

NOTICE.

We shall be pleased to receive items of interest pertaining to Trade Societies from all parts of the Dominion of publication. Officers of Trades Unions, Secretaries of Leagues, etc., are invited to send us news relating to their organizations, condition of trade, etc.

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We wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions of correspondents.

Our columns are open for the discussion of all questions affecting the working classes. All communications must be accompanied by the names of the writers, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

WILLIAMS, SLEETH & MACMILLAN.

Trades Assembly Hall.

Meetings are held in the following order:—
 Machinists and Blacksmiths, every Monday.
 Painters, 1st and 3rd Monday.
 Coachmakers, 2nd and 4th Monday.
 Crispiens, (159), 1st and 3rd Tuesday.
 K.O.S.C. Lodge 356, 2nd and 4th Tuesday.
 Tinsmiths, 2nd and 4th Tuesday.
 Cigar Makers, 2nd and 4th Wednesday.
 Iron Moulders, every Thursday.
 Plasterers, 1st and 3rd Thursday.
 Trades' Assembly, 1st and 3rd Friday.
 Bricklayers, 1st and 3rd Friday.
 Coopers, 2nd and 4th Friday.
 Printers, 1st Saturday.
 Bakers, every 2nd Saturday.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

We have sent accounts to those of our Subscribers who are in arrears, and hope that they will remit the amounts without delay. We know people are apt to think "Mine is only a very small matter, it won't make much difference," but when these small amounts, scattered over various parts of the province, are multiplied by tens and hundreds, it becomes a matter of importance to the publishers that each subscription should be paid promptly. The publication of a newspaper is attended with a very considerable outlay of money and energy, and we trust our readers to whom we have, and may yet, send accounts, will strengthen our hands by prompt remittances.

Those of our City subscribers also, who have received their accounts, will please remit to us as soon as possible.

The Ontario Workman.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, JAN. 30, 1873.

THE GAS STOKERS.

From our English trade exchanges we learn that the feeling intensifies in connection with the case of the convicted gas stokers. In all parts meetings to protest against the severe sentence passed upon the men have been held, and at these meetings, Mr. Justice Brett's conduct, both in refusing time for the preparation of the defence, and in inflicting so heavy a punishment, despite the jury's recommendation to mercy, formed the subject for strong comment, a punishment as one paper states, as heavy as that pronounced upon persons found "guilty of manslaughter, and putting stones on a line with a view to upset a railway train, and at least twice as severely as a man who had incited a bull dog to worry his wife." A writer in the *Weekly Times*, in discussing the question says, "the men broke a contract by leaving work without notice. This is certainly a grave offence, as without good faith in adhering to contracts, an industrial state would become impossible, and we should revert to barbarism." True, quite true,—if the law be administered impartially, and there be not one involving a sentence to twelve month's imprisonment for the poor workman, while for the employer there is complete immunity. A case in point has just occurred—in connection, too, with a gas stoker. Mr. Trew-

by, the superintendent of the City of London Gas Works at Beckton, was summoned at the Woolwich Police-court to answer the complaint of a gas-stoker for having discharged him without notice. For the defence it was stated that the complainant had so conducted himself as to give rise to a suspicion that he was in confederacy with the men on strike to coerce and damage the company, and that any appearance of treachery at such a time would justify the superintendent in getting rid of him. The magistrate took this view of the matter, and dismissed the summons. Comment on this is unnecessary.

But the excessive punishment meted out by the court in this particular case is not the only phase of the question that is rousing public sentiment; the case involves a much more serious danger to workmen. The judge declared in passing sentence, that the time had come to teach men in union a lesson; and certainly in doing this, Mr. Justice Brett did rise fully to the height of an enraged schoolmaster of the most ferocious type. His legal cat had wire in the strings, like those used in Jamaica,—it was meant to lacerate, and it has done so. But if the judge had a lesson to teach, the workmen of Great Britain have one to learn. They will find out by this verdict and sentence that any act they may do collectively may be construed and punished as a conspiracy, and that a strike, however justifiable in the eyes of those who enter on it, may terminate in the jails of the country, if English Judges can be found willing to strain the law under the influence of passion, and with a pretended zeal for the public welfare.

It is right that the men of England should, at this time, arise in their might, and that their sentiments should be uttered with no uncertain sound; it is right, that the wives and children of the imprisoned men should be provided for—they are the charge of the unions, now; it is right that strenuous efforts should be made to obtain a mitigation of the sentence.

But above and beyond all this there is a duty to be performed by the working classes of England. Never, of late years, have their liberties been more seriously threatened; and the most important object to be achieved is the alteration of the law—and this it is which will cost most effort to obtain. Many thousands of English hearts are now smarting, as under a personal wrong, and for a time England will be made to ring. What is to be guarded against is the danger that the zeal of many will wax cold. But this must not be allowed,—the indignation must only give place to a settled determination for repeal. It must not be forgotten that not the application, but the existence of the law constitutes the chief injustice. English workmen ought never to rest until the law is repealed,—and until that is accomplished, effort and agitation is the solemn duty of every workman who has any feeling of self-respect or any desire for independence and freedom. And the matter is in their own hands. Under household suffrage and the Ballot, they can compel Parliament to do them justice. Power they have in plenty, but if, through apathy, through want of persistence, or through disunion, they fail to obtain justice, they will prove themselves unworthy the tradition of their class, and must continue to suffer an injustice for which they have but themselves to blame. "Who would be free, himself must strike the blow."

