

NOTICE.

We shall be pleased to receive sums of interest per annum to Trade Societies from all parts of the Dominion for publication. Officers of Trades Unions, Secretaries of Leagues, etc., are invited to send us news relating to their organizations, condition of trade, etc.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

(INVARIABLY IN ADVANCE.)

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ADVERTISEMENTS.

Each insertion, ten cents per line.

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All communications should be addressed to the Office, 124 Bay Street, or to Post Office Box 1025.

We wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions of our correspondents.

Our columns are open for the discussion of all questions affecting the working classes. All communications must be accompanied by the names of the writers, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

WILLIAMS, SLEETH & MACMILLAN.

Trades Assembly Hall.

Meetings are held in the following order:

- Machinists and Blacksmiths, every Monday.
- Painters, 1st and 3rd Monday.
- Coachmakers, 2nd and 4th Monday.
- Crispins, (159), 1st and 3rd Tuesday.
- K.O.S.C. Lodge 356, 2nd and 4th Tuesday.
- Tinsmiths, 2nd and 4th Tuesday.
- Cigar Makers, 2nd and 4th Wednesday.
- Iron Moulders, every Thursday.
- Plasterers, 1st and 3rd Thursday.
- Trades' Assembly, 1st and 3rd Friday.
- Bricklayers, 1st and 3rd Friday.
- Coopers, 2nd and 4th Friday.
- Printers, 1st Saturday.
- Bakers, every 2nd Saturday.

The Ontario Workman.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 1873.

We publish in another column a communication from Mr. Mowatt, of Hamilton, respecting the recent mass meeting in that city. A perusal will suffice to show that Mr. Mowatt argues from wrong premises. The opposition that has been given to the measures named, has not been owing to the fact that those measures emanated from a Reform Government, but because it was generally believed they would, in their operations, fail to benefit the operative classes, in whose behalf they were said to be framed. Certainly, every man in this country has a right to hold and express his opinions, and if Mr. Mowatt, or any one else, is quite satisfied with the provisions of the measures proposed, it is their privilege to accept them; but we are quite sure that the great majority of the toilers of our land are not so satisfied. At the representative mass meeting, held in Toronto, the measures were calmly and fairly discussed, and the verdict of the workmen was against them. Mr. Mowatt confesses to be highly satisfied with the Lien Law, even in its original shape, because, he argues, small sums can be collected as readily as a landlord can collect his rent. Under the Master and Servants' Act, any sum under \$40 can be sued for, but twenty-one days must elapse before the debt can be restrained for. But supposing Mr. Mowatt's opinion was correct, what protection would that afford men in the case of absconding contractors? We have a case in Ottawa, at the present time. Last year a contract was let for the erection of a church. The work proceeded; the contractor drew money and absconded, failing to pay the men under the Master and Servants' Act. What remedy had they? None. The object of a lien—so far as mechanics are concerned—is to make the property upon which labor has been expended, responsible for that labor; consequently, had the lien law been in force at that time the men would have been protected, and their wages secured.

With regard to the Convict Labor question, it certainly was the contract system that was opposed in both the resolutions offered, on the ground that the leading tendencies of that system

are the aggrandizement of the pockets of a few at the expense of the people, and the corruption and demoralization of the convicts—all the evidence that has been brought to bear upon the subject has fully established this fact. That the convict system in force at the Kingston Penitentiary has not received opposition does not alter the case—two wrongs do not make one right. In the one case, the evil is of long standing, and what was sought by the agitation of the Prison Labor question in connection with the Central Prison was, to prevent the evil being extended. Had it been possible to accomplish this in the one case, it would have been a much easier task to assail the other of long standing.

THE BAKERS' SUPPER.

We regret that we omitted in our last issue, to refer to the very pleasant gathering on the occasion of the second anniversary of the journeymen bakers of this city. It was a very social and interesting occasion, and we are pleased to know that the union is in a flourishing and prosperous condition.

OTTAWA.

In our last issue we referred to a meeting that had been held in Ottawa, in reference to the difficulty in that city, with respect to the men who were last year defrauded of their earnings by a defaulting contractor. In our advertising columns will be found a notice addressed to the mechanics of the Dominion, to which we direct special attention.

"NO ADMITTANCE."

The *Machinists and Blacksmiths' Journal* gives us a peep at affairs as they exist in the city of "Brotherly Love," as follows:—

The workshops of Philadelphia, many are aware, are noted for beautifully ornamented doors, bolted, and labeled, "No Admittance," the windows are elegantly decorated with iron bars, all of which strike one forcibly of prison houses for the confinement of criminals, instead of American freemen. Yet these poor, miserable, poverty-stricken slaves of Philadelphia, who call themselves machinists and blacksmiths, are so blind to their interest that they prefer locked doors, iron-barred windows, slavery, degradation, and, many of them, \$3 per week, to Unionism and freedom; they prefer starvation prices and misery to fair recompense and the Union. To show our readers how completely the slavery of these men are accomplished, we print a document that certainly is a disgrace to the firm whose name it bears:

OFFICE OF WM. SELLERS & Co., }
PHILADELPHIA, PA., December 30, '71. }
The bearer is admitted to the works, on condition that he does not converse with any of the workmen.
WM. SELLERS & Co., }
per S. C. H.

