

LABOR ADVOCATE

A WEEKLY LABOR REFORMER

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Mr. J. H. Sanderson and Capt. W. J. Clarke are authorized to take subscriptions for the Labor Advocate in this city and neighborhood.

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TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, MAY 27, 1901.

CLARKE WALLACE AS A LABOR REFORMER.

There is a movement on foot to capture the workmen's vote in West York for Mr. Clarke Wallace, the Tory candidate. A strong point is being made by his supporters out of his lack of place on the statute book the Combines Act, whereby trusts and combinations among manufacturers and other producers with the object of preventing free competition and keeping up prices are declared to be illegal. This, it is claimed, is a measure clearly in the interest of the working classes and apart from party considerations sufficient to establish a claim to the labor vote.

We regard all anti-trust legislation as a mistake. No doubt Mr. Clarke Wallace sincerely believes that his Combines Act is a step in a right direction, and considers it possible and

the evils which always and everywhere flow from irrepressible power, the Government, while assuring combinations of capitalists a legal standing and recognizing their right to organize and for the purpose of securing uniformity in prices, should, whenever it becomes necessary to protect the public or the wage earners against extortion, step in and regulate prices and wages. The gradual extension of Government authority would in time bring about the nationalization of all productive enterprises.

Government control and not suppression is the true solution of the trust difficulty. Mr. Clarke Wallace's act is conceived on the old lines of political economy and might have been regarded as a good radical measure and in the interests of genuine Labor Reform twenty years since. But it is not in accord with the most enlightened and progressive thought on the social question to day. It is in fact a step backwards, and without wishing in the least to disparage the author's good intentions we are at a loss to see how its passage entitles him to the gratitude or the support of the workmen's voters.

It is the small capitalist who is hit hardest by the combines, not the workman. And there is really no reason why the laboring class should particularly interest themselves in a futile attempt to prevent the small fry of capitalism being swallowed by the big fish.

THE BABES AND SUCKLINGS.

We have received from Messrs. I. Suckling & Sons of this city a publication entitled "Canadian National and Patriotic Songs," edited and arranged by Theo. Martens, and "dedicated to the children of Canada." Most of the pieces are characterized by the usual patriotic rant and fustian in which extravagant laudation of monarchy and British institutions alternates with expressions of bombastic defiance to our neighbors and outsiders generally. Those who, for the promotion of party

slavery. The average workman is not a creature of sentiment. He is not by his feelings and emotions rather than by his intellect, and is always ready to sacrifice his interests to his convictions. Cunning politicians, spiteful scribbles and platform fakirs are for the most part without an ounce of sentiment or of honesty in their position—trade upon this amiable weakness, and by inventing with grand effect sublime attributes, and wreathing a loss of sanctity about institutions which are really unjust and vile and despicable, they have managed to create a false and wholly unreasonable and reasoning public opinion on such questions.

The movement to instil into the minds of hidden the wrong notions and perverted sentimentality which has its outcome in the rule of the privileged few and the subservience of the mass in every country, ought not to be acquiesced in by Labor Reformers without protest.

THE SPRINGHILL DISASTER.

The terrible explosion at the Spring Hill coal mines in Nova Scotia, on the 22nd inst, which 119 lives were lost, is an awful illustration of the risks and dangers run by the laboring class in the routine of daily duty. The fact that the mine was carefully inspected a few days before the accident, by a government inspector, and also by a committee of workmen who corroborated his report that everything was in good order and perfectly safe, while exonerating any individual from blame, indicates something very defective in the present methods of inspection. If our rulers took as much care of workmen's lives as they do of property interests, such calamities would be much rarer than they unfortunately are. The disaster, by robbing many families of their bread winners, has plunged a number of homes in poverty, and public subscriptions are being called for in aid of the sufferers. In any well ordered society those dependent upon men who fell victims to such a catastrophe would not be left to depend upon public charity. The state is the widow and orphan of the soldier who falls in battle. It is a disgrace to our sham civilization that, so far as the government is concerned, the survivors of the soldier of the industrial army who dies at his post are left to starve.

CHARITY AND CAPITALISM.

It is not probable that the furnishing of cheap non-union labor to unfair employers was one of the objects specified in the charter of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society. But that this is the practical result of the methods adopted by some of its officials is shown by the following extract from the account given in last Saturday's Globe of the distress prevalent in the city: "A married couple came from Montreal a few weeks ago. The man, a comfortable home, his wife said, to come here; and there was nothing for him to do when he arrived. There was some trouble at Gurney's with the men—he could have had work at that foundry, but he would not accept it, owing to the fact that the milliners were on strike. The couple had no money, but they were well provided with wearing apparel, and to support themselves they pawned nearly everything they possessed. Then they applied to the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society for aid; but Secretary Bailie has a system of his own of dealing with cases of that kind. 'A man,' said he, 'who can get work and won't work on a merely sentimental ground must not come to me for assistance.' The wife wept, and made a piteous appeal, so Mr. Bailie relented to this extent—that he would give the woman something if she promised to use her influence with her husband to get him to take the work offered him at Gurney's. She did so, and that is how the man comes to be in employment to-day."

The list of members of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society no doubt includes many who belong to labor organizations and others who have "sentimental" objections to the encouragement of staking working men at the expense of unionists. They ought to insist that a person who has spent

himself so entirely and so long in the service of the State should be rewarded from office. Moreover, that it is not the only ground of complaint against this class, who have shown no self-consciousness, except in the discharge of their duties. Poor people have often to wait for hours at a time during the absence of their officers. It is high time that an investigation into the manner in which reward is distributed through the medium of the P. B. S. was held. In the meantime Labor Reformers who support this organization, either by paying membership dues or attending the concerts and other entertainments given in aid of its funds, ought to realize the fact that by so doing they are building up an institution which is being managed in a spirit of bitter antagonism to their principles.

