

Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press

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A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER.

FULL ENDORSATION

If any answer is required to critics, particularly those within, that the International trade union movement as outlined by the American Federation of Labor is too conservative in its policy or fails to make the best use of its possibilities, such critics received a full measure of condemning reply in the re-election of the entire old guard at the Montreal Convention. With such carping criticism that is all too prevalent, we are sometimes apt to give way to thought that there is something wrong with the movement, with the responsibility for same to be placed upon the leaders. A continued use of the hammer is distasteful to the ear, and we may become prepared to allow our better self-judgment to be temporarily cast aside.

For this reason alone we readily welcome the annual assembly, whether it be the A. F. of L. convention or our own Trades Congress, to have again in use the clearing house to prove the continued progress and solidarity of the trade union movement and the discrediting of those who would seek to destroy. The two weeks' convention of the A. F. of L. allows for a careful analysis of the work undertaken during the intervening twelve months' period, and a presentation of the stewardship of the selected officers. History repeats itself at these gatherings, and never in more decisive manner than at the convention just closed, when the whole of the old officers were re-elected. One contest thrown in for good measure to prove conclusively that the individuals were fully trusted in their respective positions, and the collective standard for the movement was that approved by the enrolled millions.

The incident whereby, on a matter of policy, the president was not sustained was one hailed with delight by the anti-trade unionist and retrogressive forces. It was an incident seized as showing a diversity of opinion and conjured up as the forerunner to the defeat of the progressive forces. Shortlived was the period of exultation as the endorsement of the officers and their methods came in due time and in such unanimous manner as to leave no doubts in the minds of the progressives, and carrying dismay to the enemies, whether they were in the nature of card carriers or those directly opposed to workers' rights.

A division of forces on the incident mentioned, that of railroad policy, lent a certain shade of doubt as to future movement, but there could be no mistaken notion with the nomination of Samuel Gompers for the presidency, a position he has held with one year's exception since 1886. Endorsation of the candidate was fittingly expressed, and the railway vote was proven only as an incident, when the representative of one of the organizations who had advocated the winning cause closed his laudatory remarks with the following: "We have always been a staunch admirer of the excellent qualifications of the grand old veteran, we are with him, we love him and God bless him."

The grand rally in the endorsement of the directors for the past twelve months was a message to the world of the solidarity of the International Trade Union movement and faith in the constitutional policies pursued. It was not the individualism of Gompers being elected that was the lesson given forth, but the voice to friend and foe that the carefully carved-out path of progress is to be followed. It has also its lesson to the Dominion workers that the faithful ally of the A. F. of L., the Trades and Labor Congress, has had its policy endorsed, which is part and parcel of the International Trade Union movement, to which it neither adds nor detracts when the craft organization is being considered.

POLES APART

THERE were two outstanding individuals at the election for the A. F. of L. president, the one was the veteran leader, Sam Gompers, representative of the old guard, the second individual was James A. Duncanson of Seattle, representing himself. This is a criterion of the support the A. F. of L. trade unionist method finds favor with its continuing success, as against the despised Seattle method of strong-arm plan with the unfavorable results that go with same.

"You cannot govern men without a large admixture of mumbo-jumbo."—Hilare Belloc. In New York a steamship load of fruit was taken out to sea and thrown overboard because it could not be sold at the price demanded. This should serve as an excellent lesson on the subject of how to reduce the cost of living. "After considering the Budget very carefully, some people are veering round to the theory that we didn't win the war, but just bought it."—Punch. "History teaches us that social ends must be met by social organization."—Westcott. "Superstition will persist so long as it is useful."—Robert Arch. "Shopwalker: Yes, sir. Would you mind going to the toy department downstairs?"—Royal.

Across the Atlantic.

What Our Brothers in the Motherland Are Doing.

SCOTTISH BANK STAFFS HAVE VOTED TO STRIKE.

The Scottish bank staffs have voted by a majority of 80 per cent. in favor of striking for better conditions.

GENERAL WORKERS WILL SEEK RETURN OF MORE MEMBERS.

The conference of the National Union of General Workers recently decided to increase the number of its parliamentary candidates for the next general election. The general council is to fix the number at such a figure as the finances would permit.

In the discussion J. R. Clynes said the longer the present Government remained in power the more money would be required to fight the election.

Last time they limited their number to eight. They had four men in the House of Commons who were responsible to the union as its officials. They might be able to support more than eight; he hoped they would do so.

Mr. Lock (London) said there was plenty of good material in the organization. The men they had in Parliament had increased the prestige of the union. Before the election of the Labor party in the House of Commons many trade union organizers had to crawl on their bellies to get interviews with members. They were even afraid to wear their union badges.

