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EDMONTON FREE PRESS

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THE EDMONTON TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL

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ELMER E. ROPER, Editor

Phone 5595 Adams Building

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VOTE ON THE BY-LAWS MONDAY

On Monday next the burgesses of the city will be called upon to vote on money by-laws involving expenditures of approximately a million and a half dollars. There are seven different proposals to be voted upon, each calling for specified sums ranging from ten thousand to seven hundred thousand dollars.

The largest amount the ratepayers are being asked to endorse is to provide additions to the power plant as suggested by experts who have gone over the present equipment. It would seem that in marking their ballots on Monday the burgesses should ask themselves if they desire a continuance of the present power service or are they prepared to vote the money for a better one.

The next largest figure is that required for the extension of telephone equipment. This proposal was covered fully last week when it was shown that if the telephone system of the city is to keep step with the city's development the \$500,000 being asked for is a necessity. It would be folly to allow the city's most efficient utility to deteriorate.

\$175,000 is the sum requested for the erection of a new concrete grand stand at the exhibition grounds. A feature of this proposal is the fact that the Exhibition Association will assume all interest charges on the amount requested, making the loan practically self-supporting. On another page will be found part of a statement issued by Manager Stark which clearly shows the handicap the Edmonton exhibition suffers from the lack of space that would be supplied by the new grand stand. The Free Press is unqualifiedly in favor of this proposal.

The balance of the questions being submitted have to do with lesser amounts, and a perusal of the proposals will reveal the need of the improvements that are projected. It would presume upon the intelligence of Edmonton citizens to attempt to dwell on the need for improvement to our streets and sidewalks.

The Free Press and the Trades and Labor Council are supporting the by-laws as a whole. But whether it turns out to be favorable or unfavorable this paper would like to see a record vote polled on Monday. The best advice we could give the voters is that they should deal with each separate proposal to vote all the proposals down because he or she were opposed to one or two of the questions submitted. Again we urge the burgesses to decide upon each question on its merits in the light of the city's welfare, and, whether favorable or unfavorable to the proposals, show sufficient interest in the affairs of the community to GET OUT AND VOTE.

FREEDOM IN ORGANIZATION

Business Men's organizations of all kinds across the line, especially in the western states, are passing resolutions favoring the open shop, to which movement they are endeavoring to give an eagle scream by naming it the "American plan."

Why do employers favor the "open shop," which of course is camouflage for non-union shop? Is it because they wish to protect the "freedom" of the individual who does not want to belong to the union? They will tell you that that is their purpose and if you are simple enough you will believe it. But the contrary is true, nevertheless, for the reactionary employer's real dread of organization of his employees lies in his knowledge that freedom comes with organization. The organized workers have some voice in the determination of their working conditions and this your open shop employer does not wish to come to pass in his establishment. No medieval monarch ever believed more deeply in the divine right of kings than does the open shop employer in his absolute right to dictate the conditions under which his workpeople shall toil, and the remuneration which shall be meted out to them.

But the open shop or American plan, or whatever other high-sounding term by which the non-union shop may be designated, is doomed. Or in other words the day of absolutism in industry is passing. The workers in ever increasing multitudes are realizing that industrial freedom lies in organization. The first step toward democracy in industry is organization, and if our open-shop industrial bourgeois can keep their workers unorganized they can continue to exercise undisturbed sway in their industrial kingdoms.

IS A STRIKE FOR BETTER CONDITIONS EVER LOST?

We have it pointed out with some frequency the loss that Labor experiences in strikes, even when the unions are victorious. Some enterprising editors with a mathematical turn of mind even go to the length of figuring out the days and hours and total wages the workers have lost by their "vacation." They take great pains to make the toilers see how foolish it is to go on strike. The whole object being, of course, to subdue them and make them content with their lot. True it is that the workers suffer from strikes and industrial disturbances, but not only Labor is the loser. Harry Gosling, president of the 350,000 British Transport Workers, is one of the cautious labor leaders. He once said:

I know a very great authority who has worked out what it cost him to "win" a certain dispute. It cost in the first year after the "victory" something like 30 per cent in depreciation of output owing to discontent, and a number of years passed with a declining loss in each, till he got back to the normal. A "victory" for capital involving an unconditional return to work is always at bottom a defeat. Lord Devonport beat us at the docks in 1912. He won. But ask Lord Devonport today how much he won, and if he replies frankly, you will get a surprising answer. Year by year, ever since 1912, we have been "getting our own back." It had to be done, but nevertheless it has been a bad thing—for labor, for capital, for the community.

