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LABOR'S PROTEST AGAINST PRESTON

Truth Told by Those Who Know It—Manufacturers and the Government Immigrant Agent's Statement Refuted.

OFFICIAL

OPEN LETTER TO THE WORKINGMEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM ON LABOR CONDITIONS IN CANADA, FROM THE TORONTO DISTRICT LABOR COUNCIL, IN REPLY TO STATEMENTS MADE BY DOMINION EMIGRATION AGENT W. T. R. PRESTON, AND REPORTED IN THE LONDON DAILY NEWS OF MAY 9TH.

The attention of the trades unionists of the city of Toronto has been directed to the statements made by Dominion Emigration Agent W. T. R. Preston in a copy of the London Daily News, and a reply from those acquainted with the labor situation in Canada is absolutely necessary at this juncture.

In reply to a question from the News reporter, Mr. Preston is credited with saying that there was no truth whatever in the assertion that the Canadian labor market was becoming congested, and as a proof of this he states that he has received applications from the province of Ontario alone for 5,000 farm laborers, and also applications for fully 10,000 mechanics from all parts of the Dominion.

We have no desire to refute Mr. Preston's statement regarding the demand for farm laborers here, believing as we do that with our vast agricultural resources yet to be developed, and the strong effort being made to open up the agricultural territories, there is at the present time a large demand for agricultural laborers. It is admitted by the Canadian press, however, that this demand for farm help has been occasioned to a certain degree by the influx of farm laborers into the cities, where there are certain advantages that cannot be obtained in the rural communities.

This influx into the manufacturing centres of the Dominion has naturally tended to provide more than sufficient men for the positions for unskilled men, and consequently there is no demand whatever for laborers. As to the statement made by Mr. Preston that there are positions for 30,000 mechanics here, all we can say is that such a statement is readily refutable, and based upon misrepresentation, perhaps not directly chargeable to Mr. Preston, but rightly credited to the employers of the Dominion.

The struggle between capitalist influences and the influences of the organized workers has become very acute here, and there is an aggressiveness characterizing the different employers' associations that was never known before in Canada. Both (legitimate as well as legitimate means are being adopted by these associations to compel the workers to submit to conditions that are neither congenial nor approved for the industrial classes, and a determined effort is being made to disrupt the labor organizations that stand between the avarice of the employer class and the highest interests of the toilers.

A denunciation of the manufacturers of the province of Ontario recently appeared before the Premier of that province, and made certain representations to him that tend to prove to what extent these men will go to flood the labor market and thus depress the price of labor. They had a carefully prepared list of the manufacturers of the province, and opposite each name there appeared the number of mechanics that could be immediately given employment in each factory. According to these figures there were positions open for 11,000 men in the province of Ontario alone, and in almost every case estimates made by these manufacturers were gross misrepresentations, and tended to the purpose of placing and creating workers of this province at the mercy of their employers. Representative labor men were consulted by the Premier, and as strongly did they impress him with their arguments in rebuttal of the information supplied by the manufacturers that he decided to take no steps whatever to encourage the immigration of mechanics to the province of Ontario.

Trades unionists in Canada resent with all their power the reflections cast upon their co-workers from the United States by Mr. Preston, and so sometimes wonder whether he is representing Canada as an agent of the Employers' Associations of this country, or as the Dominion emigration officer, because the language he uses in criticizing the officers of our international trades unions is the synonym of the language used by the capitalists who hate our international movement because it gives virility and strength to their movement here that we could not possibly have if Canadian trades unions depended entirely upon the resources of our own limited numbers, derived as they are from our limited population. Mr. Preston is wrong.

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Continued on page 4