

THE AIM OF THE GOVERNMENT.

The aim of the Government was to induce the Senate to throw out the Bill altogether, and then lay the blame for its defeat on the members of the Upper Chamber. But the scheme did not work. The Senate passed the Bill in due course, notwithstanding the persistent efforts of the Premier's colleague to encompass its destruction.

The Act received the Royal assent on the 29th of June, 1897, and became the law of the land. The Government were thenceforth in duty bound to put it in operation so as to give Canadian workmen that measure of protection to which they were justly entitled. But Sir Wilfrid Laurier and his colleagues never intended to do anything of the kind. The Act has been continuously violated for the past three years, and there has not been a single conviction secured!

Although appeal after appeal has been made to the Government from the wage-earners in different parts of the country asking for the enforcement of the law, these appeals have fallen upon deaf ears. In several places Alien Labour Law officers were appointed, but their appointment was only a sham, for they were not given instructions to enforce the law. There was only one prosecution begun in the District of Toronto, and when the case was ready for trial the Government would not allow it to be proceeded with!

It was nearly twelve months after the Act became law before the officer was appointed at Toronto. On the 12th of May, 1898, Mr. David A. Carey, President of the Dominion Trades Congress, wired to the House of Commons from Toronto as follows: "Flagrant infringement of the Act still continues. Does Government not intend to protect us? Mr. W. B. McMurrich has gone to Muskoka and will not return until next week." A dispute had arisen between employers and men, which unfortunately resulted in a strike or lockout, and the places of some of the operatives were promptly filled by men brought from the United States. The Commissioner, Mr. McMurrich, referred to in Mr. Carey's telegram, had in the meantime gone to Muskoka for a holiday! And this is the way Canadian workmen were being "Protected!"

Many times during the session of Parliament in 1898 the Government were urged to enforce the law, but to no avail. On the 1st of June, 1898, replying to a question, Sir Wilfrid Laurier admitted that no officer had been appointed at Hamilton, but he said he believed that "after a few months there will be no cause for such appointment." Yet in May, 1899, nearly a year after, when the Minister of Justice was appealed to by Mayor J. V. Teetzel, of Hamilton, to enforce the law, he replied as follows:

"Ottawa, May 27th, 1899.

"J. V. Teetzel, Esq.,

"Mayor, Hamilton, Ont.:

"The Attorney-General is not at liberty to give his assent to the prosecution for the infraction of the Alien Labour Law, to which you refer, an understanding having been reached last summer by the Commissioners that the Alien Labour Law, until the negotiations were concluded, should remain in abeyance in Canada in respect to persons from the United States, and in the United States in respect to persons coming from Canada. Until it is shown that this understanding is not observed by the United States officers, no action can be taken here.

(Signed) DAVID MILLS.

THE GRAND TRUNK STRIKE.

When the trackmen on the Grand Trunk Railway, who were receiving less than one dollar a day, quit work, in the Spring of 1899, in an endeavour to procure higher wages, gangs of foreigners were imported to fill their places. The Government were notified, but they did absolutely nothing. The Premier denied that the places of the strikers were being filled from the United States by the Grand Trunk authorities. He repeated the excuse offered in the letter quoted above from the Hon. David Mills, Minister of Justice, that it was agreed between the Canadian and United States authorities that the practice of enforcing the law should be, as far as possible, discontinued on both sides of the line, pending an arrangement by the Commission. On the day after the Premier made this declaration, Mr. John Ross Robertson, M.P., read in the House of Commons an interview with Inspector DeBarry at Buffalo, in which that officer emphatically declared that the United States Alien Labour Law had not been suspended, and would not be suspended, but was still being enforced. In fact, he said that the labour people of Buffalo were then preparing a Bill for submission to Congress making the law even more stringent than it was.

So it will be seen that while the law was being rigidly enforced against Canadians on the American side of the line, it was completely ignored on the Canadian side. The assertion of Sir Wilfrid Laurier that the law was not to be enforced was simply laughed at—as it deserved to be—by the United States Labour Commissioners.

The Toronto Globe of August 17, 1899, contains a report of an inquest on the body of an Italian labourer who was killed while working on the Grand Trunk Railway track at Mimico, in which the following statement is made: "The foreman of the jury asked the witness, an Italian, if he had been hired in the States to come here to work as a trackman. The man said he had, and admitted also that he and other Italians, among whom was the deceased, received passes to come to Toronto."