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by
Katherine Newlin Burt

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PEACE WITH HONOR.

The great railway strike in Britain ended with dramatic suddenness on Sunday, much to the relief of the people of England. The strike had completely paralyzed every branch of industry in the old land and any efforts that were made to supply a railway service were puny and without effect. While it only required a word from the railwaymen to bring out the balance of the Triple Alliance as well as other unions, the railway workers realized their own ability to succeed and resolutely refused to accept offers of sympathetic strikes in their behalf.

The terms of settlement as contained in dispatches evidently do not adequately set forth the workers' gains, for we have the statement of Mr. Thomas that: "The settlement brings home great gains," while Mr. Cramp, President of the Railwaymen's Union says: "While we did not obtain the formula we set forth in the strike resolution, we obtained terms equally good, which will give the railwaymen the same thing in effect. Our men have broken the back of the first attack made on the entire working class, and no doubt this splendid stand will save workers from a degraded standard of life." The Secretary of the Firemen and Engineers declares: "The settlement is highly satisfactory. There is greater value in it than appears at first sight."

Different views are expressed by the London newspapers. The Herald claim the settlement to be "a great success" for the workers while the Morning Post says the strike was "a disastrous and ignominious failure." The Graphic declares that the Government yielded too much, while the News maintains that: "The defeat of either could not have been satisfactory. Both can claim peace with honor, the men's gains being far greater than is evident in the concrete terms of the settlement." Summing up the meagre information to hand at this writing, we are inclined to the view expressed by the News regarding the settlement. We are convinced at any rate that the orderly conduct of the strike could not but commend the Union heads, while the blatant cry of "revolution" by Lloyd George is one more nail in the political coffin of that shifty gentleman.

NOT A COMPLETE FAILURE

A glance through our exchanges reveals the fact that the majority of Canadian Labor papers refer to the recently held National Conference on Industrial Relations as an utter and complete failure. The Edmonton Free Press does not take that view. We grant that the conference showed no immediate results and it is true that the questions on which Capital and Labor could not agree are the ones that are most vital and very present elements in the industrial unrest that is prevalent in this and other countries. But we cannot term any gathering a complete failure, where Labor has had an opportunity to propagate its aspirations and its ideals. Labor certainly had that privilege at Ottawa and we are bold to say that the delegates representing the Labor movement made very good use of their opportunity. We were not pleased with the method of choosing the delegates, and we still claim that the manner in which the Labor representatives were chosen was wrong in principle. But it does not follow that those who were chosen could not properly present to the conference the fundamental objectives of Organized Labor. As a matter of fact, so great was the predominance of the Labor group at the Ottawa gathering, that it was a subject of comment by all the big eastern papers. Moore, Stone, Simpson, Woodward, Bruce, Miss Gutteridge, Baneroff, McLellan, Winning and many others that might be named, are persons who have a thorough knowledge of the aims of Labor and undoubted ability to give expression to the same. That is a fact which will be admitted by all except those whose sense of fairness is seared by personal antipathy. The conference was given much publicity in the east, all the Toronto papers having staff correspondents in Ottawa. The Labor delegates' addresses were in every case covered very fully, so that as a means of publicity and propaganda alone, the gathering justified the participation of the labor movement.

But while we could not admit that the conference was a complete failure, we are nevertheless, not prepared to agree that the gathering was a great success, or that it will have any immediate effect in allaying the undoubted unrest that is a very present feature of Canadian industrial and social life. It may result in the amelioration of some of the most aggravated industrial conditions that were brought to light by the Labor representatives, but the present Government's record does not even give great hope in that direction. We are inclined to the belief that the success of the Conference can be confined to the revelation of industrial conditions that, having received the light of publicity, may be somewhat ameliorated by legislation, providing there was any spark of sincerity in the Government's apparent desire to improve conditions industrially. That, and the presentation of Labor's aims with the corresponding weak defence of the exponents of privilege, is to our mind the sum total of what the conference accomplished in so far as organized Labor is concerned.

SHOULD ENFORCE SAFETY LAWS.

The death of a worker may not seem to be of much consequence in this "advanced" age, but we venture the opinion that someone will have a heavy heart because of the fatal accident to Thomas Watson, a member of the local Sheet-metal Workers' Union. The late brother was instantly killed on Monday afternoon when a scaffold on which he was working collapsed.

