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HOUSING TO HAVE FIRST CLAIM ON BUILDING TRADES IN GREAT BRITAIN

A national agreement under which work on the various housing schemes in Great Britain will be accelerated has been under discussion during the past two months between the Housing Committee of the Cabinet and the Resettlement Committee of the National Industrial Council for the Building Industry. Progress on these schemes has been retarded hitherto by the prevailing shortage of skilled labor, stoppages of work, the prohibition by the unions of overtime work, and other causes. To remedy these conditions, the Government at first proposed that union rules in regard to apprentices and hours of labor in house-building should be relaxed, and that the Building Trades Council should provide guarantees against stoppages of work or strikes. The representatives of the Industrial Council replied that no such guarantee was possible, but agreed that the rule regarding overtime should be suspended in regard to housing; they maintained that the labor shortage was largely due to the lack of proper distribution of available labor, which they believed could be remedied by a proper distribution of contracts, and asserted that labor was deliberately diverted from housing operations by means of special inducements offered to

the workers to engage on commercial buildings. A compromise was finally reached to the effect that in future housing schemes should have the first call on labor so which end trade union organizers should prepare returns of all men willing to work on housing schemes in their own districts, and ascertain the extent of labor shortage on the various schemes. It was further agreed that steps should be taken to prevent the offer of extra inducements to workmen to abandon housing for commercial building. On the suggestion of the Building Industry Council, it was agreed that as labor objected to the principle of payment by results, the output of houses should be increased by augmenting the personnel of the trades, by the improvement of existing working conditions, and by payment for "waiting" or idle time due to weather. Increased personnel will be obtained by doubling the number of first-year apprentices at present, allowed, and by fixing the apprenticeship term at three years for ex-service men, and four for others. A minimum wage for the first six months of indenture equal to 50 per cent. of the journeymen's wage, with successive advances, and with definite provision for the instruction of apprentices.

MEXICO WANTS PROTECTION FOR WOMEN.

(I.C.W.W. Newsletter.)
The Secretary to the Mexican Labor party has written to us assuring us of the interest of this organization in the work of the I.C.W.W. It is a sign of the times that from Mexico has come this letter asking us to keep in close touch with the Mexican labor movement, so that we may help the Mexican workers to increase their efforts "in behalf of the rights of women." The letter says further: "We believe that the achievement of the workers' emancipation will be impossible of realization unless the

woman is also emancipated and her rights guaranteed in such a manner as to make her a factor in the social struggle."

ASKS WOMAN'S RELEASE.

The Woman's Independent Labor party will forward a petition to the Minister of Justice asking for the release of Mrs. Mary Evans, who was sent to jail for shoplifting. She had an infant in arms when sentenced. The women are much exercised over the affair, and stated that if this woman were in better circumstances her case would have been called kleptomaniac and she would have been freed.

DESERTED MOTHERS MAY BE BROUGHT UNDER ACT.

Major T. J. Murphy, who is chairman of the London Mothers' Pensions Board, states that from all parts of western Ontario are coming appeals for allowances for mothers who had been deserted by their husbands. Major Murphy says that all the facts are being obtained, with the intention of securing an amendment to the act which will assist such mothers financially, to which they appear well entitled.

ADDS MUCH TO ECONOMIC RESOURCES OF THE NATION.

"Women of United States who are doing their own housework are making an annual contribution of more than \$10,000,000,000 to the economic resources of the nation," declared Mrs. Thos. G. Winter, president of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, in a speech at Harrisburg, Pa., recently. "Every woman who does her own housework is making a contribution of at least \$40," she said. "The club women should recognize this contribution and should demand that provision be made by the Government for the training of teachers and other women in home economics."

The right of labor to fix its hours of work must not be abrogated, abridged or interfered with.

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