

# Labor News From Coast to Coast

## Tabloid of International Labor News

### Austria

**Reciprocal Unemployment Support**—According to an agreement made between the Austrian Republic and the Swiss Federal State, each state assures to the other the same treatment of unemployed as would be accorded them in the state to which they owe native allegiance.

**Unemployment**—From June to October, 1923, unemployment in Austria showed a gradual decrease, but November, 1923, marked the beginning of a period of increase, 2,615 persons joining the ranks of the unemployed during that month. Inasmuch as the municipality of Vienna continued in its efforts to revive the building trades, that city showed a decrease, rather than an increase, in the number of idle workmen.

### Brazil

**Immigration Legislation**—As a result of the severe agricultural labor shortage throughout the northern states of Brazil, a bill is now pending before the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, providing for the establishment of European immigration colonies in the states from Bahia north. Free third-class passage aboard the steamers of the Lloyd Brasileiro S. S. Line from European ports to a port in Brazil will be afforded to prospective immigrants, as well as attractive guarantees of land, good housing and sanitary conditions.

### England

**Boilermakers' Strike**—After continuing for a year and causing an estimated loss to the country of about eight million dollars, the boilermakers' strike now shows signs of settlement.

**Trade Disputes Decrease**—Trade disputes involving stoppage of work showed a great decrease in December, 1923, as compared with the previous month.

**Unemployment—Liverpool**—For the first time in many months, unemployment in the Liverpool district, during December, 1923, decreased. The decline is said to be due to the great exodus from that part of England to the United States, and the increase in foreign and domestic trade.

### Germany

**Unemployment**—Sixty official Saxony employment bureaus report that in December, 1923, there were 273,000 unemployed persons in Saxony. In the City of Dresden, there were 58,000 idle on January 4, 1924.

**Wages Paid in Food**—A number of firms in the Dresden district are paying their workmen in foodstuffs instead of marks.

### Sweden

**Emigration**—Statistics on emigration from Sweden show that the emigration of last year was the largest in 20 years, the estimate being that 26,000 persons left Sweden during the year 1923.

**Unemployment**—The number of Sweden's unemployed dropped during the year 1923 from 45,000 at the beginning of January to 13,000 at the end of December. The cost of living index fell from 183 to 176.

### Canada

**Emigration**—An abatement in the movement of emigrants from the Maritime Provinces to the United States, as of the close of 1923, is reported by the Canadian Press, which also states that emigrants from those provinces, who moved to the United States a year or more ago, are beginning to return to their homeland.

### China

**Shipbuilding Activity**—With modern machinery, secured chiefly from the United States and Europe, and experienced and technical workmen from the United States and Great Britain, shipbuilding in Hong Kong is said to have been very active during the year 1923.

### Cuba

**Railroad Strike**—A general strike on the lines of the Cuba Railroad Company on December 19, 1923, virtually shut up all freight and passenger traffic between Santa Clara and the eastern portion of the island, until January 5, 1924, when settlement was effected.

### Czecho-Slovakia

**Unemployment**—Unemployment in Czecho-Slovakia has practically reached a standstill, but the indications are that an increase may be expected in the near future, especially in the iron and steel industries.

**Unemployment Subsidies**—During the early part of December, 1923, the Czecho-Slovak Government presented a bill to Parliament requesting a further sum of 140,000,000 crowns for unemployment subsidies for the remainder of the calendar year, 1923. The sum of 250,000,000 crowns, previously appropriated, had been exhausted by September 30, 1923.

### Germany

**Eight-Hour Day Preserved**—The principle of the eight-hour day, which has been the subject of vigorous attacks by industrialists in recent months, is preserved in the decree of December 21, 1923, promulgated by the Government under the "Enabling Act."

### Mexico

**Unemployment**—A general decrease in unemployment, on account of the resumption of mining operations and increased agricultural developments, is reported from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

### Spain

**Railway Labor Courts**—According to the Official Gazette, of December 24, 1923, a decree has been issued establishing courts for the settlement of questions that may arise between railway companies and their employees. An appeal lies from the decision of these courts to the Government, whose dictum is to be final.

