

THE PROGRESSIVE LABOR LEGISLATION

OF

The Mowat Government.

Mr. Alonzo W. Wright, Secretary of the Order of Knights of Labor, Philadelphia (formerly of Toronto), says: "While there is still a good deal of legislation which we labor cranks think should be enacted, I am free to say that **Ontario has not much to learn from any State in the Union in this respect, and is immeasurably in advance of most of them.**"

The following is a brief synopsis of some of the most important labor measures passed by the Mowat Government in recent years. Its careful perusal by any workman will prove Mr. Wright's statement, as above given, to be true.

An Act to facilitate the adjustment of disputes between Masters and Workmen: to enable masters and workmen to form a Board to settle differences between them. The amending Act of 1890 authorizes this Board to "establish a rate of wages or price of labor or workmanship at which the workmen shall in future be paid." Experience having demonstrated the necessity, the Government introduced during last session (1894) "An Act respecting Councils of Conciliation and of Arbitration for settling industrial disputes," the provisions of which apply to any business employing not less than ten persons. It provides for two boards—a Conciliation Board of local composition, and a Provincial Arbitration Board, and the machinery of these may be set in motion by either party on the other declining or neglecting to act.

An Act to amend The Trades Arbitration Act, repeals section 28 of the original Act and substitutes the following: "The masters and workmen making the agreement or memorandum mentioned in section 3 of this Act may by such memorandum or agreement authorize the said Board to establish a rate of wages or price of labor or workmanship at which the workman shall in future be paid."

An Act respecting Councils of Conciliation and of Arbitration for Settling Industrial Disputes (1894)—The provisions of this law apply to any person, or body of persons employing not less than ten persons. Provision is made for the creation of local Conciliation Boards as well as a permanent Arbitration Board for the whole Province; and it is provided that either party concerned in a trade dispute may invoke the services of the Arbitration Board, the expenses and payment of the members of the Arbitration Board are provided from public funds.

An Act respecting Liens of Mechanics and others provides for a priority of claim for wages for work done or labor performed by mechanics and laborers on buildings, etc., good for thirty days after the last day's labor was performed. By an Act of 1890 the provisions of this Act as to legal procedure were simplified, costs limited, and summary enforcement of liens provided for. Again in 1893, "An Act to further facilitate the enforcement of the just rights of Wage-earners and Sub-contractors" was enacted. The Act further provides that any device by any owner or contractor which shall be adopted in order to defeat the priority of wage-earners for their wages under the several Acts relating to mechanic's liens shall, as respects such wage-earners, be null and void.

An Act to simplify the Procedure for Enforcing Mechanics' Liens, provides that besides the legal machinery already in existence, without issuing a writ of summons or taking any other preliminary proceedings, the plaintiff may file a statement of claim in the office of a master or official referee having jurisdiction in the county wherein the lands in question are situate. One certificate of the master shall have the same effect as a judgment of court, and the fees payable, shall be as