

I believe that has been recognized, and I think that even the records of the department will show that as far as possible now immigration is taken out of the hands of transportation companies and that there is no direct bonus given. I think this is in the right direction. At the same time our Immigration Department has been growing and the work, although it may now be done from other motives, is still going on. At that same congress there was another resolution passed, but, I am unfortunate in having it here in the French language, and not being able to read it, I can only give a general idea of its purport which I happen to know because this resolution was proposed by Mr. Mortimer and seconded by myself. It condemns the importation of labour in blocks, or in large quantities, because, when such is brought into the country, it interferes with the labour market and has a tendency to reduce wages. It is not a proper thing for the government to concern itself with that in view of the fact that it has taken no means whatever to in any way fix a standard of living in this country such as has been adopted in some other countries by fixing a minimum wage and a maximum number of hours to constitute a day's work. I quite believe that if this were properly provided for there would be no objection from the ordinary workmen of this country to any kind of immigration whatever, Asiatic, European or any other. If there was a standard of living, if there was a minimum wage and a maximum hour for everybody and a fair competitive basis as far as the market is concerned, I do not think there would be any objection to immigration. This can be obtained, and is being obtained now in some countries. New Zealand by means of its arbitration laws, is fixing the minimum wage and fixing the day's work. It is doing so with the most remarkable success and its experiment has not been followed by the calamities prophesied for it. In most of the Australasian colonies the same thing is being done. The immigrant question in these colonies—in the light that objections are taken to it, not only by the labouring people of Canada but of this continent—has passed out of controversy. There is no objection to immigration as immigration on the part of any one. We all wish to see the country prosper and we all wish to see the country properly develop, but there is a decided objection to what is practically the bonusing of competition in the labour market. In 1898 there was some correspondence between the Trades and Labour Council of Winnipeg and the Minister of the Interior, dealing with this very subject of the Doukhobor and Galician immigration. It very fairly represents the opinions of both sides, and reading it over now after two years, I think it is probably one of the fairest and one of the ablest statements to hand on the immigration question as it

affected the city of Winnipeg, which city is most vitally interested. I will not read all the correspondence, but I will give the House an idea of what it contains. In the summer of 1899, when the larger part of this immigration was coming into the North-west it had a most decided detrimental effect on the labour market of the city of Winnipeg at the time. With two or three thousand people laid down in the city for some months with nothing to do, you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, that the labouring men of Winnipeg at that time felt that their interests were jeopardized. They wrote to the Department of the Interior as follows:

The Winnipeg Trades and Labour Council desire to call the attention of the government to some of the grave evils attending the large importations of Galicians and Doukhobors into this country, especially as they are at present affecting the interests of the unskilled labourers of Canada. We wish the government to clearly understand that we are not opposed to immigration into this country as such, but where public money is being spent to bring these people here, we have a right to demand that their presence should not injure the standard of life of the resident population.

Now, sir, this is just where the working classes are being hurt. These immigrants have been accustomed to a mode of life which enables them to work cheaply, and are thus displacing the Canadian workman who earns his living by manual labour. Last winter hordes of Doukhobors were parading Winnipeg doing such work as wood-cutting, &c., at wages of about 30 cents per day. At other points in Manitoba their competition was equally injurious, and thus, in spite of the written assurance of the local immigration commissioner, Mr. McCreary, that they would not be allowed to compete in the labour market, but would be located on land. We will cite another instance of this injurious competition. A large number of Galicians have been drafted from Yorkton and are being employed on the railroad construction of the South-eastern Railway at rates of wages which we have reason to know are less than current. In the House of Commons recently the Hon. Mr. Blair, discussing the low rates of wages paid trackmen on the Grand Trunk Railway, said the matter was one of supply and demand, but just here the government is paying out public money to increase the supply of labour, while the demand, being normal, is crowding down the wages of the working classes to a point that will not afford even a bare subsistence.

Having these facts in consideration, we therefore petition the government that railroads subsidized by public money shall pay current wages to all classes of labour which they may employ, and thus do something toward checking this unfair and dangerous competition which the working people of Canada are being subjected to.

Signed on behalf of the council by

J. T. MORTIMER,
President.

W. WHITE,
Secretary.

Then the Minister of the Interior answered that letter and answered it very fully, and I believe put forward grounds that will hold good to-day. His answer was in part as follows: