

# A. F. OF L. FORMULATING WORKERS' POLICIES

## MANY CANADIAN WORKERS DESIRE NATIONAL

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to accept affiliation organizations expelled or rejected by the American Federation of Labor and has also, in the past, refused further affiliation to international unions who have been expelled for causing the American Federation of Labor. It is therefore with regret that we are compelled to report that forty-three international unions will refrain from strengthening our hands in our fight to maintain the recognition and prestige of international trade unions in the Dominion.

With a growing activity of opposing bodies such as the National Catholic Union, Canadian Federation of Labor and the One Big Union it becomes apparent that if the progress is to remain the predominant labor body of Canada and the mouthpiece of the organized worker, considerable additional support must be forthcoming from international unions having branches in Canada. We, therefore, wish to bring emphasis to the attention of this convention of the American Federation of Labor the necessity of some further action on their part to see that in every department of the Federation, considerable assistance be rendered to the international trade union movement that the Trades and Labor Congress is given the full support of every departmental union affiliated to the American Federation of Labor. Our request can best be understood by the following figures: Out of 2850 members of international trade unions in Canada only 169,000 are, as yet, affiliated to the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

**General Activities.**

In order to effectively carry on the legislative work throughout the Dominion, the Trades and Labor Congress has chartered Provincial Federations of Labor in Alberta, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. In the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, the duties of presenting legislation under direction of the congress executive. Until the latter part of 1919 Provincial Federations of Labor in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, however, took upon themselves to return this charter and since that time have declared themselves a unit of the O. B. U. This has temporarily left the province of British Columbia without any central executive authority. Throughout the Dominion there are fifty-eight trades and labor councils chartered by the Trades and Labor Congress and acting as the legislative body in their respective cities.

In addition to presenting to the Federal and Provincial Governments legislation called for by the Dominion Congress has spent considerable effort in combating the activities of the O. B. U. Through the aid of the Congress charters have been secured for several of the international organizations in addition to membership in the Dominion Congress which received the general approval of all classes in Canada.

In September, the Congress was again requested by the Dominion Government to nominate workers' representatives to participate in a National Industrial Conference. Sixty-five workers were selected from the different labor organizations affiliated to the Congress in different parts of the Dominion, who along with sixty-five employers and a number of others forming a third group, met in Ottawa to discuss each other's conclusions on questions affecting labor. A full report of this has been issued by the Dominion Congress and on the suggestion of the Trades Congress Executive a quarterly international unions for their information.

In accordance with the labor section of the Treaty of Peace, the Canadian Government has invited members of the League of Nations and the International Labor Body called upon the Congress to nominate a delegate to the League of Nations and five advisors to represent the workers of Canada at the annual conference of the International Labor Body held in Washington. Full reports as to the work accomplished at this conference have already been published. The Trades Congress has again been called upon to nominate the delegate and adviser to attend the second annual conference of the International Labor Body.

## A PROMINENT DELEGATE.

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F. M. DRAPER, secretary-treasurer of the Dominion Trades Congress, who presented the report of that body to the A. F. of L. convention at Montreal, "Paddy" has been a delegate at many conventions of the A. F. of L., and is one of the most prominent delegates in attendance. He is officially representing the Ottawa Trades and Labor Association.

The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada is officially recognized by the Dominion Government as the authoritative source from which the labor representatives should be nominated for the annual conference of the Dominion Trades Congress. In addition to the Dominion Trades Congress, the Dominion Government has also recognized the Dominion Bureau of Technical Education. We also succeeded in securing the creation of a Ministry of Health and Public Welfare, an act to provide compensation for injured federal employees, amendments to the Immigration Act, provision for a literacy test, and other measures indirectly assisting labor, while through the various Provincial Governments extensions of the application of Workmen's Compensation Act, improvements to factory legislation and other valuable measures have been secured.