RETURN THIS PASS.

It is generally believed that the United States is the "land of the free and home of the brave," etc., but the above precious document is a "leettle" bit ahead of one that, for a few brief fleeting days, made its appearance last year in this Canada of ours.

DEFEAT OF THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

The Gladstone Administration was defeated on Tuesday night, on their Irish University bill by a majority of three. The result of the division was announced as follows:—For the bill, 284; against, 287. The announcement of the vote caused great excitement. The House has adjourned until Thursday.

DOMINION GOVERNMENT.

The debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, took place on Tuesday. Mr. Tobin, of Halifax, moved, and Mr. Palmer, of St. John's, seconded the address. After discussion, *pro* and *con*, the address was passed without any amendments being offered.

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT.

On Tuesday night, the question of removing the Agricultural Farm and College from Mimico to Guelph, came on for discussion, and proved one of the most interesting debates of the present session. Mr. McKellar moved the resolution of removal. Dr. Boultier moved in amendment, that the scheme be ab-

andoned altogether, and Mr. Cameron moved, in amendment to the amendment, that the site be not changed. After long debate the amendments were lost, and the original motion carried on a division, the Government having a majority of nine.

THE SOUTH WALES DISPUTE.

We learn from our English exchanges that the prospects of at least a partial settlement of the great South Wales strike are somewhat encouraging. A further conference between the employers and the colliers and miners was to be consummated. In the meantime, Mr. Trump, manager of one of the companies, has made a proposition that it is to be hoped will form the basis of a settlement of the dispute. It is to the effect that the men should resume work at ten per cent. reduction. If, however, they turned out a certain amount of coal per month, and thus put an end to the restrictive policy which has hitherto guided them, then the ten per cent. should be restored to them. Both union and non-union men have expressed themselves in favor of Mr. Trump's suggestion, and in all probability our next exchanges will bring intelligence that work had been resumed in the coal mines of South Wales.

NEW COAL CONSUMERS' ASSOCIATION.

An English paper considers that the present state of the coal market renders any relief that can be given to the public a great boon. A company for this purpose has just been formed, which, from its organization and the principles upon which it will be conducted, is likely to reduce the price of coal most materially to every shareholder who may join the Association. The mode in which this is to be accomplished is by raising capital among consumers and exporters of coal with which to purchase or lease collieries, and otherwise to obtain coal at moderate prices. It is to be worked entirely upon co-operative principles; the miners and all the employees of the Association equally having the opportunity of becoming shareholders. The first principle of this Association is that coal consumers can become colliery proprietors on a large scale by subscribing for two-thirds only of the present annual cost of their coals. Besides receiving 10 per cent. per annum on their small cash investment, they will have the great advantage of obtaining coal at cost price. Great success has attended the working of this system in Messrs. Briggs', Whitford, and Methloy Junction Collieries since 1865, and the result has been peace between masters and men, an annually increasing dividend to the shareholders, as well as a bonus to the wage-earners, thus clearly showing that this principle affords the safest and most profitable method of carrying on mining for coal.

WAGES.

Men sometimes, in the absence of argument, reason in a circle, and again, when facts are against them, they are apt to set up a man of straw, and then call upon us to view the ease and rapidity with which they knock him down and kick him to pieces. And very frequently we are forced, as it were, to admire the destructive ability of the learned orator, as he pummels and slashes the constructive creation of his ingenious mind. But what end, after all, does it accomplish? The man of straw was certainly annihilated almost as readily as he had been created. We admit the ability to destroy a defective, imperfect realization, but if asked to admit the ability to create something genuinely perfect, we emphatically demur. About a month or two ago, Commissioner Leggett amused himself and his audience by setting up and knocking down a man of straw. He set his strawy creation up by claiming that dear labor made all manufactured articles dear, and he then knocked him down and "kicked the stuff" out of him," by showing how workmen would be benefited by low wages, and injured by any increase in remuneration, or reduction in the hours of labor.

Were Mr. Leggett an employer, making twenty-five per cent. on his invested capital, it would not necessarily follow that the ware he manufactured should be enhanced in value because his employees had demanded an increase in wages. But it would necessarily follow that he should be content with a more reasonable percentage on the money he had invested in the business. In this case the demand made by the men would seem to indicate that they considered a portion of the twenty-five per cent. margin belonged to them, and not that they meant to increase the selling value of the article manufactured. We claim that employers, generally appropriate, of the proceeds of manufacturing enterprises, vastly more than the capital they have invested is justly entitled to. Labor and capital are *pro rata* partners in the production, and should partake *pro rata* of the proceeds. That is, each should take in proportion to the value of the service each performed. But this is rarely, if ever, the case. Labor demands that it shall be so. Capitalists reply by saying such a consummation would injure us, because, though it increased the volume of our wages, it would at the same time decrease their purchasing power by enhancing the cost of the necessary articles of consumption. But we claim the just result should be simply more money for the workingman and less for the employer, and it should be the duty of workmen—everybody—to resist the attempt of the manufacturer to enhance the cost of his goods. And even if it were true that an increase of wages would decrease the buying power of money, we would still unhesitatingly insist upon an increase in the remuneration of labor.

