

Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press

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A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER.

TRADE WITH RUSSIA.

ELSEWHERE in this issue may be found the terms of the recent trade agreement entered into between the Soviet Russian Government and the British Government. We do not desire at this time to comment on its terms, reserving our criticisms until the full text of the agreement reaches this office. However, no one will dispute the fact that trade with Russia will relieve some of the unemployment in Great Britain and throughout the British Empire. Canadian Labor knows all about Bolshevism. It condemns it for all time, but we are of the opinion that the quickest and surest way of destroying that form of government is by allowing Russia to trade with the outside world. Canadian Labor is not alone in this belief, for the Rt. Hon. Newton W. Rowell, ex-president of the Canadian Privy Council, in his address in reply to the speech from the Throne in the House of Commons, recently, had this to say of trade with Russia:

"I believe that nothing will more quickly bring the Russian people to an appreciation of the benefits of sound, constitutional, democratic government than free communication with the other nations of the world. In this respect I am hopeful that the trade agreement between the British and Russian Governments will be ratified."

The British Government is the first power of any consequence to conclude a trade agreement with Soviet Russia. One of the large industrial capitalists of the United States was negotiating a private agreement with the Soviet Administration, but little has been heard of this transaction for some considerable time.

Everyone is desirous that the Russian situation should be cleared up in some manner. Rt. Hon. N. W. Rowell, speaking on the League of Nations recently, stated quite frankly that the Assembly of the League of Nations felt that "the least said and the freer we leave Russia to work out her own destiny and settle her own problem as to her own form of government, the more likely we were to promote the peace of the world."

Mr. Rowell, speaking of the possibilities of Russia, said:

"Everyone recognizes that the Russian situation must be cleared up in some way before Europe can return to normal conditions. One hundred and seventy-five millions of people in Russia have been producing great quantities of foodstuffs and raw materials for the consumption of the nations of the world. That production has largely ceased, and until it is restored, the other nations will want for food and raw materials. On the other hand, Russia has been a great purchaser of the world's manufactured articles. She is no longer a purchaser, and until she becomes a purchaser again there must be tens of thousands of workmen out of employment, who, in the past, were engaged in the manufacture of goods for Russian consumption. The world is greatly interested in clearing up the Russian situation. Everyone at Geneva recognized that the situation could only be cleared up by the Russian people themselves, and that the less outside interference there was with Russia the more speedily she would settle her own problems."

Just what position Canada occupies in regard to trade relations with Russia is hard to determine. Sir George Foster, Minister of Trade and Commerce, replying to questions in the House of Commons a day or so ago, gave little encouragement to those in Canada who desire to trade with Russia. He did say that there was no embargo on exports to Russia, but he did not give to the House and to the people of Canada any assurance that the Canadian Government would encourage trade relations with Russia. The British Government has given this assurance to the people of Great Britain, and we are sure that the Canadian Department of Trade and Commerce should carefully survey the situation and immediately open up trade relationship with Russia. We are not convinced that the opening up of trade relations with Russia means a recognition of the Soviet form of government. We have stated on many occasions, in arguing for a lifting of the blockade, that the quickest way of clearing up the Russian situation was by trading with Russia and by allowing the Russian people to see what true democracy means.

At the Hamilton Convention of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, held in September, 1919, that great army of workers unanimously endorsed the lifting of the blockade on Russia. At the Windsor Convention the workers of this country reiterated their previous declaration in regard to Russia. We have heard of no action on the part of the Canadian Government to meet Labor's desires. Canada's nationhood is declared by those who participated on behalf of the Canadian Government in the drafting of the Peace Treaty. Having this in mind it was expected that the Canadian Government would have taken some steps to have the blockade lifted on Russia. However, so far as the British Government is concerned, under the provisions of the agreement entered into with the Soviet Government, the blockade now ceases to exist. This



POLITICS AND PEOPLE THROUGH THE TELESCOPE OF LABOR

By J. A. P. Haydon.

