

RECONSTRUCTION IN INDUSTRIAL LIFE

Representatives of Capital, Labor and Agriculture Speak at Social Welfare Congress

Reconstruction in industrial life, was the subject of addresses given by representatives of Capital, Labor and Agriculture, at the afternoon session of the Social Welfare Congress in Toronto on January 16th. The speakers were Mr. S. R. Parsons, ex-President of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association; Mr. Tom Moore, President of the Trades and Labor Congress, and Mr. W. C. Good, B.A., farmer.

Mr. Parsons, who was the first speaker, took the stand that industrial reconstruction must have for its working basis the closer relationship between employer and employee for the mutual benefit of both. But he said that before this could be accomplished, as a starting-off place for further progress, each must be willing to make certain concessions that would reconcile personal liberty to social advancement. He advocated joint committees composed of employees and employers by means of which problems affecting both could be discussed and adjusted.

The speaker took a firm stand for a high tariff wall in Canada. The farmer's cry of "Smash the tariff!" he declared, would, in his opinion, throw out of work one-half of the labor employed in the industries of Toronto. The country, he held, could never be expected to pay increased taxation with a decreasing revenue; but, he said, "I would certainly be in favor of some form of direct financial assistance to farmers in order to aid our agriculturists to become prosperous and contented." He believed that there was a great need for a more proportionate representation of the manufacturers, labor and agriculture in the legislatures of Canada.

Want Shortening of Working Day

Mr. Tom Moore referred to the fact that during the war a law had been passed making idleness a crime, and held that it was equally possible to supply work for all under peace conditions. One of the remedies for unemployment put forward by Mr. Moore was the shortening of the working day. In many cases manufacturers in Canada still maintained a 10-hour working day, while progressive industries had found that a man was not capable of giving his best to his work if driven over the eight hours. In Switzerland, he pointed out, a law had been enacted whereby no employer might lay off a workman for lack of work unless the hours of work had been reduced to each workman beyond a certain point. If the reduction in working hours did not exceed 10 per cent., then the workman bore a portion of the loss, but if reduced less than that the employer received compensation from federal and local governments.

If an eight-hour working day were established in Canada, the conditions thus created would absorb 10 per cent. of the present unemployment. The prosperity of the country was based upon production, not upon the capacity of workmen to work 10 hours.

What the workers wanted, he said, was: Shorter hours, free education for all, free text books, direct legislation by the people and not by means of orders-in-council, and protection for mothers that would take them from the factory to the home and give them back their children, now being taken care of by charity and in institutions.

Mr. W. C. Good, B.A., spoke for greater co-operation between all classes of society, and challenged Mr. Moore to send some of his unemployed out to his farm, where they were badly needed. The farmer, he pointed out, combined in the individual the land-owner, the capitalist and the laborer. He looked forward to the day when every person might become a land-owner through the expropriation of unearned increment.

Democracy, he said, was to be found in its purest state on the farm, where the employer and the employee labored side by side. Here social injustices did not exist, and social injustices, he contended, were the cause of anarchy, unrest and Bolshevism. He gave for his solution of industrial problems: Public ownership of public utilities, development of voluntary co-operation, equality for all and special privileges for none.

THE RIGHTS OF CAPITAL

That capital was entitled to its just reward was a statement made by Rev. Father Minehan, of St. Vincent de Paul's Catholic Church, before a large gathering at the People's Forum, St. George's Hall, Toronto, on January 19th, and which was opposed strenuously.

Father Minehan held that money was but one phase of capital, and that in its wider meaning capital stood for the proceeds of past labor stored up for use in further industrial development. He held that the man who first made for himself a bow and arrows was a capitalist, and that the food which he procured by means of these weapons was his legitimate right, or a capitalistic right. It was on this point that he met his greatest opposition, his opponents holding that until the primitive man made a number of bows and arrows and rented them out he was not a capitalist.

In spite of protests that capital had no rights, the speaker stoutly maintained that capital was the energy which animated industry, and that capital had the right to what it had put into industry, and certain remuneration besides, in order that more capital might be created for the animation of further industry.

HYDRO COMMISSION WANTS REBATE OF DUTY

Within the last few days Sir Adam Beck, chairman of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, and other officials, have been actively pressing their case for rebate of duty paid on equipment during the past three or four years on several of the Dominion ministers. Thus far no reply has been made, but not the slightest encouragement has been given the Hydro officials.

The duties which the Hydro has paid, and which it is now asking a refund of, date back to the commencement of the Chippawa Canal power development scheme. As far as possible the commission bought its equipment in Canada. There was much machinery, however, that could only be obtained in the United States. Because of the war the prices were higher, and at the 42½ per cent. duty charge the commission has paid approximately \$2,000,000 into the federal treasury. In addition to the machinery bought for use on the Chippawa scheme, equipment was bought for Eugenia Falls, Trent Canal and other development works. Some of it was also for use on the Ontario Power Company extension, which is being put in for temporary use.

TRADE FIGURES SHOW DECREASE

Trade figures for the nine months of the fiscal year, or up to December 31st, show that the total of Canadian imports and exports is \$379,405,183 less than it was after a similar period in 1917. For the nine months of the fiscal year the total of Canadian trade was \$1,676,006,825, while in 1917 it amounted to \$2,055,412,011. For the month of December alone the decrease amounted to \$28,551,923, the 1917 total being \$212,521,710, and the 1918 being \$183,969,787.

The figures show that the falling off in trade is due largely to a decrease in the export of domestic merchandise. The decrease in domestic merchandise exported for the nine months, when compared with a similar period last year, totals over \$310,000,000. At the end of December, 1917, the total exports of this class of goods was \$1,257,684,900, while this year it was \$947,257,356. Import figures show a decline of \$55,576,947 during the nine months as compared with 1917.

A great decrease in the export of domestic agricultural products during the fiscal year is largely accountable for the lower trade figures. During the nine-month period which closed on December 31st of the last year this class of goods had been exported to the value of \$228,149,278. For 1917 for the same period the total was \$475,338,003. Exports of domestic manufactured articles show a decrease of \$84,008,824, the figures for 1917 being \$522,963,430 and for 1918 \$438,954,606.