

Ontario Workman.

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

VOL. II.—NO. 6.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, MAY 22, 1873

NO. 58

Labor Notes.

A State Trades' Assembly has been organized by the workmen of Indiana.

The master masons in Dunfermline have granted the demand of the men for an advance of wages from 6½d. per hour to 7d.

The saddle makers of Hamburg, Berlin, and Vienna, are agitating for higher wages, and a strike has already occurred in the latter city.

At Vienna the tailors object to piece-work, and new working rules to regulate the trade have been presented to the masters, who have eight days to decide on the matter.

The Glasgow operative pump and slipper makers have memorialised their employers for an advance of wages, to begin on the 5th of May.

The cutters in the Leicester boot and shoe trade are agitating for an advance of 15 per cent., which is resisted by the manufacturers. Should no settlement be arrived at by the end of the week, a strike of 500 men is anticipated.

The carmen employed by some Manchester firms having struck, the masters published a list of their names, and have agreed among themselves not to employ the strikers. The men are instituting proceedings against the masters for intimidation.

The operatives on strike in the building trade at Leamington have united to carry on building on the co-operative system, and recently they issued the prospectus of the "Leamington United Trades Building Company."

The impending strike of Bath coach-makers, has been averted, and an amicable settlement arrived at between employers and their men by the mediation of the Mayor of the city, Mr. R. S. Bleaine.

At a meeting of the operative shipwrights held recently, it was agreed to accept the offers of the masters of an advance of 1s. per week, from the 1st of May, and 2s. per week for old work. The men had asked a little more. They have agreed to make no further demand on the employers for three months.

At a meeting of the journeymen lapidaries held lately in Buchanan's Hotel, reports were handed in, from which it appeared that all the employers to whom application has been made have consented to reduce the working hours to fifty-one per week, the change to take place on Monday, May 5th. A vote of thanks was accorded to the employers.

The dispute in the masons' branch of the building trade of Blackburn, has been reduced to smaller proportions. The men ask for 33s. per week in summer, and 30s. in winter. The masters have consented to give the advance, which is to come into operation on the 21st of June, but the men say that unless it be paid on the 1st of May they will resort to a strike.

The boot and shoe makers of San Francisco vote Chinese cheap labor in their factories a failure, and will substitute white men. They say the Chinese are untrustworthy, and when employed on piece-work, slight their labor. Moreover, that as soon as they learn their trade they abandon their employers, open shops for themselves, and undersell the Americans.

The Cincinnati Trades Assembly has adopted its constitution. The following are the officers for the current term:—John Schley, Typographical Union, No. 1, President; N. White, Carpenters' Union, Vice President; E. H. Kimberly, Typographical Union, No. 1, Corresponding and Recording Secretary; C. Rihl, Bricklayers' Union, No. 1, Treasurer. The Assembly has presented a petition and memorial to Congress in relation to a duty on foreign printed matter.

The steady resistance of the German compositors against the combined efforts of their employers has ended in vindicating the cause of arbitration. After a costly resistance, the employers, realizing that the whole German proletariat was ready to

support the compositors' strike, at last consented to the nomination of a board of arbitration composed of ten employers and ten workmen. The committee were to meet on the 1st of May, and we hope this desperate struggle will at last be amicably concluded.

The master cabinet and chairmakers of Edinburgh and Leith with one or two exceptions, have declined to grant the advance of wages sought,—but agree to give time and half for overtime. This has not proved acceptable to the men, and at a largely attended meeting they unanimously resolved to adhere to the demand for an advance of wages. A deputation, which had been appointed by the Cabinet and Chair Makers' Union to confer with the employers was approved of; and a committee was appointed to receive reports, and to give assistance to those out of work. A letter has been sent to the employers requesting a conference.

A somewhat curious thing is just now taking place in Glasgow and some other towns on the Clyde with respect to the arrangement of the hours of labor. Last spring, by a determined struggle, the iron-workers obtained a reduction of the hours of labor from ten to nine, and a movement is now on foot with the object of going back to the ten hours' system for five days in the week during the summer months, and getting the whole of Saturday as a holiday. In some of the public works the employers have agreed to this arrangement, whilst at others, where there are fortnightly pays, a clear Saturday is to be had once a fortnight. At Dumbarton it is proposed to leave off work about ten o'clock on Saturday, and if this is agreed to, it will soon practically amount to an entire holiday, as many men who get their wages on Friday night will not return to work for only two or three hours on Saturday.

The movement in favor of sending delegates elected by the French working classes to Vienna is gaining ground every day. The collection made for this purpose by the *Corsaire* now amounts to £1,380 odd. Among the Paris corporations which have been most active in the matter are the workmen engaged in making mathematical instruments, jewellery, pocket-books, type, clothes, carpets, and in printing painted prints, marble cutting, tanning, &c. These trades will doubtless be well represented at Vienna, notwithstanding the parsimony of the Government. With regard to this matter, an incident has occurred which demonstrates the orderly conduct of the Paris Syndical Chambers. The plumbers and locksmiths met on the same day at the *Corderie-du-Temple*; and, as there were no separate rooms, both these associations carried on their business in the same chamber, divided only by a light curtain, in so quiet and orderly a manner that they did not in the least interfere with or disturb each other. This for a French assembly is very creditable, particularly when we add that 100 francs were voted on that occasion towards the expenses of the delegates to Vienna.

