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EDMONTON FREE PRESS

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LABOR MEMBER MAKES GOOD

Another session of the Alberta legislature came to a close on Saturday. It was in many ways a disappointing session from Labor's standpoint. The increases in the indemnities to be paid under the Compensation Act are only partial, and a small part of what was needed to make the act as valuable as it should be. The minimum wage amendment to the Factories Act was horribly mutilated in the process of submission by the Government. Alex. Ross, who was prevented by a technicality from submitting the bill himself, passed it on to the Government; but it was so altered as to defeat some of the important provisions in the original draft. There were many other questions settled—and left unsettled—during the session in a manner highly unsatisfactory to Labor. It was hoped that this year Alberta might overtake some of the other provinces in the matter of Labor and social legislation, but the session's end finds us still lagging behind.

The bright spot in the session just closed was the work of Labor's sole representative. From his reply to the speech from the throne, which was easily the best address delivered in that debate, to the closing hours of the session, Mr. Ross was "on the job." Being Labor's only representative his duties were particularly arduous, for the reason that he had to be prepared to express the viewpoint of Labor on every question that directly interested the workers. With four or five Labor men in the house the work could have been divided among them, making it less strenuous and giving greater opportunity for study and concentration. Mr. Ross was always in his place. He supported everything of a progressive nature, and fought measures which he considered unjust or inequitable with all his characteristic vigor and tenacity. Never criticising for criticism's sake, but always contributing constructive thoughts and suggestions, Mr. Ross is an able representative of his constituency and the Labor movement.

Readers of the Free Press were fortunate in being enabled to keep in touch with the work of the legislature through Mr. Ross's splendid articles which appeared in this paper each week during the session. The fact that many of our readers have commented favorably on the manner in which the Free Press covered the session, may in a measure repay Mr. Ross for the sacrifice of his time in preparing his interesting and instructive articles and news items.

EXTREMISTS AND PROGRESSIVES

Probably the most persistent of human traits is that of going to extremes. Consequently there are many extremists prominent in the public life of every country. They can very well be classed in two main divisions: extreme reactionaries, and extreme radicals. Or, in other terms, those who can see nothing good in the new and those who despise all of the old. Both are extremists and both are equally dangerous.

There are many things in connection with present society that are bad. Many of our economic and social customs have outlived their usefulness and are obsolete. Changes are necessary and very desirable, and those who oppose them are extremists of a reactionary type. They stand in the way of human progress and are dangerous to the best interests of humanity.

There are some things in connection with present society that are built upon solid foundations of righteousness and service. Not all of present civilization can be scrapped with impunity, and those who advocate such action are extremists of a radical type. Their views are as dangerous to the orderly progress of the human race as those of the reactionary extremist.

But there is a middle road to be followed in the matter of social progress. Those who follow this course are the people of broad mind and clear vision. What is good in the old they would retain; what is bad they would discard. They would not grasp new thoughts and ideas because they are new, but because they could serve humanity. They are not reactionary or radical. They are progressive.

The extremist of any type is narrow; the progressive has breadth of mind and vision.

THE A.F. OF L. AND POLITICS.

It is not correct to say that the American Federation of Labor is keeping out of politics, and those who make such a claim have surely given the latest policy of the A.F. of L. a very superficial study. As a matter of fact the Federation has established a gigantic political organization throughout the United States and has adopted a platform so broad as to earn the approbation of a radical journal like the New Republic.

The new non-partisan effort of the American Labor movement is something more than the scheme of "elect your friends and defeat your enemies." In the matter of tactics, as well as of program, there is an innovation: "Our central bodies and our local non-partisan political committees have a great opportunity in the primaries. Here a smashing effort can be made to nominate members of trade unions for elective office." Commenting upon this move the New Republic says: "Mr. Gompers has put a cutting edge on his political weapon for the first time. If he is in earnest about it, if he really intends putting the full strength of organized Labor behind trade union candidates, he is likely to cut a deep gash in some of the industrial sections of the country."

It will be noticed that while in the past individual trade unionists were asked to reward friends and punish enemies with their votes, now central bodies have been instructed to form political organizations for the purpose, nominating and electing trade unionists or others favorable to the Labor movement. Whether the plan proves to be successful or not, it at least dispels the idea that the A.F. of L. believes in keeping out of politics.

FREE SPEECH AGAIN

Agitation that is purposeless, impracticable and otherwise unsound, if given free rein will evaporate into thin air. The white light of publicity, like no other agency, will reveal the weaknesses and follies of impracticable and illogical ideas and proposals. The Free Press has made this claim many times before and we have been corroborated in our views on as many occasions from a number of sources. We are glad to have our opinion on this matter confirmed further by the president of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

Mr. Moore who has just returned from Britain, finds that free speech there is not questioned in any way, and the consequence is that political ideas which will not bear the test of a searching analysis, are dying a natural death. This is what can be expected, for "out in the sunlight evil dies." Free speech, free press and free assemblage are the inalienable rights of free peoples.

EDITORIAL NOTES

If the trade union movement fulfilled no other purpose than that of the mouthpiece of Labor its existence would be justified. Organized Labor speaks for all the workers, expressing the needs and aspirations of the toilers, organized and unorganized.

There is much sound common sense in the words of Mr. Stanley at the Alberta Teachers' Convention, when he said: "Heretofore cheap talk on the dignity of labor and the joy of service has been accepted in lieu of gain of the realm, but it is no longer legal tender. I have not seen any statement that \$1,200 is too much for the job. If it would close schools we would not ask for it, but for every one closed because there is no salary to pay the teacher, ten will be closed because there is no teacher to pay the salary to."



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HUDSON'S BAY CO.

No man lives to himself alone. The trade union movement raises the living standard of the non unionist and the latter's inactivity militates against the movement's greater success.

Organization is the watchword of modern civilization. The unorganized are not up-to-date.

The public library provides an opportunity to Edmonton citizens that cannot be estimated in terms of dollars and cents.

The continued exclusion from the Factories Act of women and girls employed in restaurants, hotels and theatres, is worthy of the strongest condemnation.

The attendance at Trades' Council meetings is fairly good in Edmonton, but there are still a large number of delegates who do not answer to the roll call. Local unions should insist on their delegates being in attendance at the meetings.

The Labor Press

To the woman of the trade unionist household the union label affords a guarantee that the wages earned under union conditions are expended upon union products and for the maintenance of union conditions, to return with interest in improved conditions for all.

The union label derives its power from the fact that it is based upon the first law of nature, the law that "motion seeks the line of least resistance."

The workers who strike in protest against their wrongs may be defeated, but the public protest registered in the demand for the union label is invincible.

Every railroad in the country is bankrupt or on the verge of bankruptcy while their owners are millionaires and rolling in wealth. And that is practically the situation with every big corporation. It is head over heels in debt and can hardly pay for its operation, while its owners pay taxes on millions upon millions of annual profits. Doesn't that beat all the fairy tales! And there are still mudsills talking about letting well enough alone.—The Labor Clarion.

Legislation which benefits the mass at the expense of the excess indulgence of the few may be called class legislation by those whose indulgence is curtailed, but it is the kind of legislation Canada needs. Legislation which fosters and encourages the excess indulgences of the few while thousands are denied the right to live a normal life is the kind of class legislation the industrial and agricultural workers are organizing to destroy.—Industrial Banner.

Ever notice how some laundries fix a man's collars? They simply sharpen them and send them back.—The Leather Workers' Journal.

While everything else is dear, thrift can be had for nothing; yet a lot of persons do not seem to want it. Careless of him.—

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