The enactment known as the Building Trades Protection Act, a provincial legislative measure, provides for the proper inspection of scaffolding. But—it absolves the government from responsibility by a provision that the city authorities should enforce the Act. With the result that what is anybody's business is nobody's business and we have Monday's fatal accident as the consequence of the improper enforcement of a measure calculated to insure safety for the worker. We do not know where the direct blame for the accident of Monday should rest, but we do know that the Provincial Government is open to censure for not providing for the proper enforcement of a law which it found necessary to enact.

It would seem that the Workmen's Compensation Board should be empowered to see that all laws enacted for the safety of workmen should be properly enforced. At any rate it is to be hoped that some provision will be quickly made to insure a greater measure of safety for the workers in the pursuance of their occupation.

AFFILIATE WITH CENTRAL BODIES.

There is some significance in the statement of Minister of Labor Robertson before the Trades and Labor Congress, to the effect that the Government would recognize only the Congress as the official mouthpiece of the Canadian Labor movement. It can also be stated authoritatively that the Alberta Federation of Labor occupies a similar position in this province, as does also the Trades' Council in the various cities of Canada.

The lesson then should be clear and all trade union organizations should not only be affiliated with central bodies, but should take an active part by attendance at conventions and meetings of the central organizations. The success of the Federation of Labor in Alberta will be gauged largely by the percentage of trade unionists who are affiliated. We cannot, therefore, too strongly urge upon Edmonton Unions the advisability of becoming affiliated with the provincial central body immediately, and thus prove that Labor in this province is united in demanding legislation that will benefit the workers. After becoming affiliated all Unions should plan to be represented at the

Convention in Calgary in January, where the program for the year will be decided upon and officers elected to carry on the work during the year 1920. Let the subject of becoming affiliated with the Alberta Federation of Labor be made a special order of business at the next meeting of every Union that is not now a member of that body.

EDITOR'S NOTES.

Compromise under certain circumstances may be permissible or even desirable; but the habitual compromiser is in danger of degenerating to the point of vacillation. Premier Lloyd George seems to be bordering on the latter state.

The Steel Trust won the two previous strikes in that industry and they may succeed in the present instance in retaining their despotic system of slavery. But the war against despotism will not be over until the last battle is fought and freedom is triumphant.

"Soviets and manifestos in this country are not the cause but the symptoms of disorder, and a Government that was worthy of its tremendous task would find something better to do than exploiting a triviality as a screen to incompetence." The Manchester Guardian was referring to conditions in Britain when it made this observation, but it can be applied to Canada very nicely without any change in the wording.

The B.C. Federationist which is generally conceded to be an O.B.U. organ, and was denounced as such at the last meeting of the Vancouver Trades' Council, treats its readers to a lengthy screed regarding the work of the "machine" at the recent Trades' Congress Convention. There may be a machine in the Congress, but criticism along that line from O.B.U. sources will not carry great weight with the delegates who attended the Calgary Convention and witnessed the "railroading" that took place there.

The indefensible interference in Russia and the supporting of the reactionary adventurer Koltchak, is receiving very general condemnation in Britain. The Manchester Guardian concedes a powerful editorial by the observation that "we have no more business to supply either of the Russian factions with munitions than Germany has to supply Sinn Fein or Ulster with machine guns. It is not a question of the relative merits of Lenin and Koltchak, or of their respective followers, any more than it is for Germany to judge between Sir Edward Carson and Mr. De Valera."

"Even so sane a Labor leader as Samuel Gompers gives evidences now and then that he has been affected by this not recover sufficiently from the fatigue day after day, until challenge it. Unless unionism is to lose most of the gains of fifty years it will have to purge itself of its Socialist leaders and declare plainly that it has no ambitions to be the dominant political factor in the life of the country."—Toronto Mail & Empire.

Now we know what we must do. We will have to get rid of dangerous revolutionary characters like Sammy Gompers and be content with "crumbs from the master's table," putting any suggestion of progress from us as something not to be enjoyed by the toilers of earth.

After receiving the verbatim report of the Ottawa conference, we can easily understand why it was that all the eastern papers commented upon the superiority of the Labor group in the many debates. Here is a choice illustration given by Miss Helena Gutteridge in supporting the eight-hour day:

"I have read the report of the Ministry of Munitions in the old country dealing with the question of the 8-hour day, and particularly I read it in connection with the working day for women; and I noted specially that in one instance there was found to be a falling off in the output of the women workers in making munitions, and investigation revealed the fact that because of the hours they were working they did not recover sufficiently from the fatigue day after day, until there was such an accumulation of fatigue at the end of the week that they did not properly recover at the week-end. It was found that to continue the labor of women for a longer period than 8 hours a day—and the same thing applies to men—was like stretching a piece of elastic a little too far: it did not go back as it was originally, because the elasticity was lost, and therefore the production was lowered."

