted by the Dominion Government, in the form of cash aid to private railways over $100,000,000. The Province of Ontario, according to the same authority, had supplemented this by nine and three-quarter millions of Provincial money and the municipalities of the Province by nearly twelve and one-half millions more. The people of Ontario have, therefore, through the Provincial Government and the municipalities granted over $22,000,000 towards railway construction. Our share of the Dominion subsidies will amount to nearly $50,000,000 more, thus making total sum given by the people of this Province in cash, towards railway building, $70,000,000. If to this we add the value of the Provincial lands given to railways, and the value of our share of Northwest lands (and our eyes are joint heirs in those vast territories) it is safe to say that the contributions made by the people of Ontario, in the way of railway aid, amount all total to upwards of $100,000,000 in money and money's worth—an amount almost equal to the average annual value of the seed crops of the Province in the last twenty years.

We believe the time has come to put an end once and for all to this waste system. Railway building is practically the one form of industrial activity in which the subsidy system still exists. Time was when promoters of nearly every new industry asked a bonus for the work they proposed undertaking. That time, so far as ordinary industries are concerned, is now pretty well at an end. In our opinion the system should end as far as railway construction is concerned as well. We believe this country has reached a stage of development when, whatever may have been the case in the past, public aid is no longer necessary to secure railway construction. Immigration is pouring in. Last year we received 120,000 immigrants. In a few years we will receive half a million a year. Even to-day we are receiving a larger number of people who intend settling on the land than are being received in the United States. And the people who come to us are prospering. In one year 40,000 Manitoba farmers produced $50,000,000 worth of farm products. That is a record that can probably be equalled in no other part of the world devoted to mixed farming. Under these conditions, we say again, that public aid is not essential to the building of railways in this country. In fact, taking the country as a whole, we believe there is no line of industry, under proper management, where the returns should be more sure.

In exceptional cases it may be the public interest will require the bonbling of railways that will not prove immediately profitable. Where such cases occur we are strongly of opinion the Government should build such lines as public works and own and operate them when built. In fact we are of opinion that no policy could be conceived which would be more in the interest of the people than the application of public ownership of railways to the whole country. Railways so owned would exist primarily for the purpose of developing the general industrial interests of the country, and not, as now, for the promotion of the interests of shareholders and managers as their chief object. But in any case, we hold that the old system under which the people largely provided the cost of railway building, and promoters received the whole benefit from operation, should end once and for all. And we trust your Government will see that policy is carried out so far as Ontario, the bigger Province of Confederation, is concerned at least.

Signed by representatives of the Farmers' Alliance and the District Labor Council.

SPARKLING THOUGHTS FROM J. L. GORDON'S SERMON ON "THE ORIGINALITY OF CHRIST."

We have before us this morning the character of the Supreme Prophet.

The vision of Christ is five-fold—the historical vision, prophetical vision; we have an artistic vision, we have the poetical vision, we have the all-round vision.

Wherein consists the unique originality of Jesus Christ.

He gave the world a vastness of the view of the universe that it had never had before.

He seemed to have a vision that gave him the true proportionments of this world.

The very last word that Jesus said, "I'll come again."

Jesus stood for the improvability of human nature.

Jesus stood for the possibility of the human nature.

"The lion of the tribe of Judea shall break every chain and give us the victory again and again."

The heroes of the world are the givers, not the getters.

The greatness of service He emphasized.

Christ placed a value on the individual soul.

Birth was more than worth in these days.

Christian civilization stands for the welfare of all.

Most natural thing in the world was for Jesus Christ to give a life of love, because He was the incarnation of love.

The originality of Christ consisted in His living the life He asked others to live.

NOTES AND NOTELETS.

The Hon. James Stuart, Deputy Minister, has published his report on the immigration of the year. In the report he speaks in the most glowing terms of the extent of this immigration. The total amount of land taken up by settlers, he says, equals 9,387,561 acres. This is an enormous amount for one year; for the total amount of land cleared in Ontario is only a little over 13,000,000 acres. The gross revenue of the department for the year is a little less than $2,250,000.

In stating the cost of bringing the immigrants he mentions $100,000; but he does not give the amount of the cost of caring for the immigrants and the cost of placing them on the lands. The grant of parliament was somewhere about $600,000. The Honorable Deputy Minister in vindication of this expenditure says: "The increase in the population of Canada by a class of healthy, law abiding and thriving settlers is an object which fully justifies the large expenditure of public money which is annually incurred."

The kind of writing reminds us of the efforts made by Louis XVI, when he sent out ship loads of girls to furnish wives for the settlers and then gave bounties on every baby that was born. All this was done to increase the population of the country. Louis was bound to have the country well stocked with the object of reproducing a new France on this continent. He had no doubt as to the rightcousness of his course. That he should tax one man to move another man across the ocean, that he should strive thus to increase the population of the country, was accepted at once as certainly quite proper.

To this doctrine we give our most positive disapproval. It is a governmental function to provide roads, to furnish schools and other public conveniences, but it is not the duty of any government to tax industry for the purposes of increasing the population. Let the people have good government and there will be a rush for this land.

In Europe the people have to submit to the multifold exactions of an oppressive military system, an idle aristocracy, and an extravagant monarchy. In that part of the world to most of the inhabitants there is no hope of the possibility of owning any land, nothing but a life of bitter hardship. Let us make this country what it should be, a country where labor has every chance for employment, and where it can reap the reward of its toil without any unjust exactions from monopolies, from land speculators, from bonus hunters, from protected manufacturers and other parasites, and the rush of immigration for this country would exceed anything that this continent has ever witnessed.

The present method of immigration is most iniquitous. A tariff often amounting to fifty per cent. protects the wealthy factory owner from foreign competition. Thus the law enables him to sell dear. But the immigration policy aims to flood the labor market so as to keep wages down to a minimum, compelling the laborer to sell cheap and enabling the employer to buy cheap. At the same time the rush of immigrants to buy land makes a harvest for the land speculator to enable him to rake in his unearned tribute or to saddle the settler with a mortgage round his neck for an ornament the rest of his days.

$130.00 GIVEN AWAY

The Circulation Committee of the District Labor Council submitted to the Directors of the THE TOILER PUBLISHING CO., the following proposition: **"That a trophy valued at $50 be presented to the Section of the District Labor Council sending in the most subscriptions by the first of September, 1904. Not less than 300 Subscriptions will be necessary to win the trophy."**

F. J. WILSON, President. WM. BOLAND, Secretary.

The Directors have accepted the proposition and will offer the following prizes to be competed for between the **1st day of May, 1904,** and the **1st day of September, 1904,** inclusive:

To the Section returning most Subscriptions

$50.00 TROPHY

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