

Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press



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The Canadian Labor Press

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KEEPING CANADIAN WORKMEN EMPLOYED

There is an industrial conflict in process in the City of Toronto at the present time with regard to the allotting of a city contract for iron water mains. The National Iron Works of Toronto are bidding against an English concern for the contract and to date decision has been reserved. The tender from the Toronto Works was some \$14,000.00 higher than the English company which has caused the hold up in the awarding of the contract.

There are apparently some members of the Toronto Council who look at the nickles and lose sight of the dollars, and also forget the fact that we are continually campaigning that Canadian money should be kept in Canada as far as possible for Canadian Trade and Progress. The National Iron Works are not only paying twenty thousand dollars per year taxes into the coffers of the City Treasurer, which is six thousand dollars in excess of the difference in the tenders, but the future for the coming winter of some four hundred Canadian workmen is involved. The National Iron Works depends on contracts of this nature to keep their plant running, and the loss of this contract would mean that these four hundred would be thrown out of work and it would be up to the city to provide for them, which in the last analysis would amount to a good deal more than the fourteen thousand dollars. The whole question is one which contributes to or detracts from the steady growth of Canadian industry. It also should be borne in mind that the Canadian workman receives a much higher rate of pay than the English workman and his entire social life is built in a higher scale.

ONTARIO'S PROHIBITION FARCE

One of the momentous questions of the day is prohibition in all its phases and it is particularly in the limelight at the present time with the majority of the provinces under Government control, and the comparison of Quebec's position with that of Ontario. It is estimated that within fifteen years Quebec will have paid off her debts and the same time conditions are not so bad there as they are in Ontario with regard to the moral aspect. Immorality and vice exists to a more or less degree in any community, be it wet or dry, and we are of the sincere belief that Ontario would be ahead in every way if we handled the liquor question in a similar manner to that prevailing in British Columbia. We may be wrong, but we believe that the only individuals benefitting under the Ontario Temperance Act are the doctors and bootleggers. Instead of the general public through the government getting the benefit, it is going into the hands of a few. We venture to say that 95 per cent of the liquor prescriptions issued by doctors are unnecessary from a medicinal standpoint and the present system, instead of prohibiting, only raises the cost to the consumer, and confines the use to those people having the means to purchase the beverages. We lose sight of the fact that a large majority of our working men would also like to share in the consumption of the beer at least. The only ones who are restrained from drinking at the present time are those not having the price, and it is kept from them on the pretext that the beverages are not good for them, why is it not kept from those individuals who have the price? This whole question again demonstrates the inequalities that exist between the rich and the poor. Ontario's Temperance Act should be changed so that the business is run for the benefit of the masses. If there was absolute Government control with every citizen licensed, it would do away with exorbitant high prices and give every man an opportunity to feel that he was free to exercise his own judgment within due bounds and within reason. If a man abuses his privilege, his license could be taken away until such time as he knew enough to behave himself. The result would be that instead of the Government expending huge sums to enforce the O. T. A., they would receive all the revenue from licenses and profits and they could control the profits to the manufacturer as well, and the moral and business standard of the province would be on a much higher plane as a consequence.

Patronize White Laundries Who Employ White Labor

A SET-BACK TO COMMUNISM.

The Communist workers in Canada received a severe jolt when Jim MacLachlan, former Secretary of District 26, United Mine Workers of America, and one of the outstanding radical leaders in Canada, was sentenced to two years imprisonment for sedition in connection with the recent strikes at the mines of the British Empire Steel Corporation in Nova Scotia.

In connection with this sentence, The Worker, official organ of the Workers' Party of Canada, with whom MacLachlan was associated, makes a bitter attack on the British Empire Steel Corporation, and blames them for all the supposed wrongs of the miners. On the other hand, the manager of the B. E. S. Co., claims that the shareholders are shouting because they are not getting dividends on their investment. No doubt both sides are to blame, and it is the old story of the struggle between Capital and Labor. The miners got restless under the strain of hard work with nothing to look forward to, and feel that they really have nothing to look forward to and feel that they really have nothing to lose no matter what they do, so they go the limit, with the result that bitter struggles ensue. The employers on the other hand, contend that the business is not paying, and are very much insulted when the miners demand better working conditions and more money. The employers take the attitude that the shareholders come first, while the men naturally believe that they should come first. While we are well aware that industry is a cold blooded affair, at the same time it behooves all employers to treat their men on a fair and equitable basis if only for their own selfish motives. A good many employers think that when they have the bulge on labor they should grind the men down, but the reverse should be the case, for if you treat your employees right they will return you good dividends in service. We know that many thousands of dollars are lost to industry through dissatisfied help, and the small increase in wages or the bettering of conditions would be repaid many times through increased efficiency of the worker.

POSSIBILITIES OF ESTABLISHMENT OF COKING INDUSTRY

INVESTIGATION BY THE DOMINION FUEL BOARD

Progress Made in Effort to Solve Domestic Fuel Problem—Testing Maritime Province Coals.

The central part of Canada is feeling the need at the present time of ample supply of domestic fuel of a high quality at a reasonable price. The great strike of last year in the anthracite field was the cause of the acute shortage last winter but the attention thus drawn to the subject has shown that the deposits of anthracite coal are limited and that the supply is being used up with comparative rapidity.

To assist in the obtaining and distribution of fuel of some kind to tide over the strike period, fuel committees, federal, provincial, and municipal were created. These committees functioned through the winter of 1922-23 and are still in operation, but they do not touch on the larger problem, that of obtaining a suitable domestic fuel to take the place of anthracite. It was to deal with this problem that the Dominion Fuel Board was established by the Hon. Charles Stewart, Minister of Mines. The function of this Board is not to find fuel for a few months during an emergency but to carry on investigations which may indicate to citizens a permanent source of supply. Their task, therefore, is a large one which will take time for completion.

Various lines of investigation are being followed, among others that of the commercial feasibility of producing coke in by-product recovery ovens in our larger cities. The field work in this investigation is practically finished and the information collected is now being prepared for publication. While the details are not yet available, it may be stated that conditions are found to indicate that the erection of plants at several points would be a warranted com-

mercial venture for individual firms or corporations. Investigations are also being carried out by the board in conjunction with the Mines Branch to determine the coking qualities of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick coals, and it is hoped these may be available for this purpose and thus reduce the supplies drawn from abroad.

EXCESSIVE LABOR SUPPLY.

Unskilled labor in Cuba is receiving from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per day, the low rate being due probably to the fact that the labor supply exceeds the demand. West Indians and Southern Europeans, who are temporarily domiciled in Cuba, are also adding to the surplus labor.

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Minority Move

"TO PREPARE FOR FEDERATION BY PROPAGANDA."

As a result of continued attacks upon wages and the status of Welsh miners and further drastic cuts promised in November, a new Welsh movement has been initiated in the Rhondda Valleys.

It is known as the Miners' Minority Movement, and is intended to be run on the same lines as the unofficial movement that was born on the Cambrian strike. It will bring its

influence to bear upon matters of vital importance to miners.

It urges the federation to give 14 days' notice to terminate the present contract and agreement, and to demand a wage equal to the cost of living, taking 1914 as the standard. Mr. Arthur J. Cook, Rhondda miners' agent, said to me (wires of Daily Herald representative, "We feel that the ordinary constitutional channels of federation are too slow and hedged in by so many domestic issues as to be incapable of drafting policies to meet the ever-changing economic conditions in the coalfield."

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