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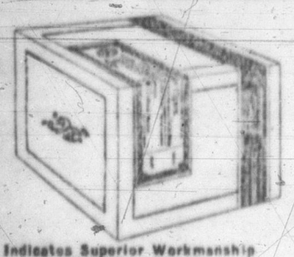

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Butcher's Fight Endorsed by Council

Report of Special Committee Mr. J. W. Flavelle's Statement and Reply.

Your committee to whom was delegated the duty of interviewing Mr. J. W. Flavelle, in the interests of the settlement of the butcher difficulty, desire to report that they have had two interviews with the gentleman mentioned, and were upon each occasion treated with every mark of respect due the body which they represented.

The representations upon both occasions were offered on with the best of feeling upon both sides, but with practically no tangible results as the outcome.

The accompanying statement submitted by Mr. Flavelle covers in a great measure all the points discussed and explained. Kindly bear in mind of the fact, however,

Toronto, July 19, 1904.

Mr. James Wilson, Toronto.

Dear Sir,—As I presume it will be your duty to report back to the Federated Labor Council the result of a meeting between the committee of the Council (composed of yourself and Mr. Kennedy) and me, perhaps it will be better for me to state in writing my understanding of the situation as presented to me by you and Mr. Kennedy, and my reply.

I understand that you were directed to say to me that your Council urged upon me the duty of directing the manager of the Harris Abattoir Company to submit to arbitration the difficulty between the company and the men who went on strike some weeks ago; that if I did not exercise this pressure and compel such arbitration, you were instructed to say that every line of business with which any member of the Harris Abattoir Company was identified, in any way to be attacked, that in particular war was to be made upon every enterprise with which I was personally associated, and that all the influence of your federated body of labor would be used to the injury of any business in which I might be engaged. You particularly mentioned your belief that I was vulnerable on the side of the "News," and that an attack by your organization upon its circulation and advertising support would be a serious thing for me to meet.

Before replying to your specific demand, permit the following general statement: During the month of May a committee from the Butchers' Union, together with some members of your Council, waited upon me and stated that there was difficulty between Mr. Harris, the managing director, and the members of the union who were employed by the company; that the committee waited upon me as president of the company hoping I would be able to improve the situation.

The only matter which was presented to me was a scale of wages which had been drawn up by the union and which the company was asked to accept. No reference was made to any grievance because of overtime or grievance from any other cause. My reply was, that I regretted there was no basis which I could see for negotiation; not because the union presented the matter, but because under the existing conditions in Canada it was my impression that it was impossible to fix a scale of wages for the different types of work. I pointed out that the operations in Canada had been on such a modest scale, and were still so small, that expert help could not be used exclusively for the different types of work, and that men had to be changed from one place to another, performing whatever duties were necessary in a business of small compass; that therefore it was natural from time to time to pay men different rates of wages, even if they were doing part of the time the same work, and that the company must be left entirely free to fix its wage sheet as the value of the men employed determined. I indicated that doubtless some of the men would be paid quite in excess of the proposed scale, while others would be paid less. I added, "I hope there will be no issue between you and the company upon this point. If you make an issue I am sure you will be wrong, and I cannot see how you can hope to succeed." I added, "If, however, the union or anyone else at any time sets to tell me of improvements which could be introduced for the comfort or betterment of the employees of the company their suggestions would be received with the heartiest good favor." The interview was friendly throughout. There was no sign of temper on either side, and one issue and one only was discussed.

The strike occurred during my absence in England. On inquiry I learned that one of the employees, representing the others, called at the office and presented a wage schedule, with the requirement that the company accept it, or the men would go out. The manager said it would be impossible for him to accept it, and the men went out. As clearly foreseen by me the strike utterly failed. With the exception of the embarrassment of the first two or three days the company's business has gone on as usual, and to-day we are slaughtering as many cattle as we can sell, and if we could chill and sell many more we could secure ample staff for the purpose of slaughtering them.

Your demand comes to me, therefore, at a time when there is no trouble between the Harris Abattoir Company and its employees; at a time when the work of the company is going on as usual. I do not suppose your Council intended it, but in substance I am asked by your influential body to correct for the Butchers' Union an error in judgment which they made in calling out their members. I am asked after weeks of improper statements by the Butchers' Union, both as regards myself and the company, to intervene and save the union from a position in which it should not have placed itself, and in which it placed itself after having been assured by me that I believed their position was a mistaken one. I am told that if I do not do so I am to encounter the opposition and warfare of all organized labor in the city; I am told that enterprises in which I am a shareholder, and which have identified with them many other shareholders, are to be singled out for injury by the members of your body.

Referring specifically to your demand, I am unable to see any justification for any desired interference with the management of the Abattoir Company or with the existing staff of workmen employed by the company. The position which I took when the deputation waited upon me in May was a deliberate one and grew out of my intimate knowledge of the whole situation as it affected a wage schedule. Nothing has transpired since which leads me to believe I was then in error. I am, therefore, compelled to say that the demand made upon me is unreasonable and I cannot refuse to bring to bear upon Mr. managing director of the Harris Abattoir Company the pressure which you request.

