

been greedily seized for fining the workers, and especially women or youths, for slight faults or oversights, and thus surreptitiously reducing wages, already far too small, has been abundantly proved. One case was given in which an apprentice had put in 57 hours' work during the week, but had no wages to receive, the fines inflicted having not only consumed his small earnings, but left him in debt to his employer. This, of course, is an extreme case, but cases in which from one-third to two-thirds of a woman or boy's earnings are thus fraudulently and illegally withheld are numerous. In the cigar manufacture it was sworn to by several witnesses—for all the evidence before the Labor Commission is on oath—that journeymen were charged with imperfect cigars, though in what the imperfection consisted was not told them, nor could they discover it on examination. The cigars thus charged did not, as would naturally be supposed, become the workman's property. They were taken away, and none of the hands knew what became of them. They were probably sold by his employer at a somewhat lower rate, the journeyman being thus unblushingly robbed of the amount received for them. If men could be robbed in this open manner, we may imagine how poor women, perhaps widows with dependant families, would fare. Such proceedings are both fraudulent and illegal, for although an employer can deduct the value of an article destroyed or injured by carelessness or malice from the wages of a domestic servant or hired workman, the burden of proof of malice or carelessness falls by law on the employer who cannot in any case charge against wages any damage purely accidental. Nor can fines, except subject to this rule, be legally deducted unless it can be shown to the satisfaction of the court that their levy, according to a mutually agreed on scale, formed part of the contract between employer and employed.

The whole testimony on this important subject shows the necessity in our larger trades for mixed boards of employers and workmen invested by statute, with power to arrange these and similar matters, and to decide, cheaply and summarily, all disputes on such points. Such boards have existed in Continental Europe for years, and have done much to prevent strikes by diminishing the friction between the buyers and sellers of labour. They do not attempt the impossible task of fixing by law the rate of wages, but their recommendations on this point, based as they are on the demand for the articles manufactured by their trade, the cost of raw material, freight, etc., are always received with respect, and in most cases adopted by their constituents. As to what may be termed the internal discipline of their own division of the great army of toilers, these boards possess and exercise ample compulsory and legal powers. They regulate fines and their disposal, enforce the payment of wages, punish breaches of contract by either party, and decide on the sanitary and protective arrangements necessary for preserving the lives, limbs and health of members of their trade. The best proof that can be given of success of these trade councils is the rareness of strikes or internal trade disputes wherever they exist. Anarchists, Nihilists, Communists and Socialists, men who would destroy or remould the whole constitution of society, can be found in more or less numerous walks in every European country. But that suspicious, antagonistic, hostile spirit which, in English-speaking countries, so largely leavens the relations between the individual capitalist and the men he employs, is scarcely known.

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The list of subjects on which the commissioners request evidence has a very wide range, and having been extensively circulated, ought to elicit a vast variety of information and opinions. That workmen fully appreciate the importance to them of many of these subjects, is shown by the amount of valuable and interesting testimony already taken by the commission.

SEJONOS.

THE MURDER LEAGUE.

THE STATE OF IRELAND—THE PRIESTS AND THE "PEOPLE"

—ENGLISHMEN MUST SETTLE THE DIFFICULTY.

In Ireland the National League is at its zenith. Tyrannies and cruelties are performed as if the law was a sham; in fact in some places the courts of the League reserve the decision of the courts of the Queen. In the words of Mr. Justice Fitzgerald: "Life is not secure, right is disregarded, the process of the law cannot be enforced and dishonesty and lawlessness disgrace the land." Since these words were uttered by Mr. Fitzgerald no change has taken place. The National League is the root and branch of disorder and anarchy in Ireland. It is an organization with 1,500 branches, and each branch generally, hold their meetings on Sunday, either in a chapel or some other place of a more secret character. In most instances the presidents are Romish priests. It is they who direct their movements. They are the bitter enemies of English rule in Ireland, and they are never behind in attesting their hatred towards England and everything English. The priests are complete masters of the situation, and under their direction they find dupes to do their dirty work. They attend at evictions, and under their superintendence the chapel bells are rung and horns are blown to gather their dupes together to form a counter party to obstruct the sheriffs in the lawful execution of their duty. If a compromise is to be made between landlord and tenant the priest does it; the tenant is a mere tool in the priest's hands. If the proceedings at an eviction become noisy and of an outrageous character, those in authority cannot get the police to do their duty. As a matter of fact they will instantly throw down their arms and refuse to perform the most simple order. This has been the case in many instances. Naturally enough one would say: "How is it that the police will not do their duty?" The fact is, by going against the dictates of a priest they are liable to have the curse of excommunication pronounced upon them. In Ireland the priests think it is a sacred duty to incite "the people" against the law of England. If a priest comes under the law for some misdemeanor he has committed, or if he is summoned to give evidence in behalf of the Crown, he will refrain from appearing in court. Why does he do so? Because in the Romish Church there is a law that prohibits him from doing so. If a warrant is issued for his arrest for "contempt of court" there cannot be got a policeman to arrest him. Any man who arrests a priest brings himself under one of the cannon laws of Rome, which is as follows: "We curse all magistrates and judges who bring criminal causes against ecclesiastical persons by arresting them or pronouncing sentences against them." Now, that doctrine every priest in Ireland is bound by his vows to inculcate on the consciences of his poor, ignorant dupes.

Priests will not sow the seeds of intelligence amongst their people. Their chief object is to keep them in the depths of ignorance, lest they should go according to their own consciences. At present it is impossible to obtain a just verdict, no matter how simple the case may be. A jurymen cannot go according to his own conscience; he has to do as the priest directs him. I support my argument in saying that the priests and prelates are the chief supporters of the National League by giving a quotation from a speech delivered in the British House of Commons by Mr. Sexton: "The National League is the mainstay and the protection of the people, and is sanctioned and supported by the prelates and the priests of the church of the people—the Catholic Church."

The Land League is absolutely a Roman Catholic society. All those outrages, however extreme they may be, have been perpetrated by Roman Catholics. In fact, Protestants hold altogether aloof from sharing in its murderous