During the past week the Hon. J. D. Reid, Minister of Railways and Canals, presented to Parliament the annual report of the Canadian National Railways. The report is not an encouraging one. The deficit has increased during the past year and the Minister of Railways gives little hope for a better showing, financially, for the ensuing year. Dr. Reid again intimated that the wages of the employees of the National Railways would be materially reduced in the near future and further there would be a readjustment of working hours. Much has been said and written about the great deficit of our National Railways. Dr. Reid, in presenting the report of the National Railways to Parliament, had this to say of wages:

"Rate increases have been given from time to time in an effort to meet increased cost of operation under the McAdoo and United States Labor Board awards, and under which the average wage per employe of the Canadian National System is now \$1,550 as compared with \$700 before the war. These figures justify immediate discussion between employes and employers."

This rate of wages (\$1,550 per annum) is considered too high and the Minister of Railways and Canals gives the railway workers of Canada advance notice that efforts will be made to reduce this level when he said:

"The management expect a re-adjustment in the price of materials, also in wage schedules and working conditions, which should have a substantial effect in reduction of operating costs."

A reorganization of the Board of Directors will soon be made and the Minister of Railways made the announcement that the employes will be given representation thereon. This policy was previously announced by Sir Robert L. Borden, when he was Prime Minister, and reiterated by the present leader of the Government.

Concluding his statement the Minister of Railways and Canals said: "The solution of the problem is one which will require joint action by the management and employes. Not only as employes, as operators of the road, but as citizens of Canada, their interests are identical, and I feel sure that

if they, the management and employes, meet and take up the whole railway problem they can deal with it in such a way as to preserve the good relations which have so far existed between them."

The report the Minister of Railways and Canals made showed the net deficit is \$69,593,441, as against \$48,242,595 in 1919. This deficit is made up as follows: operating deficit, Canadian Northern, \$16,858,579; Canadian Government, \$19,449,876; Grand Trunk Pacific, \$10,134,512; fixed charges, Canadian Northern, \$24,155,999; Grand Trunk Pacific, \$9,332,776; total, \$70,331,734. There is a Canadian National income credit showing in the detailed statement which reduces this sum to the one mentioned above, viz. \$69,593,441.

The management explain the increased loss of \$20,000,000 chiefly by increased expenditures in pay rolls and fuel. It is apparent that much work was performed on deferred maintenance during the past year. The minister's statement in this regard is as follows:

"The management emphasize the fact that maintenance deferred during the war made it absolutely necessary to, as far as possible, overtake this work at increased cost during 1920 to protect the property. They also found it necessary to improve to a large extent terminal facilities and main lines if they were to be in the care of the traffic satisfactorily to the public and be in a position to compete with other lines operating throughout the country."

Previous to the statements of Hon. Dr. Reid on the Canadian National Railways, Mr. F. S. Cahill, Pontiac, asked if the Government intended to produce to the House certain correspondence between the officials of the Canadian National Railways and the Hon. Mr. Arthur Meighen both replied to the question. The replies indicate that the Board of Directors are supreme in the management of the National Railways. The Prime Minister said:

"The Board of Directors of the National Railways operate the system just as the board of directors of any other railway company that is not owned by the Government. The Government of the country is the owner of the stock of the road. But if any matter connected with operation is, by means of the production of correspondence,

to be brought before this Parliament for review, that means direct political control of the road, and that we are determined to avoid."

The statement of the Prime Minister is worthy of note when one recalls the "non-partisan" order of the President of the Canadian National Railways. Speaking of this order in the House of Commons, the Hon. Mr. Meighen, the Speech from the Throne, Mr. F. J. Pellerin, Mataje, said:

"The order is absolutely unfair to the railway employes. These men were compelled by the Government to become its employees when it took over the different railways; therefore it is through no fault of their own if they are now in the employ of the Government or of the Canadian National Railways. I fail to see why they should be disfranchised by the Government or its creatures—and Mr. Hanna and other officials of the National Railways are the Government's own creatures."