I do not attempt to minimize the power and influence of the Union to which you signed. I only attempt to outline the personal position, but it will be to me to be exposed to all that is included in such a statement as you have made. I am interested on the labor side of points of difference between capital and labor, and am an earnest believer in shorter hours of work with extra payment for overtime. I have endeavored for years in the company for which I am managingly responsible (The Wm. Davies Company, Limited), to make conditions as good as the business would permit. I shall therefore find myself in strange relations when I am singled out as being so guilty of unfairness toward labor that the central organization determines that I am not only an enemy, but any who are associated with me are also to suffer.

Yours truly,
J. W. FLAVELLE.

Replying to this statement your committee desire to say that while they are perfectly willing to concede to Mr. Flavelle his opinion upon the situation of the industry and its ability to pay a minimum wage scale, and also to believe that he makes the statement therein contained with an honesty of purpose not always discernible in our opponents, yet in the interests of our fellow wage workers we must still maintain that his position is not the correct one in the interests of and upon the broad grounds of justice to the workers.

Setting aside for a moment Mr. Flavelle's contention upon the wage question, we desire to point out to him and the members of the company associated with him the nefariousness of their stand.

After weeks of negotiation, commencing in January, and seeing almost of them a disruption of relations with the company the Butchers' Union as a last resort in the interests of peace offered the company arbitration in the following letter:

Toronto, June 15, 1904.

The Harris Abattoir Company, Toronto.
Mr. James Harris, Mgr. Director.

Dear Sir,—We are again compelled for the sake of peace to appeal to you; and request that you show a disposition to be fair. We ask not under what honorable system the improved conditions we are asking for our members who are employed by your firm are brought about. We are not asking you to recognize the union. We are simply asking for fair wages and fair conditions under which our members who are employed by your firm should work. You must admit, we have treated with you in a business manner, though without success. We have presented our grievances between you and your employees who are members of our organization, to the Retail Butchers' Association of Canada, who at our request have appointed a committee of two to confer with you to endeavor to adjust matters. We are perfectly willing to place our case in the hands of a fair impartial committee to arbitrate, and are willing to abide by their decision; more than this we cannot do. We realize, as do the retail butchers, the inconvenience of an open rupture, and with this in view we again request you to give this your careful consideration with a disposition to be fair.

Awaiting your answer not later than Friday morning, June 17th, so that I can make known your decision to the committee of the Retail Butchers' Section.

With best wishes we remain, yours respectfully,

BUTCHERS UNION, 188,
Per F. C. Letts, Cor. Sec.

This letter states specifically that the Butchers' Union are willing to arbitrate before any fair board of arbitrators, and yet to this letter Mr. Harris replies:

Toronto, June 16, 1904.

Mr. F. C. Letts, 73 Tixles street, City.

Dear Sir,—I have your favor of the 15th inst. and have given it, contents a very careful perusal. You refer to grievances under which some of our employees claim they are working. We are not aware either who these employees are, or what are the grievances of which they complain. We are as anxious as you possibly can be that our men should work under fair conditions and that they should be satisfied and well disposed towards the firm, as we realize the importance of this, even on the lowest grounds—that of the welfare of the firm.

You state "We have presented our grievances existing between you and your employees who are members of our organization to the Retail Butchers' Association, who at our request have appointed a committee of two to confer with you and endeavor to adjust matters."

As stated above, we do not know what the grievances are, to which you refer. No one of our employees has ever made a complaint either for himself or on behalf of his fellow employees. We gather from your letter that some complaint has been made to you by one or more of our employees. If you will be good enough to refer this employee to me I shall give the best consideration of which I am capable to the adjustment of his complaint.

We think you will be ready to admit that we, as the employers of our men, should be the first to hear of any grievances which exist. We have confidence, moreover, that if there are any complaints we shall ourselves be able to adjust them with our employees without the friendly offices of any other person or organization whatever.

I have the honor to remain, yours very truly,

THE HARRIS ABATTOIR COMPANY, LIMITED,
Per James Harris, Managing Director.

Mr. Harris says in this letter, that his company desires no outside interference and are quite capable of adjusting any grievances of its employees. Mr. Flavelle, in his statement, says "that the company must be left entirely free to fix its wage sheet as the value of the men employed determined."

Mr. Flavelle, in another part of his statement and all through the conference, showed any antipathy to the union, and brought down to these great issues the two statements mean one and the same thing. They deny the right to their employees of having any say in the fixing of what they shall work for.

The Harris Abattoir Company was wrong and Mr. Flavelle is wrong in his contention in this respect and their action in refusing to arbitrate the disagreement with the butchers was wrong.

Inasmuch as Mr. Flavelle nor those interested with him gave any consideration whatever to those interested in the earnings of the workers turned upon the street we cannot see any good ground for his argument that it would not be honest to hurt men who are in no way responsible for this fight because they are associated with Mr. Flavelle.

Looking at the position of the butchers from any standpoint you may their cause in this fight is the cause of all who work for wages and this Council should take advantage of every avenue open to them to help the butchers win, even though the innocent capitalists may be made to suffer for the guilt of the Harris Abattoir Company and the shareholders thereof.

JAMES WILSON,
D. W. KENNEDY.