**The Eight-Hour Day.**

Considerable propaganda has been carried on by the Congress for the adoption of the eight-hour day both by industrial activity and legislative enactment. Through we have not as yet secured any legislation providing for this legal limitation of the workday other than for the mining industry it is satisfactory to note that out of a survey covering over 600,000 workers that close to 50 per cent. are now working eight hours or less in the Dominion of Canada.

The One Big Union has continued its campaign of vilification against the officers of international trade unions, the American Federation of Labor and the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and have succeeded in temporarily alienating many members of the international labor movement by these methods. Their policy of general strike, though ending in failure whenever put into operation, nevertheless still has a certain appeal to those who have little experience of organized effort. Whilst claiming a membership of 41,000 the figures submitted for the amount of per capita tax paid up to the time of their convention in Winnipeg in January this year their balance sheet shows a per capita tax collected of \$5,000 which cannot mean more than 5,000 dues paying members.

Increased activity is also being shown by the National Catholic Union who are waging an aggressive warfare in the province of Quebec against international trade unionism. They submit a claim to the Dominion Government Directory of Labor of a membership of 35,000, but for the purpose of showing this membership have changed their name from National Catholic

Federation of Labor Union to the National Catholic Union and have included in their aggregate membership many forms of organization which can not by any stretch of the imagination be classed as labor organizations.

The Canadian Federation of Labor is also making strenuous efforts to build up its membership, employing a permanent organizing secretary for this work. There are also existing about 100 independent unions having none but local federations.

The efforts of the Congress have been concentrated towards effecting these activities and whenever possible steps taken to bring about consolidation of independent or national units with established international trade unions.

**Conclusion.**

Appreciation is expressed of the support extended by the American Federation of Labor by placing additional organizers in Canada whose work has materially assisted the efforts of the Congress. Many of the international unions have also realized the necessity of maintaining Canadian Districts with executive board members of vice-presidents in charge thereof, and we would respectfully request your attention to the desirability of each international union carefully considering what steps may be possible to meet the expressed desire of their Canadian membership for national recognition within their international trade unions.

## COMPULSORY LABOR MUST BE RESTRICTED AT ANY

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movement in Canada were affiliated to their trade unions or with the A. F. of L. was to fleece the working people of their money, and that money was sent in tremendous sums to the United States and very little coming back to Canada, and that the money was used with all the international officers of all unions asking them for the exact figures of the payments by the organized labor movement of Canada to the International Trade Unions and expenditures for all purposes made for the men and women of the organized labor movement of Canada.

"The responses which I have received are incorporated in the report of the executive council laid before you, and will show that more than \$200,000 in the past year was transmitted to and expended for the labor movement of Canada than was received from the organizations in Canada. I do not care to enter into detail, but I felt that because the matter was referred to in one of my addresses made here that I could not escape the influence and desire to put the subject before you, perhaps a bit prematurely, but I do hope with some effect as to ascertaining the truth.

**Internationals Essential.**

"I want to refer also to a misunderstanding that has gone forth among some people of Canada," continued Mr. Gompers, "and I have reference to the word 'international.' They have tried to confuse the term 'international' in our trade union movement with the 'international' of some parts of Europe. I do not mean anywhere which is so out of harmony with that so-called 'international' as the American Federation of Labor. We surely cannot, for example, call the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America a national organization because it has very large number of men in the Dominion of Canada, and we recognize the Dominion of Canada as one of the parts of Europe."

"So long as life is with me, and mind is impaired, I shall contend for the right of men and women to hold themselves unowned or untrammelled by any force." (Applause.)

**Growth of A. F. of L.**

Mr. Gompers in continuing his speech welcomed the British fraternal delegates, and bid all welcome to the American Federation of Labor convention which had been held in Toronto in 1919 the membership had been 1,450,915, and today on meeting in another Canadian city the figure was 4,078,450.

"We have grown in numbers, we have grown in influence, we have grown in power, in the same way that we shall grow, and grow, and still grow, providing we hold ourselves in leash, but we will not keep time and step with those who are most backward, so that they may keep on the fringe line. Let our movement, no one can destroy it but ourselves. With unity, not dividing our influence, to get the American labor war against men and women, and let us spur them on and urge them on to duty and to the front. Let us have discipline upon ourselves, the voluntary discipline which is so essential to our unity and progress and success."

