

INDUSTRIAL REVIEW FROM MANY SOURCES

CAPE BRETON AGAIN

The public in this part of Canada are not without interest in the recrudescence of the labor trouble in Cape Breton, since the coal-mining industry of Nova Scotia is, or ought to be, an important economic asset. Canada's domestic coal resources, though unfortunately distant from the larger consuming markets, are all that stand between the Canadian consumer and complete dependence upon supplies of imported fuel. With labor in Canadian mines owing allegiance to the same organization as that which virtually controls United States resources, the Canadian mines cannot be regarded as a dependable safeguard from a national point of view, but the fact that they are in this country is something, and their development would, under normal conditions, contribute in no small degree to the progress and upbuilding of Canadian industry. The trouble is that normal conditions do not prevail in Cape Breton, and have not prevailed there for some years. As long ago as 1919, the then Fuel Controller, following an exhaustive study of Canadian conditions, deemed it necessary to observe that coal from the Maritime Provinces could not retain its markets unless mining operations could be held down to a competitive basis. "It is not sufficient merely to mine coal. It must also be mined at a figure that will give a reasonable return on capital invested, and at the same time will refund the investment during the life of the mine, for coal is a crop that is harvested once for all."

The owners of the Cape Breton mines have been endeavoring to produce coal upon a competitive basis, that is to say, to bring down the cost of production to a point at which the coal can be marketed successfully in competition with coal from other areas. The attempt has been attended with many difficulties, and some disorder, this being due to the uncompromising attitude of the organized miners, an attitude which, it must be said in all fairness, has not always had the endorsement of the international executive of the United Mine Workers. The wages paid in Cape Breton in 1921 were governed by an agreement entered into in Montreal in November of the previous year, and the rate was, upon an average, 146 per cent. higher than the 1914 scale. There had been an increase of 12 1/2 per cent. under this agreement, but the increase so affected the selling price that coal could not be marketed as readily as in the preceding year; there was a considerable loss in working time and the miners actually earned less than under the former and lower scale. At the end of 1921 the companies, having failed to negotiate a new agreement, gave notice of a reduction of approximately 35 per cent., and this reduction, subject to certain modifications, was confirmed by a Board of Conciliation. The miners resisted and, as a result of further conferences, the management granted some important concessions, but the extremists among the miners were still irreconcilable, and the progress of the industry continued to be hampered by discord, unrest and uncertainty.

The agreement which terminated this week was entered into as a means of terminating the strike which tied up the mines in the summer of 1922, a strike which lacked the official sanction of the union and was attended with sabotage and riotous disturbances. The settlement was based upon substantial wage increases, both to dated and contract men, and was made retroactive to July 15. As the date of its termination approached, negotiations were opened looking to a new agreement, but these negotiations were unproductive up to the time of the expiration of the 1922 contract, and the company posted notice of a wage reduction of twenty per cent., to be effective during the banking season. The miners have chosen to regard this action in the nature of a lockout, which officials of the company say was not intended, and another strike has been precipitated. The situation is unfortunate and the idleness of the miners is certain to be costly, both to the men themselves and to the community in which they live. The relations between employees and employers in this industry have been more or less strained and unsatisfactory for a considerable period, as is shown by the events recapitulated above. The much-vaunted labor laws of the Dominion have failed to bring about any lasting betterment in these relations. A Commission was appointed some time ago to inquire into conditions affecting the allied steel industry of Cape Breton, but, as far as is known that Commission has accomplished nothing of consequence to date. Both the miners and their employ-

ers appear now to be waiting for some word from the headquarters of the United Mine Workers of America, a none-too-proud position for a Canadian industry to be in. Events have shown conclusively that a patched-up peace will not remedy conditions in Cape Breton, and the present strike should be settled only upon such terms as are likely to ensure stability. Such terms should be fair to the miners, but they must necessarily be based upon market conditions; high wages are of no value to the employees if they mean a prohibitive selling price.

Legal Eight-Hour Day Asked by Labor

That labor as an organization is keenly awake to the needs of itself, and equally well versed on the questions to come before the next session of the provincial parliament was demonstrated yesterday when a delegation from the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and the Labor Educational Association of Ontario laid many requests before the government.

In brief the recommendations are as follows: That one-man street cars be forthwith abolished, that an eight-hour day be compulsory by law, that women and children be further protected in industry, steps immediately be taken to reduce unemployment, fair wage clauses should be inserted in all government contracts, the Workmen's Compensation Act include in its benefits all workmen whether employed by municipalities, governments and private individuals, and the Mothers' Allowance Act include widows with one child.

