

WAGES FALL FAR MORE THAN PRICES

Where Workers Are Organized Fare Better in Struggle.

The relative lowness with which retail food prices are declining, as compared with the fairly rapid fall in the wholesale prices and the slashing of wages, particularly in industries where the workers have no union organizations to protect them, indicates that so far as food is an item in the family budget the "deflation" process is working out to the disadvantage of the laboring classes.

Statistics issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, show that retail food prices had fallen off only 2 1-2 per cent in November, as compared with October, although the wholesale price figures, issued earlier in the week, had shown a considerably greater decline, and farm products had fallen more yet.

Wages Fell Most.

Wages, however, have probably fallen more than anything else, on the whole. In the automobile industry, largely unorganized, the number of men employed during November was reduced 11.2 per cent, but the wages declined 31.2 per cent. The reduction in wages, according to the figures of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, has been from about \$17 to \$12 weekly, a loss of \$5 per employee. The relief afforded by a decline of 2 1-2 per cent. in the food budget, assuming that food constituted one-third the budget at the \$17 rate, would amount to about \$2 cents. Assuming that all other items in the family budget were similarly reduced, which does not follow—some items having risen—the reduction in the size of the budget would be only about 84 cents. In other words, the reduction in wages is eight times as great as the reduction in living costs.

Reductions of 20 to 25 per cent. have been commonly reported in many industries of late, but in organized industries reductions have seldom exceeded 10 per cent. Food prices show reductions in the price of pork chops and rice of 12 per cent. each; corn meal and chickens, 9 per cent. each; navy beans, 8 per cent.; sugar, 7 per cent.; flour, 6 per cent.; canned tomatoes, 6 per cent.; each; round steak, ham and oranges, 5 per cent. each, and smaller declines in other commodities. Eggs, however, increased 7 per cent. and there were other products that advanced.

Decrease of 1 Per Cent.

Since November, 1919, there has been for the country as a whole a decrease of 1 per cent. in retail food costs, the bureau announces.

The deflation process is making its most evident mark in the price of farm products, with clothing next in line, according to the bureau.

Since November, 1919, farm products as a whole are 21 per cent. lower, with cloth and clothing next, showing a decline of 25 per cent. Foodstuffs have declined about 11 per cent., including meat, poultry, and eggs, and grain exchange and other commodities for the rapid vanishing of values in their products. The reduction in the clothing industry has been brought about by the refusal or inability of the public, after an orgy of profligating by clothing merchants, to pay exorbitant prices for "fashionable" goods, and has been due to a widely accepted opinion. Declines in foodstuffs have been due in part to pressure brought upon the farmer, and in part to the refusal of banks to finance speculative ventures in sugar and other commodities of which large quantities were available but supplies of which were being artificially restricted in order to export large profits.

Some Increases Shown.

Increases, however, are shown, as compared with last November, in the other groups of commodities. Metals and metal products have advanced 3.65 per cent., much larger increases have been recorded in building materials, and house furnishings, goods and fuel and lighting materials have advanced 4.4 per cent. The statistics indicate that merchants and dealers generally have been able to protect themselves thus far from losses in the deflation process by throwing their loads upon the producers.

As compared with October of this year, building materials showed a considerable recession, dropping 12 1-2 per cent. Farm products dropped 3 1-4 per cent.; cloth and clothing 3 1-2 per cent.; fuel and lighting materials, 3 1-2 per cent., and metals and metal products 1 1-2 per cent. For all commodities November prices at wholesale showed a decline of 8 per cent. from October and of 24 per cent. from the high mark of May.

FOREWARNED.

An old dandy minister announced that he had introduced an automatic collection basket, which would be passed around by the deacons of his church. "It is so arranged," he explained, "that if you drop a quart or half bottle of oil, it falls noiselessly on a red plush cushion; if you drop in a nickel, it will ring a bell; and if you drop a dollar, it will be heard by the deacons; but if you fail to fall a button, my brethren, it will fish off a pistol."—Pittsburg Press.

It is impossible, in an average large industry, for the employer to keep in intimate personal contact with every one of his employees. —Tom Moore.

TOM MOORE EXPLAINS HIS VIEWS ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Reduce the Hours of Work and Keep Full Staff at Work—Charity Destroys the Independence of Those Who Receive it.