If more money were required to pay labor, the volume of currency would, of course, have to expand. We know that Mill and Bastiat say that it is a matter of no moment how much cash there be in the world, for the latter says, "If there be much, much is required; if there be little, little is wanted." But we think this reasoning defective as far as the payment of labor is concerned, for the history of this country will conclusively prove that whenever a scarcity of money existed, the payment of labor in "merchandise" invariably superseded payment in cash. No doubt the experience of many of our readers will corroborate the correctness of this conclusion. Labor can not be too well rewarded. Every permanent increase in wages has marked an epoch in the progress of the world towards the millennium of mind. In the thirteenth century workmen were not paid more than one-third of what they now receive for their labor. The purchasing power of money, and every thing considered, labor is three better rewarded now than then; and what student of history will not admit that the progress of the world, in civilization and enlightenment, has advanced in the same, if not a greater, ratio. If we wish to notice the effect of cheap labor on peoples and nations, we have in Eastern lands ample opportunities for gratifying our curiosity or desire for investigation. Labor is as cheap to-day in Palestine as it was when the master of the vineyard hired laborers for a penny a day. But in all Christendom there can be hardly found a more ignorant or slavish people. Their methods of manufacture are almost as rude as when the Saviour trod the land barefooted. There is no energy, no enterprise, no industry, no happiness, except it be laziness, among them. Ross Browne was so forcibly impressed with the thriftlessness of the people of the Holy Land, during a recent tour there, that he says he saw but one man, in all that country, doing anything, and he was falling off the roof of a house. And what is true of Palestine, is equally true of all the Eastern countries, and all other countries where labor is miserably compensated. The future of the world demands that workmen receive steady employment and good wages—the wages any how—we care not how high the standard be set, the higher the better. We are more than willing to take the consequences of any and every increase in the cost of all commodities necessary for the well being and happiness of mankind.

But let us take another view of the case: To show, conclusively, that the cost of the necessaries and comforts of life should not be affected by any reasonable increase in the compensation paid workmen, we have only to reflect that for the last three thousand years, the volume of the laborer's wages has not increased in the same ratio that its purchasing power has decreased. The comprehension of this phase of the subject requires an elucidation of the causes affecting the purchasing power of money. The main and principle reason why all commodities have steadily increased in value for the last three thousand years, may be found in the almost universal habit of mankind in adopting gold and silver as the material from which money should be made. Money is simply a sign which represents the respective value of all articles bought and sold for cash; and this sign is either made of gold or of some other material which has gold for a basis. This idea of our civilization has come down to us from the barbaric past, and though we have discarded nearly all the ignorant and semi-savage usages of by-gone ages, we still cling to this old preposterous idea of a metal basis for our money. It is not in the province of this article to show why this is done and who are responsible for it.

The ancients used the precious metals for money because they were scarce and extremely hard to be obtained. Their wisdom in so doing may well be doubted. Six hundred years before Christ, just as Athens began to light up the world by her genius and intelligence, the quantity of precious metals were so small that nine bushels of wheat could be bought for an ounce of silver in any part of Greece. Wheat was certainly cheap at fifteen cents per bushel. But the advance of civilization was accompanied by an increase in the commerce of the world, and a large increase in the production of gold and silver. Mines in Thrace, Spain, Attica, Armenia and Egypt were opened and so great was the yield that after the death of Alexander, an ounce of silver would purchase only three bushels of wheat. In three centuries the value of wheat had increased three-fold. But during the same time the laborer's wages increased scarcely two-fold. The value of wheat and other commodities increased in value, because the purchasing power of money had decreased in consequence of the large increase in the production of gold and silver.

It is a settled fact that as the quantity of precious metals increase, their value will decrease and the common sign—money—will sink in value.

Before and for some time after the discovery of America, a horse was worth ten pounds in England. But during the three following centuries, it was calculated that above a thousand millions of bullion were imported into Europe from America, and about the end of that time a horse was worth twenty pounds, simply because the metal which constituted the coin or money was twice as plentiful as it was when the horse sold for ten pounds. The horse was just as dear then as the ten pounds as he was afterwards at twenty. The value of commodities had doubled, or what is precisely the same thing, the purchasing power of had decreased one-half. And yet during this period the value of labor remained almost stationary, and it is no wonder that Hallam, the historian, should think it strange that the laboring classes of England were better provided with the means of subsistence in the fourteenth century than they were in the nineteenth.

In 1850 the stock of coin in all Christendom was estimated to be \$4,412,000,000, and during the sixteen years following, the yearly production was \$156,250,000, and it is reasonable to presume that the yield during the last six years has been equally as great if not greater. This would give a total production for the last twenty-two years of \$3,437,500,000. Now assuming that during this time there was consumed, at the outside, in the wear and loss and in the arts, not more than \$1,000,000,000, and the net gain for twenty-one years would be \$2,437,500,000, making