Satisfaction in the system of government savings banks as now in operation was expressed and the Adolescent School Attendance Act also met with generous approval by the labor men. Further recommendations were the appointment of vocational directors fully to inform youths as they left school as to the qualifications necessary in the particular line of work they intended following. Proportional representation, election day to be a holiday, one man, one vote; elimination of property qualifications for voting on money by-laws, labor representation on all appointed commissions especially the Hydro commission and the public ownership of all public utilities were all endorsed by the delegation.

Resents Threat To Make Wage Cut

HAMILTON. — President A. Shaw presided at the building trades council meeting held in Labor temple. All trades reported large numbers out of work. The Welland canal was once again under discussion, and the suggestion by the contractor that the men accept a five-cent reduction in their wages taken up. The consensus of opinion was that it was a small piece of business on the part of the contractor to intimidate the men with such a threat that, in the event of their refusing to accept the reduction, they would be deprived of an opportunity to work for the rest of the winter. The following resolution will be sent to Premier Mackenzie King: "The Hamilton Building Trades Council having had brought to its attention that one of the contractors on the Welland canal proposed, with the consent of their employer, to reduce wages five cents per hour in order that they may carry on during the winter months; the minister of labor the Hon. James

Mulock, has already intimated that if the consent of the workers is obtained that it will certainly be satisfactory to him; "Therefore be it resolved that this Building Trades Council is much surprised at a minister of labor giving his consent to this form of intimidation. No contractor has the right to hold the threat over the workers' heads of depriving them of the opportunity to work if they do not consent to a reduction of wages. And in view of the fact that the contractors have never paid the scale of wages prevailing in the district; we cannot see any reason why the workers should be further exploited. "And be it further resolved that the attitude of the government has taken on the question of emigration in bringing thousands of people into this country, claiming there is work for all, the government should see that this work is kept going and the men fully employed, and not bludgeoned into accepting reductions in wages by unscrupulous contractors."

The election of officers for the ensuing year resulted as follows: President, A. Shaw, local 15, carpenters; vice-president, A. Pullen, local 61, sheet metal workers; corresponding secretary, A. Edgington, local 212, carpenters; financial secretary, W. Allen, local 105, painters; sergeant-at-arms, A. Dove local 2,659, carpenters; auditors, W. Shields, local 700 engineers; A. Pullen, local 61, sheet metal workers.

World Labor to Confer

GENEVA. — An International Labor Conference has been convoked for Geneva beginning June 16. The main items of the agenda have been fixed as follows: Development of facilities for the utilization of worker's leisure. Equality of treatment for national and foreign workers as regards workmen's compensation for accidents.

Weekly suspension of work for 24 hours in glass manufacturing processes where tank furnaces are used. Night work in bakeries. The conference will also be called upon to take action on the report of the Advisory Committee on Anthrax upon the report of Albert Thomas, the director of the International Labor Office, which will contain a general survey of the work of the Labor Bureau during the period from July, 1922, to the end of the year 1923.

Unions Urge More Work Will Hold Labor Here

TORONTO. — With the hope of speeding up the building trades and thus holding more men in Canada local contractors are being reminded that on work commenced before May 1 they will be able to effect a 25 per cent. saving on wages alone. Business Secretary Walter Thorne, of the Bricklayers' and Stonemasons' Union, said yesterday that the glowing reports of high wages across the line brought back by men returning for Christmas had tended to augment the exodus of labor from Toronto. It was useless to expect the men to remain here in idleness when plenty of work was available in the United States.

Radicals Declare Sedition Law of Canada Too Wide

HEALIFAX. — Several labor organizations of this city have organized a defence committee on behalf of J. M. McLachlin, at present serving sentence in the Dorchester penitentiary on account of his activity in the Sydney strike. J. S. Woodsworth M.P., for Winnipeg, addressed a labor mass meeting here and stressed the great injustice of which Mr. McLachlin had been the victim. The criminal code, Mr. Woodsworth contended, contained no definition of what sedition actually was with in the meaning of the law and that consequently any court might interpret it as broadly as it pleased. Foreigners in Canada charged with sedition, he claimed, had no protection under the law whatever, even though they might have become naturalized citizens. Referring to his own experience in Winnipeg, he declared that he had the honor of being the first man ever put in jail for quoting from the Old Testament. "Many people are stronger in jail than out," said Mr. Woodsworth. "Out West we have a saying that if you want to get into parliament, first get into jail on a political offence."

Cape Breton locals of the U.M.W. are preparing for a big fight in Indianapolis for the restoration of their autonomy, and an early election of district officers to replace the provisional Barrett regime now in power in Glace Bay. For the first time in years a number of locals are sending delegates to the international convention to represent the interests of district No. 26.

