

months the Department of Labour has begun a systematic wages inquiry which will deal with wages received by both men and women in all lines of industry. A suggestion has been made, following the appearance of the articles in the *COURIER*, that one or two women correspondents might be appointed to report to the *Labour Gazette* on conditions affecting labour among women and children in the chief industrial cities of the Dominion.

NATURALLY, some of the most interesting and useful communications have come from business girls. One business girl writes on behalf of herself and five other girls who depend on their own wage earnings: "I say 'us girls' because I am one of the many who have to board and who have to depend solely on themselves. Of course, you must not take from this that I find myself a hardly-used person. I can gratefully say that my circumstances in many ways are especially favoured. But I am thinking of the many, many others who have not the privileges I have and of whom I am hearing every day, girl friends of mine working in many capacities. I could write you pages of experiences of my friends, but it would be nothing new to you, the same old story of the things girls have to go through and the way they have to stint and manage, in order to live within their salaries. It seemed to me and my five girl companions who have read your articles with the greatest interest that the price of everything has gone up, but not salaries. As short a time as three years ago, \$10 for a stenographer was as far as her hopes ever went, and she could live very comfortably on that. Then, you know, the pace of dressing has increased so much. I suppose you will say that it is not necessary for the girls to keep up to the extreme of fashion, as some of them do in the down-town offices, and we agree with you. But a girl has to dress well, because one's appearance and 'style' are taken into account nearly as much as one's proficiency; especially this is true in the larger business office down-town. After \$5.50 is taken out of that salary, which includes board and a room and a light lunch in the city, there is not a whole lot left over for laundry, dress and sundry smaller items which, when counted, mount up. We do not take the word amusement into our finances at all, or at least very little. We often go out together for a walk, or car ride, or picnic, or matinee, which means, of course, car-fare, lunch, and 50 cents for a ticket is the limit."

"Another thing we have often talked about is this: Take the average boy with just the average education, and he starts to work some place, any place, he is always able to look higher, for pro-

motion from one place to another. Of course, it depends on himself whether he is ambitious and a good worker and whether he can be depended on. He can work up year after year as his abilities show him able and as vacancies occur. Then take a girl, except in a few rare cases, she gets so far and no farther. Once a stenographer always a stenographer. Once an office-girl always one. Years of experience and intimate acquaintance with the details of the business as such girls get do not seem to get them further along as would happen in a boy's case. A girl does not want to stay a



stenographer if she can do something better. She just gets so far in both salary and position and there she sticks."

MEMBERS of a woman's organization in Toronto during two recent labour difficulties interviewed a number of the girl employees on strike. The writer of the case of the working girl has been sent notes of these interviews. One is bound to admit that making due allowance for exaggeration, imagination, and misunderstanding on the part of the girl strikers, the evidence as a whole leaves one with an uneasy feeling of social wrong and danger.

The statement is made by one of the girls that when she asked a foreman for an increase in pay he told her to go and stand on the corner of Yonge and Queen Streets. Perhaps the girl told what was not true.

At the same time the writer remembers hearing a woman intimately associated with the girl wage-earners some years ago once repeat a similar remark as having been made by a foreman to a girl employee.

Another of the girl strikers said in an interview that one of the foremen was rough with the girls, sometimes going so far as to kick a girl employee.

These statements are repeated here with reluctance. But it is a question if one has a right to withhold material of this kind when it has been sent in along with other more usable material. The object has been to keep this series of articles on the Canadian girl wage-earner moderate and temperate in every particular. It is not believed that such conditions exist except in rare cases in this country. But if the girl wage-earner is left to look after herself, untrained and often inefficient as she has been shown to be, with pay barely enough for necessities, when living away from home lonely and uncared for, such conditions will be found more largely in Canada. We cannot let this happen. And it should be remembered that bringing in girl wage-earners from other countries will tend to lower conditions which already exist. The present is the best time for action.

THOSE who wish to follow up the question of women's position in business and industry as it is being discussed to-day will find important facts in Miss Josephine Goldmark's exhaustive volume, "Fatigue and Efficiency," published by the Russell Sage Foundation. The subject is being widely written of in newspapers. A pointed, readable discussion of the success of women as workers appears in Meredith Nicholson's novel, "A Hoosier Chronicle."

"Sylvia, there's a lot of books being written, and pieces in the magazines all the time, about women and what we have done or can't do. What do you suppose it is all leading up to?"

"That question is bigger than I am, Aunt Sally. But I think the conditions that have thrown women out into the world as wage-earners are forcing one thing—just one thing, that is more important now than any other—it's all summed up in the word efficiency."

"You mean that a woman has got to learn how to make her jelly jell? Is that your notion?"

"Exactly that. She must learn not to waste her
(Concluded on page 23.)

A MENNONITE BIRTHDAY PARTY IN SASKATCHEWAN



Bishop Peter Regier, Farmer and Preacher, had a Birthday Party Recently and Hence this picture. Nearly Twenty Years Ago, Without Funds, he Began as a Homesteader Near Rosthern, Sask. Now he Owns Over 1,500 acres, with Plenty of Good Stock and a comfortable Bank Account. The Mennonites do Well in the West. One of Them Shipped a Trainload of 27 cars of Wheat Last Fall. Photograph, Friesen, Rosthern.