While the statement concerning the National Railways was perhaps the most important announcement during the past week, the House of Commons discussed some interesting subjects.

From the agrarian corner came a request that work on the Hudson Bay Railway be continued. The Minister of Railways and Canals stated that work on this road was not abandoned, as some of the misstatements appear to be. He also stated that the work was delayed until the financial conditions of the country would warrant its resumption. Hon. Dr. Reid stated that 310 miles of the road had been completed and 90 miles were yet to be constructed. "It would be useless to continue this work," said the Minister of Railways and Canals, "until we are able to complete elevators and wharves at Port Nelson and to build steamships to run from the terminal port to Liverpool. The House adopted a resolution to the effect that work be resumed on the Hudson Bay Railway as soon as the finances of Canada will permit."

When the Government introduced a resolution asking that the House go into Committee of Supply a very lively debate ensued. Hon. W. Mackenzie King, the leader of the Official Opposition, took strenuous objection to the procedure and stated that no supply should be voted until the Auditor-General's report was tabled. The debate lasted practically all afternoon on Tuesday in which the "front-benchers" of both parties

took part, including the Rt. Hon. Arthur Meighen, Sir George E. Foster, Sir Henry Drayton, Hon. Chas. Murphy, Hon. W. S. Fielding and Mr. J. P. Sinclair.

Another lively flurry occurred on Friday when the leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister for an explanation of the statements made in the House to questions concerning the resignation of Sir Herbert Ames. The resignation of Sir Herbert Ames was stated at Ottawa on February 14, 1920, and witnessed by two members of the Government. The Prime Minister had stated in the House in answer to questions, that he had no personal knowledge of such a resignation. In reply to the questions of the leader of the Opposition on Friday the Prime Minister again stated that he had no knowledge of the resignation until a few days ago and the previous answers were absolutely correct.

The House has been considering Supply during the past week and many items were passed. Trade relations having been established between Great Britain and Russia, some members desired to know the position of Canada in this important question. Sir George Foster stated that "a particular step has been taken of late to promote trade with Russia. The situation as regards Russia and Canada is simply this: that any Russian subject has a perfect right to come to Canada to make purchases and provide for payment to the Canadian bank since the armistice there has been no embargo on trade relations between the two countries. The treaty between Great Britain and the Soviet authorities has been concluded entirely irrespective of the self-governing dominions."

In answer to questions, the House was informed that only 11 individuals in Canada paid income tax on incomes of \$200,000 and over last year.

Hon. J. D. Reid, Minister of Railways and Canals, in the House stated, that "the solicitor representing the Government has recommended instructions to bring before the Board of Arbitrators the matter of the striking Grand Trunk employes of 1916." This question deals with the superannuation of these men.

Ottawa, March 19, 1921.

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will have a far-reaching effect in establishing peace in that great producing country which since 1914 has been rent asunder by wars and revolutions.

The International Association of Machinists, one of the largest organizations affiliated to the American Federation of Labor and the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, is at the present time negotiating with the Soviet Administration in an endeavor to secure orders for materials manufactured by its members.

Like the Rt. Hon. N. W. Rowell, we are of the opinion that "nothing will more quickly bring the Russian people to an appreciation of the benefits of sound constitutional democratic government than free communication with the other nations of the world."

NO REVOLUTIONARY DOCTRINES.