"WHAT'S SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE IS SAUCE FOR THE GANDER."

There was a great gnashing of teeth in St. Louis when the trade unions took advantage of the extra demand for labor caused by exposition work, to raise wages abnormally; but St. Louis landlords, hotel keepers, restaurant proprietors, etc., etc., all of whom joined in condemning the "grasping working men," have no compunction about taking advantage of the extra demand for their commodities to raise prices abnormally. Why is it always so wicked for workingmen to do in a small way what their critics habitually do in larger and more aggressive ways?—The Chicago Public.

IMPORTED HORSES AND CATTLE.

Several of the most prominent breeders of horses and cattle in Canada are at present in England, or have recently returned from the trip, which was undertaken for the sole purpose of procuring stock for show at the Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, August 29th to September 12th, and for the improvement of their well-known stables. The exhibits of these gentlemen alone would offer an interesting horse show, and when combined with the hundreds of other entries in all classes, will complete the finest display of horses and cattle ever seen in Canada. Among those whose direct and recent importations will be shown are Robert Reith, M.P., of Bowmanville; Thomas Graham, of Graham Bros., Claremont; J. M. Gardhouse, of the Highfield stables, and William Smith, ex-M.P., of Columbus. Among the cattle breeders, Hon. John Dryden, Minister of Agriculture, and Robert Miller, of Stouffville, will show for the first time their recent purchases in England. All the exhibitors agree to keep their entries on the grounds during the full period of the exhibition.

What man or woman half merits the opinion held of them by their child.

Almost invariably a liar speaks the truth with his eyes.

Truly great men say what they mean and do what they say, even in a business transaction.

No woman with an atom of romance will say "No" to a man who proposes on bended knee.

A good many of the season's graduates will be ready for the business of life in a few years when they have forgotten that they know it all.

Ontario Trades Disputes Amendment Act, 1897

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AS TO RAILWAY DISPUTES—
JOHN D. EVANS, Esq., C.E., Trenton, Ont.
EDWARD WILLIAMS, Locomotive Engineer, Hamilton, Ont.

OR OTHER THAN RAILWAY DISPUTES—
ROGER C. CLUTE, K.C., Toronto, Chairman
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FRANK PLANT, Painter, London.

R. GLOCKLING, Registrar.

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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF ORGANIZED LABOR

Humor and Philosophy

By DUNCAN M. SMITH

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THE GLORIOUS DAY.

Hurrah!
Let the bands play!
They will whether we let them or not.
Every hot
Tune they have on hand
Will chase itself up and down the land.
No use to say
We will give the firecracker the right of way.
It will take it anyhow
Or there'll be a row
Fourth of July!
The great four ply
Holiday
When everything is to pay!
The day we celebrate
Early and late
Also the day before
And more
Or be the day after.
We for every rather
In the sky
And don't half try.
The small boy runs the band.
His hand
Until it is shot away.
Directs the fray.
If you listen carefully you may hear a
[illegible]
But it is only the boys
Blowing up the city hall
Or taking a shot
Out of a boiler shop.
They can't stop.
Because being American boys they are built that way.
And it is their day.
We licked the British once or twice
And did such a nice
Thorough job that it is not strange or queer
That we must do it over once a year.
Turn loose the noise!
If it annoys
You half timber rock
And don't come back one a week.
Because it is—don't forget the date—
The day we celebrate.

Glad of It.

"Old man Sighoe is the stingiest man alive."

"How do you prove it?"

"He is tickled to death because he is baldheaded and does not have to pay the barber to cut his hair."

Glittering Success.

"I knew Clarence would make his mark in the world."

"What is he doing?"

"He writes that he is keeping score for a ball team on a big blackboard."

They Are Interested.

When we are sick,
And friends are shy
Our creditors
Hope we won't die.

Needed Every Resource.

"Why doesn't Boggs, the humorist, get married?"

"He fears that he might not be able to use the mother-in-law joke so freely."

A Sober Truth.

"I never could see anything in the mother-in-law joke."

"You are right. Take my word for it, she is no joke."

No Credit to Him.

His hundredth year was drawing nigh,
And he was feeling well.
The people came and asked him why,
But, pshaw, he couldn't tell.

Wanted to Get at It.

"Didn't you see that sign, 'No Shooting on This Place?'" demanded the angry farmer of the man with the gun.

"I ain't shooting," replied the hunter. "I am just trying to scare the game out into the road, where I can get at it."

PERT PARAGRAPHS.

The photographer does not ask you to pay in advance because he wants you to look pleasant.

Some of the young ladies think that the sweet boy graduate is worthy of a little of the notice.

The shortest summer seems long to the coal man.

While the boss is away the stenographer does not play very much on the keys of the typewriter.

Perhaps the next time Russia goes to war it will know enough to consult the dry goods box experts.

To put a hypnotist to the severest test send him out to find the calf to drink.

The poorest guesser should be able to name the next president in three guesses.

Some of the mysteries as to why a commonplace book should be the most popular of the year are cleared up when you see the advertising bills.

The poet may scorn the business manager, but not on pay day.

Campaign cigars should break a man of the habit of smoking if anything will.