The strikes have continued to multiply in France this week. At Nancy the carpenters have left off work because their employers would not grant them 5d. a day augmentation, demanded in consequence of the increased cost of rent and provisions. The same increase of pay has been solicited by the marble cutters of Carcassonne; and, on the employers refusal a strike ensued. At Dijon the bricklayers and thatchers are agitating for an increase on the ground that they are so often left without employment at all. They would fix the value of a day's work at four francs, while the masters desire to pay by the hour instead. There is much danger of a strike from this diversity of opinion. On the 1st of February last the carpenters of Tours addressed a memorial to their employers stating that as they were only paid 3½d. per hour, and, as they were often without work, their average earnings did not exceed 2s. 2½ per day. With the present high price of provisions, it was impossible to live on this sum, and

they urged therefore that their employers ought to consent to an increase of a penny an hour. The memorial further gave the masters six weeks for the consideration of this proposal. After this prolonged suspense, the increase has been refused, and a strike ensued. At Loches and Baulieu, in the same department, the masons have been more fortunate, as they obtained the augmentation they had requested.

THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT ACT.

On Wednesday afternoon, a conference of members of Parliament and the members of the Parliamentary Committee of Trades Congress was held at the Westminster Palace Hotel to discuss the question of a repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1871. The members of Parliament present were Mr. Mundella, Mr. Miller, Sir David Wedderburn, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Eustace Smith, Mr. Andrew Johnston, and Mr. Forester. On the part of the committee the following attended:—Mr. Geo. Howell, Mr. Alexander M'Donald, Mr. Peter Shorrocks, (Manchester), Mr. Guile, Mr. Owen, (Staffordshire), Mr. Kane, Mr. Plackett, and Mr. W. Allan. Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. Crompton, Mr. Frederick Harrison, Mr. Lloyd Jones, and Mr. W. Pickard were also present.

Mr. M'Donald was chosen as chairman, and he having opened the proceedings,

Mr. George Howell explained briefly the purpose of the conference. On behalf of the various trades unions which he and those with him represented, he drew attention to the injustice and hardship to which workmen were subject under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and urged that it should at once be repealed, with a view to their being relieved from the great unfairness which such legislation involved. It had been determined, he added, by the Trades Union Congress to introduce a Bill for this purpose, which Mr. Mundella would be asked to undertake, and which would be to this effect, viz., that the Act 34 and 35 Vic., chap. 33, entitled "An Act to amend the Criminal Law relating to violence, threats, and molestations" should be repealed, provided, first, that nothing in the Act for the repeal should affect any penalty, forfeiture, or punishment incurred, or any thing done or suffered before the passing of the Act, or any right or liability accrued before the new Act was passed, or any prosecution or proceeding arising out of such right or liability; and, secondly, that no person should be liable to any punishment for doing, or conspiring to do, any act, on the ground of such Act restrained, or tended to restrain, the free course of trade.

After some discussion of a conversational kind, Mr. Andrew Johnston promised to support the proposed Bill; and Mr. E. Smith gave a similar pledge.

Mr. Howell mentioned the intention of Mr. Vernon Harcourt to make a motion in the House on the 2nd May, respecting the question of conspiracy as applied to disputes, especially under the Master and Servants Act, and he expressed a strong hope that the whole subject would be thoroughly sifted, and a division obtained, unless Government gave some clear intimation of their views and intentions.

Mr. Mundella undertook the conduct of the proposed Bill, promising to do his very utmost to obtain a second reading at least this session; and after the consideration of one or two suggestions for furthering this object, the meeting terminated.

CO-OPERATIVE CONGRESS AT NEWCASTLE.

The Co-operative Congress held last week at Newcastle-on-Tyne, requires full consideration from the workmen of England. Our political agitators derive their value from the intelligent interest they indicate on the part of the masses of our people, in the welfare of the country. Those who labor to force on the legislature of the country, the improvement of old laws, or the framing of new ones, for the most part

do so because they wish to see the country improved, the happiness of the people increased, and their rights and liberties extended. Those who oppose this do so because they believe things are well enough as they are, and that to change any one law or custom can only have the effect of making matters worse. They are a race of political simpletons, with a sprinkling of something worse, whose eyes are always bent on the past—to whom the future shows nothing but glooms and shadows, amongst which they have not the courage to enter, and they, therefore, whilst admiring the past, cling to the present, and find pleasant exercise in abusing those who, heedless of their fears, drag them forward, to be saluted, when the happier height in advance is obtained, with accusations of demagoguism and all else that comes readiest to the tongues of those in whom party passions shut out all feelings of political gratitude.