## Labor Units Want Hydro Development

Moncton, N.B.—The regular semi-monthly meeting of the Moncton Central Amalgamated Labor Union was held in the Labor Temple last week. A. D. Goguen, president, was in the chair.

A letter was read from the Canadian Brotherhood of Railroad Employees, Eastern Star Division, No. 5, naming their delegates for 1924 as follows: P. L. Barnes, George E. Lowe, T. S. Bord, George Peters, Kenneth Gilmore.

The letter was received and the delegates seated. The committee on the Petitionnaire development reported as follows: To whom it may concern:

Whereas, the possibility of obtaining an abundance of electrical energy through the harnessing of the tides in the Petitcodiac and Memramcook rivers has received much attention recently and has been considered practical by parties competent to express opinions thereon;

And, whereas, in our opinion the development of a project such as this would mean a great deal to the economic development of the Maritime Provinces and be of much benefit to the whole population;

Therefore, resolved that we, the M. C. A. L. U., subject to the feasibility of the scheme, do heartily endorse the same and pledge it our support.

And, further, believing that the benefits to be derived from the development of a utility such as this, are properly the heritage of children still unborn, and in view of the experiences of other provinces with regard to the development of water powers, Ontario in particular, we strongly urge that the project be carried out under public ownership and supplied to the consumer at cost, in that way promoting the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest time.

(Signed) J. A. GODFREY, W. R. ROGERS, H. H. STUART.

The resolutions brought out a vigorous discussion in which C. H. Cameron, ex-Ald. L. MacKinnon, the members of the committee, Charles Rollins and others took part.

Mr. Cameron wanted to make sure that private parties would not get control of the big utility.

Mr. MacKinnon declared himself in full sympathy with public ownership. The people of Moncton had only themselves to blame that they had not had direct control of the dyke locally. They should have bought out the local power company when they had a chance to do so at cost plus 5 per cent interest. The New Brunswick government were on the right track developing water powers under public ownership and operation. Public ownership in Ontario had been vastly more beneficial to the public than has the privately owned plants in the United States.

The resolution was adopted unanimously and copies ordered sent to provincial leaders, Hon. C. W. Robinson and the N.B. Federation of Labor. W. R. Rogers, N. Savage and C. A. Dixon reported on proposed civic legislation. Report was received and adopted and referred to the incoming municipal committee to be taken up immediately with the City Council.

A recommendation to the N.B. Federations of Labor was adopted asking for a graduated system of certificates for stationary engineers, as obtains in some provinces, as at present New Brunswick has only one class of certificate, which entitles holder to operate anything from one horsepower to 1,000 h.p. It also called for a better system of boiler inspection. It was referred to J. A. Godfrey, vice-president of the N.B. F.L. to submit to that body at its meeting at Fredericton recently.

The delegates to the N.B. F.L. were also instructed to work in favor of having certificates for and inspection of plumbers and plumbers.

Election of officers for ensuing year resulted as follows, A. R. W.

Nickel and A. D. Walker and Linah M. Stewart acting as tellers. President, John A. Godfrey; Vice-president, Nels Savage; Recording Secretary, Charles A. Dixon; Financial Secretary, Eugene E. Sheehan; Municipal Committee: Eugene E. Sheehan, A. H. Goguen, P. L. Barnes, Nell Savage, W. R. Rogers, John I. Gratton.

Election of remaining three of municipal committees and of the other committees was postponed.

## Work to Open Up Very Soon

**Demand for Labor Will Commence Within a Few Weeks It is Expected**

Prince Rupert, B.C.—There is not much demand for labor in the district yet, but a general opening up of industry is expected within the next few weeks by the local branch of the Employment Service of Canada. Logging camps of the Massett Timber Co. on Graham Island are reopening and several men have been taken on lately. The Trestway and Grandy camps at Alvo Arm are about to commence for the season and the Prince Rupert Logging Co. at Surf Lake expects to open up about March 1st. Sawmills in the interior, which have been closed or operating on a reduced scale during the winter, will probably be resuming shortly.

If work actually commences on some of the many building projects projected for the city this year it will make the local situation very healthy.