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asked to contribute to the agenda of the conference. A draft of the business to be placed before the London conference has been received from Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson, general secretary of the British Labor party, and was considered in the preparation of the circular. The conference to be held here shortly will endeavor to arrive at conclusions upon interpartisan problems.

Report of U.S. Commissioner of Naturalization

Sweeping changes in the naturalization laws of the United States are recommended by Raymond F. Crist, Commissioner of Naturalization, in his annual report to the Secretary of Labor. Briefly they call for a clearer definition of the special naturalization privilege granted to all honorably discharged soldiers and sailors serving during the world war to conform to peace time conditions; a uniform seaman's discharge certificate for the elimination of fraudulent naturalizations; the use of dispositions instead of requiring physical presence of two witnesses to prove State residence; repeal of the prohibitions in the naturalization law against filing of declarations of intention and the hearing of naturalization petitions within thirty days of election days and the posting of naturalization petitions for at least ninety days before hearing; the extension of the period within which unlawfully arriving aliens may be deported for not less than five years after illegal entry and prohibition against their naturalization until at least five years continuous approved lawful residence; the enactment of a provision requiring appeal

registration and enrollment of all aliens as a means of checking the wholesale raiding of aliens into the United States and subsequently their admission to citizenship irrespective of illegal entry in the United States, to facilitate the taking of steps for the deportation of those who are barred under our immigration statutes and to legalize the admission of those found worthy of remaining, placing them in the position where they may take their place as worthy Americans, side by side with other Americans of similar worth; and that naturalization proceedings be brought entirely within the administrative branch of the Government and thereby relieve the judiciary of the tedious process of naturalization, with the right of appeal from the Commissioner of Naturalization or a Naturalization Commission to the appellate court of the United States in whose jurisdiction the alien petitioner resides. Commissioner Crist's recommendations for this remedial legislation are supplemented by a recital of clearly defined benefits to the candidates for citizenship and the citizenry of the country. They are based upon facts and are consistently in line with the budget plan of efficiency and economy in the administration of the "bus lines" of the Government relating to the process of assimilating the political family of the United States. During the past year 145,084 were admitted to American citizenship, 24,874 of whom were from Italy, 22,621 from Poland, 17,953 from Russia, 16,953 from Great Britain and possessions (except Canada), 12,064 from Germany and the remainder from smaller countries and their possessions. The report shows that 24,384 were denied or rejected for various causes, most of which will be avoided in the future, according to Commissioner Crist, under the recently adopted plan for simplifying the ad-

ministrative machinery by establishing a contract between the naturalization examining force and the applicant for naturalization BEFORE he files his naturalization petition instead of after. Under this plan the field officer will be able to adjust such defects as may be disclosed by his examination and insure the filing of a petition free from the risk of dismissal because of legal defects: "In short, the Government at once becomes the 'friend' of its adopted son instead of acting in the time-old conception of hindering, rather than aiding our foreign born to become citizens."

To improve the citizenry of the country, the Bureau has supplied the public schools of 2,461 communities throughout the United States with 239,995 copies of the Federal Citizenship Text Book and its various supplements. Under the law this text book is furnished by the Government to teach English and citizenship to candidates for citizenship in attendance upon public schools. A notable feature of the report brings out the fact that 22,209 declarations of intention were filed by women under the "Cable Act" of September 22, 1922, which accorded separate citizenship rights to women. The law providing independent naturalization and citizenship for married women has resulted in the extension of women's classes all over the country. Statistics compiled subsequent to the preparation of the report show that women in attendance upon public school classes for adult immigrants averaged thirty-five per cent. of the approximately 250,000 reported to have been enrolled in 1923. In New York City alone 131 classes were conducted for women with an enrollment of 1,257, up to February 1, 1923; Hibbing, Minn. had

six American-ization home teachers each with an enrollment of over 50; Jackson, Miss. conducted classes in 37 homes; Kansas City, Kans. had 30 and similar favorable reports have come from other sections of the country. In spite of the political turmoil in Europe and the tendency, against organized government, the year's work resulting from the cooperation of the Bureau of Naturalization with municipalities throughout the country shows a high wave of optimism and an increasing spirit of Americanism in every locality where patriotic exercises for new citizens were held. Commissioner Crist points out in his report that all of these activities in so far as the cost of administration by the Bureau of Naturalization is concerned, including the cost of publishing the Citizenship Text Book, and the administration of the Naturalization law, are being paid for practically in their entirety from the fees paid by the candidates for their naturalization papers.

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