Tom Moore, president of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, who delivered his first address in Renfrew in the Temperance Hall Tuesday night, devoted the most of the time to a discussion of the topic of unemployment insurance, which has provided a theme for considerable editorial criticism in the daily press all over Canada. Mr. Moore claims that his views have been misrepresented and those who heard him Tuesday night after reading the reports of and comments upon his speeches in the daily papers are likely to agree that his complaint is justified, says the Renfrew Mercury.

Mr. Moore makes it clear that he realizes that the proposition is a big problem. He does not, however, propose a solution, as some of his newspaper critics have concluded, by which a man could abstain from labor and claim wages during his idleness. He asserts that the fundamental principle of such an enactment would be the elimination of non-employment. Men would be kept at work instead of being reduced to involuntary suffering or having their independence and self-respect destroyed by the doing of charity.

Referring to the present scarcity of employment, Mr. Moore, who recently saw the bread line in Toronto, men shivering while they waited for a ticket to procure a meal, declared that shoe factories are being closed down because it is said that there are too many shoes. Yet the life workers go shoeless, because the wages have been stopped and the right to labor denied them. Workers are optimistic, always hoping for better times; otherwise there would be a revolution. Men who have risked their lives in the war and who came back believing in the promise that the world would be better for the sacrifices they had made were denied even food and shelter, for there were hundreds of such cases in Canada today.

It has been said that there are more small savings accounts in the banks today than there were before. In 1917 the Government at Ottawa had issued a statement to the effect that every wage-earner was entitled to enough to live on and to save something for old age. Is it right that they should be asked to use their savings while still able to work and then face again the horror of a poverty stricken old age?

We have been told repeatedly that old age pensions and unemployment insurance, as not noted here in a country in which there are so many opportunities as in Canada, but this problem has to do with the worker who is to suffer from unemployment will feel the sting and injustice of it. The old methods of handling it have been proved failures. Money will be handed out in charity doles to destitute and the independence of those who receive it. Increasing the hours of labor in the factories and reducing wages in proportion will not relieve the situation.

Mr. Moore suggested that a more logical plan would be to reduce the hours of labor and keep all the force at work. Municipalities can dig new sewers and engage in other public works. The Provincial Government can do so with the aid of the roads. It has already been suggested to not men at work clearing the land half a mile on each side of the R. & O. Railway line, but not only keep men at work but the wood cut can be shipped east to relieve the fuel situation.

The Dominion Government is beginning to realize its responsibility in this matter. It riots occur the Government has the power to preserve order and Mr. Moore does not blame the authorities for withholding the dignity of the state from the unemployed. He suggests that the Government should also use its power to prevent it. When the Government cannot provide work for a man then the latter should be preserved from want just as he is under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

Unemployment Insurance Fund.

With regard to raising a fund for the payment of unemployment insurance Mr. Moore's idea is to have the employer pay a tax just as he does in the case of the workmen's compensation, this to be supplemented by grants from the Dominion and Provincial Governments. There should be an allowance made for under employment as well. A man not allowed full time should receive at least 75 per cent. of his normal wages. Mr. Moore admits that the problem is a difficult one to work out in detail but maintains that Canada is rich enough to afford a living to its citizens. But this cannot be done so long as there are conflicting forces. Capital is thoroughly organized, the workers partially so. What is to be the position in the future?

It is no use for employers to say to their workers that they shall not organize or to discriminate against union labor. It is not right for organized workers to use their power unfairly. He does not believe that labor on a whole has done that. There are, it is true, extremists among them, but there are extremists among the employers, but the latter have not been advertised as having the others. There must be co-operation and confidence between the employer and the men. What virtue is there in urging the men to produce more when the right to produce is denied them? If there was more discussion between the

two parties there would be less friction and suspicion.

The Eight Hour Day.

The employers claimed that the eight-hour day was impracticable on account of the production required to repair the wastage of war. Yet all the countries that have suffered most in the conflict, France, Belgium, Italy and Britain, had adopted the shorter day and have recovered. They are flooding the English market with German goods and some of these are finding their way to Canada. Yet we who have the most up-to-date machinery, the finest type of men, employers or workers, are told we must work longer hours.

Labor's Achievements and Aims.