As soon as the snow leaves, many mining properties around Stewart will increase the scope of their operations. This may also be said of the interior.

## Reduce Pay for Vancouver Laborers

Vancouver, B.C.—Laborers on civic relief work from now on will receive only 40 cents an hour, instead of 50 cents as heretofore, and in order that they may be able to make a weekly income sufficient for bare needs, the regulation regarding the limit of three days' work a week will be changed and the men allowed to work longer.

It also decided that relief work men shall labor on gangs separate from ordinary city workmen who receive the normal scale.

These decisions were reached by the city relief committee recently after Ald. Fred Rogers had complained that many of the men, given relief work, were incapable or unwilling to give the city value for the 50 cents an hour they have been paid.

Relief Officer Ireland stated that unemployment conditions in the city were still quite bad. The situation was not mended by the influx of men returning from California and the hundreds of immigrants coming from Europe. On Mr. Ireland's suggestion, relief work will continue for at least two weeks, when a further extension will be authorized if found necessary.

## Set Minimum Wage For Women Workers

**Board Arranges With Workers to Compile Cost-of-Living Budget**

Toronto, Ont.—That wages paid to experienced female workers in the printing, paper and book binding trades in Toronto have been found, in a number of cases, to run as low as \$7.00 a week, was one of the interesting pieces of evidence produced by Chairman W. MacMillan during his review of the situation in that industry. The Minimum Wage Board, called for the purpose of gathering additional information from employers and employees before definitely settling the minimum figure.

About 25 people were present, outside of members of the board and the press, and the employees were decidedly in the majority. In fact, all those who expressed opinions during the lively two-hour discussion declared themselves to be either workers in the industry affected or employees in other industries.

**Still Undesirable Conditions**

In opening the meeting Dr. MacMillan outlined the proposed order, providing for a minimum for experienced female workers of \$12.50, and for inexperienced workers of \$10.00 to increase at the end of six months to \$11.00, and at the end of the second period to \$12.50. The proposal is to follow the lines of similar minimum wage orders operating among other factory trades in the city. At the present time, it was stated, the women employed in printing offices in Toronto were comparatively well paid, a wage of \$16.00 or \$17.00 a week being quite common, but there were still undesirable conditions obtaining, where \$7.00 and \$8.00 a week was paid to experienced workers. Much time was given to a lively debate on the question of a living wage, and to each criticism of the board's

fixed minimum of \$12.50 the chairman patiently explained that the figure was the result of months of careful study, involving the collection of budgets and the investigation of boarding-house rates and accommodations.

**Scores \$12.50 Wage**

"Although I am a poor man, I would be pleased to give \$100 to anyone who can show on paper how a girl can live decently on \$12.50 a week," declared one old gentleman, who refused to give his name. One woman worker, who had been in the trade for twelve years, declared that the printing and binding industry was harder on the workers' health than in certain other industries, and therefore, allowance for this fact should be made in determining a minimum. It was finally agreed, on the invitation of Dr. MacMillan, that a group of female workers would compile a budget which they considered fair and reasonable and submit it to the board.

Less than 5 per cent. of the 150,000 women workers protected by the minimum wage law were organized, according to H. C. Foster, member of the board. During the two or three years of its existence the board had got an additional three to five million dollars in the pockets of the working girls of Ontario, and it had been proved, from various surveys taken, that wages in those few years had substantially improved, even in spite of a slightly downward trend, he said.

## Labor Statistics Improve Showing

**Less Illness This Year Than in February Last—More Strike Losses**

Ottawa.—Time loss due to industrial disputes reported to the Department of Labor in February was 161,568 working days, involving 11,518 employees in 13 separate disputes. In the previous month 156,678 working days were lost, involving 12,753 employees in 14 disputes. These figures mark a considerable increase over the same months a year ago.

Reports from the employment service of Canada show at the beginning of February, 1924, the percentage of unemployment among members of trade unions stood at 7.5 as compared with 7.2 per cent. at the beginning of January and 7.8 per cent. at the beginning of February, 1923.