## WELCOMED A. F. OF L.

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retical viewpoint. The reputation of the "one big union" fallacy in Canada was a magnificent triumph for the unionism, and a vindication of the purposes, policies and achievements of the American Federation of Labor.

In the report stated: "We have closed a year of complex experiences. Our federation has gained in strength and influence and it has made during the year a record of achievement that must be a source of pride to every member.

"Human relations are always disturbed by great wars and must undergo a period of reconstruction and rearrangement following great wars. We have been passing through such a period of reconstruction and rearrangement; indeed we are still in the midst of it.

"In reviewing the work of the year we can say with confidence and truth that the efforts of the organized labor movement have been the means of withstanding the tide of reaction and the means of lightening the burdens of our country.

"We have given true expression to the demand of the masses of our people for progress, for the enlargement of the sphere of human life and for the development of the splendor of our democracy and its institutions of liberty, freedom and justice.

"The splendid efforts of the organized workers of America have been devoted to the cause of humanity in place as they were in war and in the years between wars. Our movement for humanity has gained in influence and effectiveness in proportion as it has gained in strength of numbers. Our problems will not be lessened during the year to come. Policies and methods far-reaching importance must be shaped. But viewing the past and the splendid statesmanship and accomplishments of our movement, we are confident of its future wisdom and ability. We call upon the movement to the vigilant in defense of the principles of liberty, freedom and justice, and to face every task with confidence, fortified in the consciousness that the struggle for humanity will triumph over all obstacles. "Now for the Five Million Mark!"

## VOLUNTARY ARBITRATION BOARD SUGGESTED

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Recommendation that the workers and employers of the U. S. create a voluntary arbitration body to settle labor's grievances in the future, was placed before the convention as a remedial proposal to bring about a "more harmonious relationship" between the two classes and reduce the high cost of living.

The resolution, presented by E. L. Edgerston of Syracuse, N.Y., representing the International Union of Steam and Operating Engineers, declares that the establishment of such a body would put an end to the present cycle of wage advancing and price-boosting, which it "seems like utterly to continue.

"Should the federation accept the proposal, the executive council would be instructed to extend an invitation to the associated industries and such other representative bodies of business men as in their judgment are necessary to meet with them for the purpose of devising ways and means of creating the voluntary arbitration body.

"Must Get Together.

"Labor and capital must get together," said Mr. Edgerston, "if the cost of living is to be reduced. We must voluntarily decide this question for ourselves as congress has failed to enact remedial legislation for reconstruction or to reduce the high cost of living."

"One hundred ten resolutions covering economic and industrial problems were made public today and referred to the committees. Included among these were resolutions that federation members must qualify as legal voters, that financial aid be given the Colorado State Federation of Labor on an injunctive to fight in the Supreme Court the Colorado "can't strike" law. Mayor Jack C. Walton, of Oklahoma City, Okla., he commended for his courageous defense of our principles and our organization; that the Government be urged to grant the labor forward holiday on Saturday throughout the year; that Congress be asked to enact legislation absolutely excluding "minor" support and financial assistance" be given the Boston Policemen's Union "until a satisfactory conclusion of its strike is reached."

"The Federated Press got off some of its propaganda but Chester Wright put the crimp in its tail by an analysis of its personnel.

"One thing that strikes a newcomer more than anything else was the democratic manner in which the business of the convention is conducted. Some there were in attendance who are not whole-hearted in the policies laid down by the Executive Council, but while they may disagree with the "old boy," as some of them have named the grand old president, still they are agreed that President Gompers is fair and fearless, and all sides are given the same privileges. He has fought labor's battles through the business of the American today, and he would be a handicap to many men, still President Gompers is full of vitality and can ever be relied upon to guide the International Trade Union ship through the troubled waters. His first lieutenant, Matt Wolf, is one of the ablest statesmen in the American today, and the two make a team of orators that are hard to equal. Frank Morrison, who by the way, is Canadian by birth, has a statement of his executive ability is unquestioned.