Our trade unionists have set themselves a most important work, away from the political strife of contending parties. They aim at improving the condition of labor, and as their organizations increase and improve, they to a considerable extent succeed in this. The old fallacy which employers, and those who devote themselves to the promotion of their interests, have been trying to impress on the minds of workmen—namely, that all bargaining in regard to wages ought to be made between the master and the man without any kind of interference—has been utterly exploded. It has been proved to the satisfaction of every sensible worker, that joint bargains are better made than single bargains, and hence trades unionism has spread, and is still spreading far and wide, and better conditions of work and better wages have been secured everywhere as a consequence. If this was to be the end of combinations among workmen, it would be satisfactory in a certain sense. Lord Shaftesbury says, high wages should be regarded as a curse; but to those who regard them as a blessing, advancing wages will always be encouraged. The profits of industry, or rather a good price for the commodity called labor, flowing into the poor man's home, carries with it many blessings, and in spite of philanthropists and philosophers, those who understand the labor question, and who know something by practical experience of workmen's habits and requirements, will always encourage well-considered attempts to increase the incomes of the masses of our people, by raising the level of wages all through the country.

But when all has been done in this way that can be done, many social and industrial evils will remain. And it may be added that amongst these, the absolute separation of labor and capital, the divorce of the workman from his work, except as he is united by the tie of wages, will always be a danger. A labor class and an employing class, whose interests and position separate them, can never fuse into such an equality of citizenship as will guarantee the peace and safety of the commonwealth. When all that trade unionism can do has been done in the interest of the workman therefore, much will remain which nothing at present contemplated by trade societies can effect.

It is here that co-operation steps in. It is at this point we may say that the co-operator takes up his work, and strikes out with bolder aims, and higher objects than ever before attempted on behalf of the laboring community. It is the merest senselessness to suppose that there is any antagonism between trades unionism and co-operation. There is nothing in the principles on which the two movements rest, which should in any way lead to opposition. The trades organization is almost naturally the first, though by no means necessarily so. Its objects are simpler, as they refer to the price of labor and ordinary conditions of work, and only require organization and its discipline. The objects in view are easily understood. There is nothing complex or tentative in the work

to be done, and when the moment for movement is come, joint action is all that is needed. On the other hand, the man who enters the co-operative movement intelligently, has a work before him which requires great thoughtfulness, self-denial, and foresight. He has to disturb old relations in business, and settle newer and greatly improved methods of carrying on the work of production and distribution. The initiatory steps in this grand movement have, so far, been admirably taken. The work of distribution has been settled in a manner so accordant with equity that it is difficult to see how any improvement can be made. In this work large experiments have been successfully made. And these are now, by their natural and constant action, bringing into the hands of the working people sums of money as profit, sufficiently large to enable them to carry out important experiments in production as soon as any authoritative decision has been made as to the highest form productive co-operation can take.

It appears, however, from the discussion in the Congress at Newcastle, that there are considerable differences of opinion on this head. Manufacturing co-operation so far as it has gone, amounts only to the introduction of the joint stock principle amongst workmen, the doing by an aggregate of small sums subscribed by workmen, what hitherto has been carried out by larger sums subscribed by people who invest solely for profit's sake. In the new form, it is true, workmen derive an advantage so far as they are capitalists, however small their investments; but their labor is not considered as an element which gives them any additional claim to share in profits. Whatever advantage they derive reaches them from their capital; their labor gives them nothing beyond wages, and in so far as this is the case the plan is narrow and defective, and leaves the worker, as such, without any acknowledged share in that important increment called national profit.

The co-operative movement must go beyond this, and it is only the worker who can safely carry it in the higher direction. The thoughtful few will see the propriety of this, and will labor zealously to carry it out as an idea; but it is only the working man who, looking at his few pounds on the one side, and his skill and strength on the other, and recognizing the just claims of the one as well as of the other, can give universality and permanence to such an arrangement as shall always equitably include labor, and thus secure the future of the world from the poverty, hunger, and degradation which has hitherto been the lot of so many millions of its toilers.

Co-operation with the crowd is not yet so much a faith as it is an experience. Multitudes who are in it do not comprehend clearly what it means, nor see where it is leading to. They know that if they enter as members into a co-operative store they will get profit on their investment, and also on the amount of their consumption. They know, also, that if they invest the profit thus made in some co-operative workshop or factory, the chances are that they will get further profit on these; but they do not see—and large numbers of them do not care to see—that by considering the claims of their labor in conjunction with those of capital they can permanently place their condition as workers beyond those vicissitudes of the market, as well as beyond the control of those uncertain and sometimes disastrous speculations which periodically plunge them as workers into destitution and misery. At Newcastle this was the kind of productive co-operation the intelligence of the assembled delegates pointed at, and this is, no doubt, the destined goal towards which co-operation is moving. A percentage on capital, moderate in amount, but regulated according to the risk of the business in which it is invested; wages of the ordinary amount, and the remaining profits divided equitably between capital and labor. As far as possible, too, every worker should be a shareholder, so that all should feel interested in both characters as shareholder and worker.—*See Hive.*