## Apprentice Laws to Be Readjusted

**New Features Will Include Provision for Technical Training**

Forecasts of the adoption of several resolutions which will have a direct bearing on the building trades throughout the Province—including a distinct apprenticeship system and methods to alleviate unemployment—were indicated at the opening session of the twelfth annual convention of the Ontario Builders' and Supply Association. With more than 80 delegates, representing the contractors and supply men of practically every city and town in Ontario in attendance, the convention is announced as the most important in many years from a standpoint of present industrial conditions.

**Report on Apprenticeship**

Introduction of the apprenticeship question came through the report of J. M. Piggott of Hamilton, who was delegated by the Executive, in December last to make a careful study of the matter. Chief among the new features of the scheme is the provision made for the securing of technical training by youths during their term of service, a measure which will be incorporated in the articles. These it is stated, will be much less severe than those usually in force. A stated yearly wage will be paid by each contractor to his apprentices. Another unusual recommendation contained in the report is that, after two

years, service, apprentices of recognized ability will be considered as journeymen and paid accordingly. The apprenticeship term is three years.

In addition to Mr. Piggott, addresses were given by Controller Cameron, Ald. Miller and H. Macdonald, Secretary of the Labor Department of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. Messrs. Cameron and Miller dealt briefly with methods applicable for employment in municipalities in order to provide work, while Mr. Macdonald explained briefly the present Dominion sales tax regulations. Peppr McClarty of Sault Ste. Marie, president of the association occupied the chair.

## Make Suggestions For Securing Work

**Trades and Labor Association Also Discusses Pay to Casual Laborers**

Ottawa.—The action of the C. N. R. in paying certain kinds of casual labor the sum of 25 cents per hour as wages, was severely criticized again at the meeting of the Allied Trades and Labor Association by delegates, who expressed the opinion that Sir Henry Thornton would never be able to carry out his idea of creating a "Smiling Railroad," with such conditions existing. It was pointed out that much to the discredit of the Canadian railways, the New York Central Railway had paid its casual labor, i. e., snowshovelers, 29 cents per hour.

The question arose when Secretary Bob Mackie read a letter from Mr. Hungerford, vice-president of the C. N. R. in which he stated that the low wages was due to the surplus of such casual labor on the market, and that he did not believe it would have any effect on the wages of the permanent employees. After much discussion, a resolution was adopted on motion of Delegates W. T. McDowell, copies of which will be forwarded to the two Labor members in the federal parliament, and the Montreal, Winnipeg, and Toronto Trades and Labor Councils, asking that when the matter of the C. N. R. comes up in parliament at the next session, that the attention of the government be drawn to it.

The request of Mayor Watters that three delegates from the association be appointed to the unemployment conference to be held at the city hall on Thursday evening next, was complied with, Messrs. Capt. J. A. P. Haydon, J. R. Johnston and R. Mackie, being appointed.

Capt. Haydon gave a resume of the conference held in the G. W. V. A. board rooms on Monday evening last, which had led Mayor Watters to call the conference next week, and was hopeful it would help in some way to alleviate the unemployment conditions in the city.

He remarked that the mayor had suggested reviving the advisory unemployment committee of 1913, but

that it would not be much good if the board of control threw its recommendation in the waste paper basket as it had done before.

Some suggestions for providing employment were: completion of the civic baths; O.E.R. extensions; opening up Young street; creation of a public golf course; demolition of old buildings on Wellington; Cliff and Victoria streets by Dominion government; draining of Cave Creek; manufacture locally of necessary pipes for civic works.

On the report of the executive, the association will deputé two of its members to attend all meetings of the public school board and report proceedings back to the association. Secretary Mackie announced also

that the executive would endeavor shortly to start a series of monthly lectures and social evenings in the Pythian Hall, for the trades unionists and their friends in the city. March 21st will see the initial effort staged.

The executive went on record as not concurring with the proposed amendment by the board of control to clause 2B, Section 83 of the Methuens' Pension Act, claiming it would work hardship. Instead, the association would make the act applicable to all widows, who are resident in the province of Ontario at the time of the loss of their breadwinner, providing they have at least one child, without respect to period of residence in the province.

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