THE EXTENSION OF THE FRANCHISE.

The bill introduced by Mr. McKeller to extend the franchise, cannot fail to give satisfaction to the great mass of the people. Its provisions are liberal,—and the measure may almost be regarded as radical in the extreme. It proposes to give every man a vote who is actually and *bona fide* in receipt of an annual income, from any calling or profession, in any city or town of not less than three hundred dollars, and in any incorporated village or township of not less than two hundred dollars. This

will give votes to a large class of young men, clerks, students, professional men, mechanics and others, who have hitherto been excluded from voting because not on the assessment roll. Evidently there does seem something anomalous in discriminating between two men in the same establishment, and on equal salaries, and who, probably, spend in the course of the year an equal amount of money, and give the one a vote because he hires a house, and refuse the other a like privilege because he takes furnished lodgings or pays for his board. But for all this, we do not believe that the whole of a person's income should be taxed, nor should a man be obliged to pay for the privilege of voting; and it is a matter for consideration whether the paying of taxes is the most convenient test for suffrage. For many years Canada has enjoyed a most admirable and universal system of public instruction. The people have been provided the means of educating their children, and we should think the time is near at hand—if not at hand already—when we should have placed on our statute book a provision that every man who votes must at least be able to read and write.

THE BALLOT BILL.

Mr. Clarke, of Wellington Centre, has introduced a bill to provide for the adoption of the ballot at our provincial elections. By this system we believe purity in elections will be more fully secured. In every community there will be many, under our present system, who are unable to record a vote according to their conscientious convictions; but especially is the ballot needed for the employees of large corporations. Hitherto, the objection to the system of voting by ballot has been that it was un-English, but this objection exists no longer, and it is gratifying to learn that it is now taken for granted, by Conservatives and Liberals alike, that the ballot has proved a most successful measure. An exchange, writing upon the subject says: Had there been any doubt upon the point it must have been set at rest by the election at Cork recently. That city is noted for its uproarious demonstrations, and at polling times the recording of votes was generally a matter of life and death. Mr. Ronayne and Mr. Pim were the two candidates. There had been at first another candidate, a supporter of the ministry, but he was forced to retire, the Home Rule element having come out so strong. Mr. Pim is a Conservative, and the party were in hopes that they might have succeeded through divisions in the Liberal camp, in carrying their man. By the retirement of the ministerial candidate this was prevented; and on the polling day Mr. Ronayne the Home Ruler, was returned by a large majority. The "Nationalists" were so overjoyed that they had immense torchlight processions; but no disturbance occurred, the polling is described as remarkable for its quietness, and all went off smoothly, and without the smallest molestation. The practice of escorting doubtful electors to the poll was discontinued. Mr. Lewis, conservative candidate who was returned for Londonderry, although originally opposed to the ballot, bears testimony to the benefits secured by that measure in his case; and we have thus a town in the north of Ireland, and another in the south-west, furnishing the best evidence that could be wished for as to the success which has attended the working of that measure, the passing of which by Parliament was regarded by very many as one of those Liberal acts which are to help on the ruin of the country. The magistrates are dealing stringently with such persons as attempt to violate the Act by personating voters. At the Manchester assizes last week, two men who were guilty of this offence at the recent municipal election, were each sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. One of the prisoners had personated a voter who was in Staffordshire on the day of election; and the other had voted in the name of his grandfather who is dead.

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CONVICT LABOR.

In the Legislature on Monday, Mr. Lauder moved an address for a return of all papers and correspondence between the Government and the Canada Car Company, and a copy of the contracts said to have been made regarding the labor of the convicts who might be confined in the Central Prison. Mr. Lauder spoke on the subject at some length, during which he questioned the propriety of making such a contract, in the face of the principle which they had always advocated, when in opposition to the Sandfield Macdonald administration, that no executive act of so much importance should be undertaken without the consent of the legislature. If the Government then, had made a contract for this labor for a number of years—it might be at remunerative rates, or it might not—it was a question whether it was the best plan to let out the labor of convicts to a public company. There were some who held that this was not the best plan—that the Government should control the labor themselves instead of hiring it out to contractors; and as the question was one which admitted of discussion, and upon which there was difference of opinion, it would have been well, before taking final action, to have brought the matter up for discussion in the House. The Government, however, he was told, had taken the responsibility of entering into this contract, which might be a good one or might not; but the principle of hypothecating for so many years the labor of the prisoners, without offering it to competition, without asking for public tenders, and without the consent of Parliament, seemed to him to be at least hasty, and might turn out to be unwise and unprofitable in the interest of the Province. Hon. Mr. Mowat acknowledged that a preliminary contract had been entered into last August, and that subsequently he had been a party to the drafting of a fuller contract, containing all the necessary details for the purpose of carrying out the bargain made in the contract. In reply to the question of Mr. Rykert as to whether the contract was yet completed binding the Government to hire the prison labor to the Car Company, Mr. Mowat gave no definite reply, merely stating that the case was just as he had said. The papers, however, would be brought down.