For years Labor insisted that the school age be raised to 16 years and that has been done. It urged the necessity of free text books. It pressed for and secured laws to protect children. It secured pensions for widowed mothers.

Labor is asking now for unemployment insurance and old age pensions, for laws to protect women in industry and for the protection of the unborn child. The proposed Maternity Act will prohibit the employment of a woman six weeks before or after the birth of her child and will provide a fund to help her if she needs it. Labor also insists upon one day's rest in seven for every worker for no man can toil seven days a week and have a broad conception of life or a true idea of his duty as a citizen.

"Let no man," concluded Mr. Moore, "join a labor union merely to settle some local grievance. Our object is to solve our personal problems and to devote part of our time to the good of others. Let us seek to correct the impression that unionism is a fester of trouble and to prove that it is a social force to which any man should be proud to belong."

MANY CLAIMS OF U. S. RAILWAY WORKERS WILL NEVER BE HEARD.

The action of John Barton Payne, while Director-General of Railroads, in dissolving the labor adjustment boards operating among railroad employees, as characterized by Labor, the organ of the railroad brotherhoods, as "highly technical and illogical." One board, representing operating employees, is dissolved as of February 15, 1920, and the others as of January 16, 1920. The action is taken, Labor charges, on representations made by the Association of Railway Executives. As a result, it is said, many claims submitted by employees will never be disposed of.

Labor charges that when the boards were made up, the Government paid representatives of the railroads, though the roads themselves were supposed to pay them. On complaint against this discrimination, it is said, the workers' representatives were also paid by the Government. Other instances of alleged discrimination against the employees are cited. Officials of the railroad administration lately, it is alleged, have in every instance weighed their influence with the demands of their railroads.

PREFERRED OLD DOBBIN.

Farmer Hawbuck regarded the automobile one of his best friends and arrived in with great curiosity. "What's that thing stuck on the side?"

"That's a spare tire in case one of the wheels goes wrong," said the farmer. "I drove horses for over 50 years and I never carried a spare leg for 'em yet."

JIMMIE KNEW.

A teacher was instructing a class in English and called on a small boy named Jimmy Brown.

"James," she said, "write on the board, 'Richard can ride the mule if he wants to.'"

"Now," continued the teacher when Jimmy had finished writing, "can you find a better form for that sentence?"

"Yes, ma'am, I think I can," was the prompt answer. "Richard can ride the mule if the mule wants him to."—Boys' Life.

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CHRISTIE AND HALFORD TO REPRESENT CANADA

Governing Body of International Labor Office to Meet Soon.

The Government has appointed Mr. Loring Christie, legal adviser of the Department of External Affairs, to represent the Dominion Government at the meeting of the governing body of the International Labor Organization, which takes place in Geneva on Jan. 11. This body was created by the Treaty of Peace and forms part of the League of Nations.

The Minister of Labor is Canada's representative on the governing body, but, owing to the pressure of other business, Senator Robertson will be unable to attend. Mr. Christie has been in attendance at the meeting of the assembly of the League of Nations and it will therefore be only necessary for him to remain in Geneva a week or two longer, in order to attend the meeting of the governing body.

It will be remembered that the governing body of the International Labor Organization consists of 24 members, 12 representing different Governments and the remaining 12 being equally divided between employers and employees. Mr. P. M. Draper is the member designated to represent labor from Canada, but he will not attend the meeting this year. He will be represented by H. J. Halford, of Hamilton, Ontario, president of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

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INDUSTRIAL AUTOCRACY MENACE TO CIVILIZATION.

The benevolent motives pleaded by the great steel makers of America in their determination to prevent the organization of their hundreds of thousands of working men are once more placed in a withering light," says the New York World in its editorial comment on revelations by the building trust probe.

"When manufacturers undertake to dictate the particular kind of labor that purchasers of their products shall employ they have but one step to take before limiting builders and owners as to their use and occupancy of their properties. Aside from the intolerable tyranny of this situation as respects capital, labor and housing in New York, the attitude of the steel makers comprehends everything charged against them last year at the time of the strike and since substantiated by the report of the interchurch committee.

"Thus the existence of an industrial autocracy which defines and becomes a menace to great populations far removed from the thundering mills and squalid camps of the ported labor. At great cost it suppresses everything charged against them last year at the time of the strike and since substantiated by the report of the interchurch committee.

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