"Matt Wolf is small of stature but — Oh Boy."

Extensive propaganda in favor of the Union Label will be carried on during the coming year.

Rev. Father P. Dietz, of Cincinnati, one of the real stand-bys, was in attendance as a guest as has been his lot for a good many years. He attends all conventions of the A. F. of L. and never misses an opportunity to boost the International Trade Union movement.

The story is told of Abe Gordon, general organizer of the United Garment Workers of America, who during the days of the Labor Forward Movement had occasion to address a meeting in a Protestant Church. He had a large and attentive audience, while his religion was Jewish still he put over his little talk and everything went nicely until the next day when the church burned down. He claims to this day that this was due to the fact that a Jew spoke in a Protestant church.

Major F. Berry, general president of the International Pressmen's and Printers' Union, is the best dressed delegate in attendance at the convention.

One day this week we met Big John O'Connell, secretary of Typographical Union No. 62, New York. He was not a delegate to the convention, but had come to Canada on a "fishing" trip.

We doubt very much if there is another convention of any kind that produces so many "big" men. Not only "big" in brains, but "big" in stature.

At the International Labor Press Convention, a Labor edition from Pennsylvania, in speaking about freedom for Ireland, stated that the workers in that state were on a par with the people of Ireland. He stated that when the Legislature found that the police and militia did not function as they wished, it sent a message to Canada to the workings of the Mounted Police.

It did not suit, so a mission was sent to Australia and the Rangers did not fill the bill. So a mission went to Ireland. Here they found what was desired. "Not only," said the speaker, "they have the same conditions in Pennsylvania, but they wear the same uniforms, too. Come down there and free us. Never mind Ireland when there is work to do at home," was his advice.

Collis Lovely, the general president of the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union, was one of the most prominent delegates in attendance at the meeting of the Union Label Trades Department, which met just prior to the opening of the A. F. of L. convention. Boot and shoe workers have made and are making rapid progress in all parts of the country and it is not a very difficult task to secure boots bearing the label.

It is surprising to note the very large number of Canadian and British-born officials in the various international unions. On the executive committee of the A. F. of L. the president, Samuel Gompers, was born in England, while Frank Morrison, the secretary-treasurer, was born in Canada. Vice-President Barrett, of the I.T.U., is Canadian-born, and President McParland, the new

president of the I.T.U., was born in Australia. Many other officers are of British or Canadian birth.

The Amalgamated Clothing Workers, a dual organization to the United Garment Workers, had its quota of unopposed delegates made and it was not hard to distinguish them. Their hair gave the same away.

We were in conversation with Organizer Anderson, of the Longshoremen's organization, and from him we learned that his organization recently was compelled to strike. They had all of the men excepting at one port. Here the local was an I. W. O. One. When the legitimate organization pulled the strike it was not long until the I. W. O. did likewise, and now this local has made application to affiliate with the "right" organization.

President Bryan, of the United Leather Workers of America, was in attendance at the Union Label Trades Department, and also at the convention of the A. F. of L. The United Leather Workers have made rapid progress since the amalgamation and after their next convention a more active organization campaign is proposed.

President Tom Moore and Secretary-Treasurer P. M. Draper, of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress, are delegates to the convention and while they are the leaders of the International Labor movement in Canada they occupy a place of honor in the A. F. of L., and will carry the workers' flag in that body as they do on all occasions when any question affecting the workers' interests comes to the fore in Canada.

We notice a large number of the Canadian organizers at Montreal during the first days of the convention including the old war horse, John Flett, "Eddy" O'Dell, Jim Marsh, Fred Bush, E. Bastien, Frank Healey, J. Sullivan and others.

Some of the delegates are reported to have stated that they would move a resolution that the Statue of Liberty be moved from New York harbor to the mouth of the St. Lawrence as Montreal was the only oasis on the continent.

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