WHY PRICES ARE HIGH.

One of the greatest causes of high prices is taxation, according to W. A. Appleton, secretary of the British General Federation of Trade Unions, speaking recently at the annual meeting of the National Alliance of Employers and Employees.

The Civil Service of this country now cost \$60 million, as against \$1 million prior to the war. No nation could afford such a sum as that. Every tax imposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer tended to raise prices.

BRITISH TRAM CRISIS OVER.

Renewed efforts to avert a national tramway strike were made in London recently, when the Joint Industrial Council for the industry met under the chairmanship of Sir David Shackleton.

The Council confirmed the decision of the Northern, Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales District Councils.

In regard to the Scottish, Yorkshire and South-Western districts, the dispute has been referred to the District Councils for classification along the lines adopted by the Lancashire area, which will mean awards ranging from 7s. to 8s.

On the question of classification the right of appeal is still in existence and a change of classification subsequently has been allowed to both sides, final ratification being made by the National Council.

In the London area the rate of 2s. was adopted.

This carries with it the effect that the long-deferred settlement of the London tramway will be completed on the 29th.

All settlements will operate as from March 29.

Our Mail Bag

To the Editor, Canadian Labor Press.

Sir—I read your paper with a great deal of interest, and it is my desire to see efficient work adequately paid for. One of the great weaknesses of Labor at present is that it demands equal pay for the poor workman and the good workman, and the ones who do the paying have much to say about it. Most of us are willing to pay to have a job well done, but at present there is such a tendency to just draw the pay and let the employer suffer, that to me the situation is appalling, and it seems as if this bad state of affairs were the direct result of the labor unions. What advantage is there to a man to try to excel in his work if the poor workman who stands next to him reaps just as much from the job as he does? It seems to me that Labor has destroyed efficient work.

You must not think from the above that I am down on the laborer. I have every sympathy for him, but I am only worried myself, but I do wish to see Justice triumphant over everything. And I know that Capital has been most cruel and unjust in the past, but that is no reason why we should shackle it now to the extent of destruction, for, having destroyed it, what are we going to do to replace it? I think the best thing to do is to carry on such an educational campaign that both Labor and Capital will see that their interests are one and the same.

Your paper does a good work in presenting the best side of Labor to its readers, but could it not also help the laborer to see that his interest does not lie in enmity to his employer who has capital, but in doing the very best work he can so that he will be worthy of receiving the highest reward thereof? Capital is slowly beginning to see that its interest lies parallel with the interest of Labor, and if only the two can be drawn together to work in harmony we shall have a blessed state of affairs.

In your issue of the 8th instant you publish a summary of the Gompers side of the debate held at Carnegie Hall, but you leave out that of Allen, which you say was such that it appealed to more deliberate thought. Where do you report Gompers as appealing to the emotions. Gompers says that the workers should have the right to stop work if they are not satisfied with their contract? Have one class of men the right to break their contract, even if it is only implied, where the other may not do so? Does not Capital many times keep on manufacturing when they are losing money, in order that they may not throw an army out of employment? Would it be right that they should close up entirely whenever a slack period came?

I know of case after case where the employer would make much more money if only he would shut down his factory at certain periods of the year, but he keeps open so that he may take care of his men. This makes his overhead expenses very much higher than they would be if he would shut down for three months. Does Labor take these matters into consideration? Does Labor stop to think where we are going when we destroy the present status of life? Gompers says that

"the right of sovereign free men in the Republic of the United States can only be maintained when men shall have the right to stop work." That is all right. If a man wants to stop work, let him, but do not let him force those others to stop work who have no desire to do so. Where is freedom when men who are contented and happy must stop work at the behest of those labor agitators who go through the country trying to make men dissatisfied so that they will stop work? While I say "if a man wants to stop work, let him," I mean only that he should stop after a fair warning is given that he will stop work, and that that stopping of work shall not be forced upon him, quite against his wish or will. Let him live up to his side of the contract, and give fair warning. There is nothing to keep him at the work if he does not want to stay once he has given the necessary notice. In the case of day-workers, I believe they can stop at any time, but those engaged for longer should give fair notice and then quit, or quit without their pay if they quit before the term for which they are engaged is up. This seems only fair.

I wish that you could have seen your way free to print some of Allen's arguments, if only for educational purposes. I will do the laborer good to hear and understand the points in favor of Capital. Perhaps you intend to give the summary of Allen's arguments in this week's issue of your paper. I hope so, so that we may have them before us while Gompers' points are in our mind.