A seeming defeat of the workers in a strike for better conditions is very seldom without its redeeming features. And while the strikers suffer inconvenience and privation, a forced surrender never leaves them daunted or broken. On the contrary it leaves them possessed of a rankling sense of injury that is likely to break out at any favorable opportunity. As a matter of fact the workers are never defeated though they may sometimes be compelled to retreat at certain points in the line. Wise employers realize this and in many industries a stand-pat policy on the part of the employers is seldom met with. But all leading industries have at sometime experienced strikes, in some of which the workers have been immediately successful, in others of which they have been seemingly defeated. Regardless of the decision however, every strike made it harder for further disputes to materialize, and in the industries that are today noted for industrial peace, some of the most bitter Labor struggles of all time have taken place.

Social liberty was obtained by a struggle that involved in many cases suffering and privation, the justification of which was not always immediately apparent. Is it reasonable to expect that industrial freedom will be obtained in any other way?

HOW LONG?

If anything further were needed to convince the working people of Canada that money is in control in Ottawa, the budget should do the trick. It is without doubt a most brazen and deliberate scheme to make the toilers of the country, who have already borne the brunt, pay further for what the war has cost the country.

The budget tax proposals are cleverly calculated to keep the workers down. They are designated to make the poor poorer and the rich richer. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association could not have served itself better had the government given its executive carte

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(Third Floor)

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blanche to impose the kind of taxes that would make the common people pay. The people of Canada are now suffering almost to the point of desperation with the cost of living, and the new taxes will further add to their burdens. It is to be sincerely hoped that this is the last straw and that the budget will serve the purpose of arousing the voters of the country to a state of mind that will not permit them to tolerate any longer the conditions under which they are compelled at present to exist. Just as long as we are content to send only business and professional men to Ottawa, just so long will only business interests be considered there.

An optimist: One who plans for a picnic on the 24th of May.

Freedom and democracy are being prostituted when men are imprisoned for the expression of political ideas.

A secessionist union in the States advises machinists to get into an organization with a "kick" in it. A horse that is continually kicking over the traces is not doing very valuable work and the analogy between the refractory quadruped and the union that has nothing more to offer than a "kick" is striking to say the least.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLE

(Continued from page 2).

sage to be! If workpeople are to come to Oxford, and they are to be trained for the great task of lifting their class—which is no class but the nation—if they are to come to Oxford to be trained for this great task, then the study—as has already been pointed out—the study of history and economics is an essential part of that definite work. But what school of economics does Oxford accept as authority? Will her interpretation of history inspire a man to remain in his class, or will it imbue him with a desire to escape from his class, which is supposed to have no history or only one of menial service? The economics which emanate from Oxford are well-adapted to meet the requirements and stimulate the minds of those young gentlemen who frequent her colleges, and because they are reduced to a science of social conduct and industrial practice which has made them and keeps them comfortable. But you cannot expect the people to enthuse over a science which promises them no more than a life of precarious toil.

"We want from Oxford a new science of national and international economics—a science that will teach us the true relationship between production and consumption; that will teach us the true economic relationship in which men ought to stand to men and men to women—a science based, not on the acquisitiveness of the individual, but on social utility. Even as much do we want from her a new interpretation of history—not one that will continually remind us that we are on the edge of the abyss, but one that will inspire us; not the short and simple annals of the poor, but the history of the people. For although we are supposed to have no recorded history, without us all history was and is impossible."

As a result of the attitude of the labor men of England, a sabbon in the above quotation, the W.E.A. came into being.

Our next article will deal with its development.

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