MASS MEETING OF WORKINGMEN.

On Tuesday, the 11th of February, a Mass Meeting of the workingmen of this city will be held in the St. Lawrence Hall, to take into consideration matters and things of vital interest to them as a class. Among the subjects to be discussed will be the Convict Labor question, and other questions of equal importance. Delegates are expected from Ottawa and Hamilton and we hope upon the occasion to see a crowded house. Let there be a grand rally!

THE HACKMEN'S BALL.

The Hackmen of this city intend holding their ninth annual Ball in the Music Hall, on Tuesday evening next Feb. 4th. Every effort will be made by the committee to render the occasion one of great success. Hitherto it has been the custom to divide the proceeds between the Boy's Home and the House of Providence, but this year, owing to the heavy drains that were made upon the horse fund of the Union consequent upon the large amount of sickness that existed among the horses during last summer, it has been decided this year to devote the proceeds to that fund; and it is to be hoped that the result will place the horse fund in a strong financial position. We doubt not there will be a very large attendance at the ball.

We are in receipt of the third number of a new paper—the *Northern Borderer*, published at Bangor. It is devoted to science, literature, social life, and home development. Its selections give evidence of a high moral tone, and its circulation cannot fail to accomplish good. We wish our contemporary every success.

WHAT SHALL WE DO.

How often we hear the interrogation coming from the man whose form betokens the greater portion of a life spent in drudgery and toil, whose hands have become calloused in the service of those who care nought for his sufferings and misery, and only dote upon the dependent condition of the poor, overworked toiler, whose bones have become stiffened and body bent with hard, incessant labor, and all for the mere privilege of a bare livelihood, while those in whose interest his life of labor has been spent, roll in wealth and luxury, and fatten upon the proceeds of the poor man's toil.

"What shall we do?" says another laborer, who, although not yet reduced to the condition of the other, sees the same inevitable fate before him, and unless his interrogation meets with a solution that will snatch him from the pending danger, he must walk into the same channel, and there meet the inevitable fate of his predecessor. "What shall we do?" says the hard working mechanic, "to change our iniquitous laws of distribution—laws that give the money-lender and non-producer all the comforts and luxuries of life, while labor, the producer of all wealth, is compelled to go hungry and naked?" "What shall we do," exclaims the mechanic who has spent years of study to acquire a thorough mechanical knowledge of his trade, "to lift our trade from the low, dilapidated condition into which it has fallen, thereby enabling those who have become proficient to make something more than a mere livelihood, to enable them to clothe and educate their children, and prepare them for the start in the race of life on an equal footing with the favored and pampered children of fortune?" "What shall we do?" says the young man, full of vigor and energy, starting in life with the almost insurmountable barriers of poverty before him. "What shall we do?" exclaim his comrades. Thus they plod along, asking the question, without ever stopping for a moment to solve the problem, when they finally find themselves drifted into the gulf of hopeless despondency, surrounded by all the barriers that a down trodden and oppressed condition is heir to.

Reader, workingman, mechanic, friend, co-laborer in the work of emancipation, drop the hackneyed, worn out cry, "What shall we do?" With labor unperformed piled up mountains high before us, and the facilities with which to perform it within our reach, we not only wrong mankind, but insult the intelligence of our Maker. You may feel that the task is hard, unceasing and endless, you may become discouraged even before you undertake it; but you should remember that without labor nothing can be done. Without a sacrifice nothing is gained. Without perseverance nothing is accomplished. Stand up, then, erect, prepare for the contest. Do not ask "what shall we do?" but throw off the coat, roll up the sleeve, resolve on victory, and stop at nothing short of it. Strike a blow at the fetters that bind the limbs of your fellow laborer, set him free, secure his co-operation, go forth hand in hand under the flag of united brotherhood. You may meet with reverses, but become not discouraged, your cause is just and you are sure to triumph in the end.—*M. and B. Journal.*

A SENSIBLE SUGGESTION.

Mayor Manning, in his inaugural address on Monday night, among many other good suggestions, recommended the advisability of petitioning the Legislature to have the labor of the prisoners in our jail utilized in repairing and keeping in order our streets and sidewalks. We are certainly of the opinion that our City Fathers should act upon this timely suggestion.

A COMPLIMENTARY SUPPER.

On last Thursday evening, a very pleasant gathering was held in Mr. Foy's Orange Hall, in connection with the formation of Toronto L. O. Lodge No. 800. A number of the brethren and