Yours truly, KATHLEEN E. HILLARY, 70 Victoria street, Toronto.

The above letter contains so many of the arguments advanced by the opponents of Labor that it fits in and proper we should answer them.

In the first paragraph the writer states that Labor demands equal pay for the poor workman and the good workman. This is absolutely contrary to fact. Labor has never yet fixed a maximum wage. What Labor does is to make a minimum wage adequate to keep body and soul together. This wage is based on the cost of living, the length of time required to learn a trade, and the various qualifications. However, once a minimum wage is established Labor has never said to an employer, "You cannot or must not give to John Jones a higher rate of wages because he is a more efficient workman. Oh, no! But the employers have never said to John Jones I will pay you so much more than the minimum because you are a better workman. There may be isolated cases where employers pay some men a higher rate than the minimum, but they are so few as to be lost sight of in the aggregate. Labor organizations stand for efficiency. In many of the older trade unions technical schools have been established so that the members may acquire all the knowledge possible about his particular trade or calling. To make efficient work is but another of the employers' arguments to discredit the trade union movement.

Those in the Labor movement who would destroy Capital are very few in number. Labor the world over knows the necessity of capital in the machinery of today, and Labor realizes further that Labor and Capital must co-operate if we are to

progress and if the work of reconstruction must continue. However, when we say Labor must co-operate we do not mean that Labor must submit to Capital. There must be fairness in our industrial house if progress is to be our lot. Capital is manning for action, and while it is a regrettable state of affairs that in Canada where a few months ago the captains of industry, representing Capital, and the Labor leaders representing Labor, sat in joint conference none of the recommendations approved of at that conference has been carried out. Labor is ready to do its share and it asks Capital to do likewise.

We do not try to hide the weakness of Labor nor do we endeavor to color our news. We want to give the facts, the whole facts, and nothing but the facts. Sometimes it is not an easy task for an editor of a Labor paper, particularly, to acquire all the facts about this question or that question, but the editor of the Canadian Labor Press has at all times endeavored to give to our readers the facts as we receive them. In publishing the report of the Gompers-Alen debate we did not publish Allen's speech as the arguments advanced in favor of the Kansas "Don't Strike" Law are well known to everyone. A copy of the law may be obtained on application. Gompers' arguments are not laws but God given rights to free men to quit work when and how they desire. The Kansas law takes from the worker the right to quit work. Labor will fight for this right as long as it has breath. The arguments the writer advances about fair notice and contracts do not enter into the discussion of the workers' right to strike. Contracts, as every one knows, are entered into between the Labor unions on one hand and the employers on the other. Never has a Labor union, with the consent of its organization, broken its contract. All contracts must be respected by local unions. That is the policy of every international union. It is probably true that some employers keep their factories in operation when they might be financially better off had they closed down. If the workers produce too much at one season of the year and will be faced with unemployment at another season, then the sooner that organization, or rather the sooner the workers in that particular industry, get an equal division of the work, the sooner the terrors of unemployment will have passed away.

We have endeavored to answer all the arguments advanced by the writer, and if there is any problem not clear in the mind of our readers we would be glad to give them our view.—Editor.

Don't linger at the bottom of the ladder; either go up or down. Lots of people say things they ought to be ashamed even to think.

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Service Button Workers. Notes Of Particular Interest To Ex-Service Trade Unionists.

SAYS WAR CRIMINALS WILL BE PUNISHED.

Premier Lloyd George stated in the House of Commons this week that the punishment of war criminals had not been abandoned. Such a course, he added, would be a grave dereliction of duty by the Government.

GRATUITIES TO BE PAID DEPENDENTS OF FALLEN HEROES.

The report of the pensions committee brought down in the House last week recommended that war gratuities be paid to the dependents of those who died on service. At the close of the war the Government awarded to the returned man, and to his wife and other dependents, a war service gratuity in accordance with his length of service. The widows and dependents of those who have fallen did not share in this gratuity, save to the extent that the widows of deceased soldiers were paid a bonus or gratuity equivalent to two months' pension.

The committee recommends that the dependents of the dead soldier who during his service were in receipt of separation allowance are entitled to that share of the war service gratuity which they would have received had he survived. As it would be unfair to calculate this gratuity upon the deceased soldier's length of service, it is recommended that each one entitled should be paid the same gratuity as would have been received had the dead soldier served for three years. There will be deducted from the gratuities payable to widows what they have already received in the shape of a pension bonus. It is estimated that the cost to the country of these additional gratuities will be nearly \$2,000,000.

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