SHORTER HOURS IN EUROPE.

It is encouraging to note what strides the movement for the reduction of the hours of labor is making on the Continent of Europe. Everywhere the more intelligent element among the working classes is looking toward the shortening of the working day as the first step towards an effective solution of the labor problem and a temporary means of bettering their condition. In France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Spain, Portugal and Italy, simultaneous movements on a great scale are going forward with a view of establishing an eight-hour day. The general character of the movement is the best guarantee of its success. Hitherto the reply of the capitalists of any country, where an isolated demand for reduced working time is made, has been that to grant shorter hours would be impossible in the face of competition with other countries where the system of long hours is in force. The "protection" theory has proved signally inoperative in securing the boon of greater leisure to the masses of those countries where it is in vogue, as, notwithstanding all supposed advantages, the export of their manufactures over imported goods of foreign competition is always available as a pretext for keeping up the long hour work day. But a combined and simultaneous movement among the working class in all countries renders such an objection futile. It is only in this way that the bugbear of foreign competition, which is so often served to deter working men from insisting on greater leisure, can be effectively met.

SITTING ON THE HEELERS.

It is encouraging to note that there is one important labor organization which possesses sufficient intelligence to see that labor has nothing to be gained from the result of the present political campaign, and boldness enough to denounce the attempt made by both parties to pose as friends of the laboring class. At a meeting of the Knights of Labor, of London, Oct., a resolution was unanimously adopted, to the effect that they desire it to be emphatically understood that no person or persons representing themselves as workmen have any authority to speak for the order on any political platform and denouncing those who as workmen, and more especially as Knights of Labor, take any prominent part in the contest. "as we believe the issues are mislaid, and that the questions of money and land monopoly and usury and a false wage system, are the real factors in the distress now overspreading all countries, whether under a Free Trade or Protective policy." This is sound Labor Reform principle and common sense. The tariff is not an appreciable factor in social conditions, and the partisans who pretend that either a continuance of the N. P. or any kind of reciprocity or tariff readjustment will be of any benefit to the workers as a class, are knowingly and willfully trying to mislead public opinion and close the eyes of workmen to the real remedies for distress. Free Trade with direct taxation on land values would do something, though not so much as the Single Tax. Reformers expect in this direction. B. Free

Trade is one of the issues of the day, and the adoption of a Free Trade policy will not be a recompense would not be a least degree advanced by the result of the party led by Sir Richard Wright.

It is high time that all Labor Reformers at down here and here, the class of workmen's politicians, are always busy at election time, endeavoring to use their position as members of labor bodies to make capital-seducing partisans and place-hunters.

THE ELECTIONS.

Though the next issue of the Labor Advocate the election for the Dominion Parliament will have been decided. The issues between the (Tory and the Liberal parties have no bearing whatever upon the really important questions which Labor Reformers are interested so which ever way it goes we do not regard the result as an altogether practical consequence. Whether Sir John or Sir Richard is Premier, monopoly in one form or other will still rule supreme and labor will be robbed of the greater part of its earnings. Probably the best thing that workmen could do—if they only would do it—to forward their cause would be to go to the polls and drop in spoiled ballots with the names of both candidates scored out, as a protest against the fraudulent and meaningless nature of the whole business. If they don't see their way to this course of action the next best thing is to vote for whoever they can't stand the best man, irrespective of party.

"A MAN who can get work and won't work on a merely sentimental ground must not come to me for assistance," said Secretary Bailie, of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, in refusing aid to the family of a man who would not take the place of a striker. It doesn't seem to have occurred to Mr. Bailie, that but for the "sentimental" considerations of which he speaks so lightly the I. P. B. S. and kindred societies would have no existence. But the feeling which prevents men securing a personal advantage by an action injurious to their fellows is far higher than mere sentiment—it is principle—a word which probably has no meaning to Secretary Bailie.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MY BROTHERS' KEEPERS.

Editor Labor Advocate: My brothers, you are aware that every one of you has to earn his living by the sweat of his brow, that he who does not or cannot work lives by the use of your labor. The tramp and millionaire do not find their dinner growing on the branches of the lamp-post, nor their clothing from the higher regions of the air, and they do not live in the bowels of the earth. The two parties just mentioned compute the twin atrocities of modern times: those who do not work, and those who live on the interests of humanity that this phase of society be wiped out of existence—protected femininity throughout the land. His complement (including every variety of landlordism, legal parasitism, and lying holding swindlers, etc.) sustains on the weakness and blindness of the food and wealth producers of the land. Workingmen, more or less, are members of our nation, K. of I. assemblies, benevolent societies and religious denominations, and here and there a little knowledge of their social and political condition, and their attitude toward their oppressors; but who among the thousands will be credited with an interest in the rich man's table, and suffrage to represent them in the government of this great country. The majority of the nation consists of our wives and children, not forgetting our aged mothers and fathers. The burden of their support is on our shoulders, and we are expected to have that burden increased still more by allowing the much-made of millions at the head of government, and their practices to rule over our necks. I say increased, for no one will deny that we do not already groan at the load we carry; but some are deaf as a blind, and many are indifferent, these latter have animal instincts merely from the rich man's table, and find shelter in hovels that decency discarded long ago, but whose inhabitants are a more generous people to the owners and of due to the occupants. Still all workers, whether dirty or clean