Here was the reply of an employers' representative: "If you had come to this Conference and said: 'We do not ask for a general 8-hour day or a 44-hour week, but we do ask for it in certain lines of industry, and naming those industries, because you have examined into them; and if you state, 'This is an industry where a man has sweated his blood, sweated the sweat out of his body, where a woman has worked until she has stretched the elastic so that it is nearly broken,' then we will meet you."

EMPLOYERS HAVE ADOPTED PLAN OF ONE BIG UNION

Employers of Eleven States Meet
at Chicago and Organize Industrial and Commercial Union

The organization of employers of the whole country into one mammoth body to fight unionism is the aim of the Industrial and Commercial Union, which took tentative form Tuesday in Chicago. Employers of eleven states took part in the preliminary work. The first meeting was in Chicago, when the proposal was made to combine the members of all employers' associations into one big fighting force. The leaders of the movement are those who are opposing government ownership of railroads and who have gone on record as opposing the government employment service.

The avowed purpose of the organization is to oppose the organized workers. It is pretended that there is no opposition to "legitimate" and "loyal" workers' organizations. This is taken to mean that company unions such as maintained by Rockefeller and the Western Union Telegraph Co. will not be molested. It is only those unions which are organized solely for the purpose of taking care of the interests of the workers which will be fought. The usual claim is made that A. F. of L. unions are being dominated by radicals, and the new employers' unions will aid the labor unions in weeding out this element, it is said. The new union of employers will not admit representatives of the workers to the organizations, but will insist on running the affairs of the labor bodies.

Miss Helen Taft, daughter of ex-President Taft, and who is acting president of Byrd Mary College, has sailed for Liverpool with other women college officials on the invitation of European colleges to study their systems.

WINNIPEG COOKS AND WAITERS HAVE JUST GRIEVANCE

Winnipeg Cooks and Waiters charge that employers are trying to force them to accept lower wages than the scale fixed by the Manitoba minimum wage act, and that they are also being required to work eleven and twelve hours a day. They state the matter will be brought before the authorities unless some change is made.

MANITOBA FARMERS WILL TAKE HAND IN POLITICS

On October 15th the farmers of Manitoba will hold a "Liberty Drive," when a canvas will be made of all the farmers in the province to secure members for the grain growers' political party in Manitoba. W. R. Ward, secretary of Manitoba says:

"That since the three western provinces declared in favor of political action, and there is every reason to believe that it is universal in Manitoba today. The hope of redress through either of the parties is utterly futile. The acknowledged policy of the Conservative party is high tariff."

"The Liberal party, in its platform, avoids any declaration against the protective principle. The record of party governments offers no prospect of freedom."

"The Union government has given continuous and unmistakable evidence of its subservience to the privileged interests, and of its utter indifference to the hardship perpetuated by the continuance of privilege."

"Our one hope is in direct and effective representation by our own democratically chosen men on the floor of the house of commons."

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Board Would Force Them Back to
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Thursday morning twenty-five class rooms in the separate schools were without their regular staff of teachers. Only those classes that were being taught by nuns held their sessions, the lay teachers having gone on strike.

Since January, 1919, the lay teachers have carried on an unsuccessful agitation with the school board over the matter of salary adjustment, receiving only a small bonus last June. Not having been offered any contract upon resuming their duties in September, the teachers called the attention of the board to the matter and requested that the board submit a probable schedule which the board considered they would be financially able to adopt. The teachers were advised they would be required to go back to their old schedule, which meant that they would work for less than they received last year.

ONE KIND OF UNION (?) MAN

He never belonged to a union.
At least that is just what he said.
And he never had use for the label.
And his shoes to the hat on his head.
When winter came in with a bluster,
And the coat on his back was quite thin
Then he looked all about him, despairing.
And said he would like to come in.

He never paid dues till he had to.
He never served on committees at all,
And he never came round to meetings
Or helped the boys out at a ball.
Not a thought for his poor fellow-
worker,
Their hardships gave him quite a shock,
And he never would boost for his union.
But always stood ready to knock.

When misfortune hugged him to its
bosom,
Which it does with us all, don't you see,
He sent this word round to his local:
'You've got to do something for me.'
Now this is no exaggeration,
That the party referred to isn't you!
The story in fact is quite true;
Now honestly, aren't you thankful?

People who always talk about their
forefathers and what they did seem to
find little time to do things that their
posterity will find worth talking about.

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