BIG-GEN. Griesbach, et al, who frequently refers to Federal Union No. 66 as I.W.W. and O.B.U., should read carefully the platform of principles of the Associated Federal Employes. There is nothing revolutionary about it. It has a platform to which every trade union in this country can well subscribe. It follows:

- 1-Whitley Councils. 2-Classification:—(a) Under the Whitley Council plan, to devise a fair, simple and workable classification of positions in the public service; and (b) to provide a scale of salaries and wages commensurate with services rendered, with a minimum wage based upon actual living costs, not upon theory. 3-Reorganization of the Canadian Public Service, under the Whitley Council plan, with the view of avoiding unnecessary labor turnover, while eliminating (a) duplication of work, (b) overmanning, (c) inefficient methods. 4-Adequate Superannuation, to be administered under the Whitley Council plan. 5-Trial Boards under the Whitley Council plan. 6-Adequate representation in Parliament.

Loose statements concerning the Labor Movement, such as made by Gen. Griesbach and other politicians, are too frequently made in the Canadian House of Commons and the various Legislative Assemblies. We would suggest to these politicians that they carefully analyze the above platform.

The Associated Federal Employes of Ottawa are chartered by the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and we venture to say that its entire programme if enacted tomorrow by the various Governments of Canada would not retard the progress of Canada, but would be of great assistance to the toiling masses who are ever struggling for a better standard of life.

IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS.

IMMIGRATION restrictions, enacted by the Canadian Government some months ago, have been continued indefinitely. These regulations demand that all immigrants to Canada should have in their possession \$250.00 and a ticket to their destination. While this legislation does not entirely meet the desires of the Organized Labor Movement of Canada, it does to a great extent.

Immigration is one of the greatest problems now facing the people of Canada, and the Canadian Labor Press has stated on many occasions that the Labor Movement of this country does not desire to place any barrier in the way of a worker desirous of bettering his or her condition. Labor does say that immigrants should be told of the actual conditions existing in Can-

ada and not as they appear in the minds of some immigration officials. Many immigration recruiting officers seem more desirous of bringing large numbers of immigrants to Canada than they are in bringing to this country the class of men and women who will assist in building up a great and contented community. Too often is our attention drawn to statements made by immigration officials in Great Britain where conditions in Canada are colored to attract the minds of the particular audience they are addressing.

Farm laborers may be necessary in Canada, but it seems impracticable to say that farmers can be made of boilermakers, machinists, and other industrial workers. In the great industrial centres of Great Britain our immigration officials seem to concentrate their activities.

The Order-in-Council of the Canadian Government assists in some measure in curtailing immigration to this country, but the Canadian Government must give more thought to the question of immigration and to the immigration policy of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

VOTE "NO" ON APRIL 18.

ON April 18 electors of Ontario will be called upon to cast their vote on the question of total prohibition. Every elector should read the effects of total prohibition in Iceland as told by one of the leading statesmen in that country, extracts of which are published in this issue. We are sure that if this is done the electors of Ontario will unanimously vote "NO" on April 18, and by so doing they will assist in the enactment of sane liquor legislation which has for its object the placing of the entire liquor traffic under Government control.

U. S. POSTAL WORKERS CONSULTED BY CHIEF

First Time in Many Years Employes' Co-operation Sought.

WASHINGTON—WILL H. Hays, Postmaster-General is living up to his promise to enlist the interest and co-operation of the employes in the postal service by consulting them about policies and personnel. For the first time in years the employes' representatives were invited recently to express their views on service problems. The representatives were: Edward J. Gainer, president, National Association of Letter Carriers; Edmund J. Cantwell, secretary, National Association of Letter Carriers; Gilbert E. Hyatt, president, National Federation of Post Office Clerks; Thos. F. Flaherty, secretary-treasurer, National Federation of Post Office Clerks; William N. Collins, secretary, Railway Mail Association, and J. Cletus Stambaugh, legislative representative, National Federation of Rural Letter Carriers.

Mr. Hays expressed the hope that there could be some arrangement for bringing the departmental officials and the representatives of the employes into frequent conference for the adjustment of all difficulties. A series of room meetings at which the Postmaster-General can personally meet the employes has been planned.

"It is no new world that we find ourselves in, but an old world grown older, a world of softnesses grows more solid, more firm, more Kennedy, Selfishness, apathy and ignorance."

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