

# Ontario Workman.

THE EQUALIZATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL SCALE SHOULD BE THE TRUE AIM OF CIVILIZATION.

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## Communication.

### THE TAILORS' STRIKE.

We insert with pleasure the following communication which has been handed us for publication:—

(To the Editor of the Ontario Workman.)

SIR,—At this early stage of our trade difficulty with the master tailors of Toronto, it is my duty as a friend of humanity to make an effort to check an evil before it becomes greater. We have made a demand for an increase on our present bill of prices, and have submitted it to our respective employers, for their consideration. We ask to be paid at the rate of 18 cents an hour; we receive at present 15 cents per hour. In St. Catharines, the prices paid in first-class shops are considerably above what Toronto pays. I speak in reference to the four first-class shops here that have locked out their workmen; and, let me ask, for what? for asking an increase in their wages in a respectful way.

In St. Catharines, tailors are paid 15 and 20 cents per hour. I am quoting from their bill of prices which I have before me as I am writing this letter, and which came into operation on the 1st of May, 1873. The employers in St. Catharines have signed that bill, and their signatures can be seen attached. If they can afford to pay from 15c to 20c an hour to their workmen, surely it is not an extraordinary demand to ask 18c per hour in Toronto. Unless we ask an increase of wages in our busy time, there is not a shadow of a chance of getting it in the slack seasons. I do admit that in the view the employers take, appearances are somewhat against us in making our present demand. Two years ago our grievances were before the public, and it may appear that we are hard to please; but when I give a fair explanation, it may give our present grievances a different complexion. Two years ago the four employers that the men on strike worked for, agreed to meet, and did meet, a committee which our society appointed, to mutually settle the difficulty; but in the details of our bill of prices they shirked our demands so closely, that to my knowledge, it did not give the satisfaction that we hoped it would.

In regard to the large wages we are said to earn in busy times, I hope my explanation will give satisfaction. We have two busy seasons in the year, one commencing early in September and ending early in January, the other commencing early in March, and ending early in July. Now, if men do not work hard in these busy seasons, they cannot earn much in the slack times intervening between. Some men, as it is well known, can work faster than others. I know, to my knowledge, men that work where I do, and who, in busy times, eat their dinners in the workshop, and often their suppers also, and who work till 12 o'clock at night, and sometimes till morning. Now, what is the cause of that? Simply, the rush of work, and the scarcity—at that season—of workmen. Gentlemen wanting their garments for the winter will have them, if possible, before January, and in like manner gentlemen requiring summer garments, will have them, if possible, before the end of June; and is it not too bad, to use the agency of the public press to lead the public astray in regard to the wages the tailors earn in their busy seasons, while they make no mention at all of the amount earned in the slack times. Now, in regard to our slack seasons, without fear of contradiction, I say during the last ten years I have not averaged more than \$5 a week, and this for four months in the year. So much for the large wages that tailors can earn.

The employers in their communication with us—their workmen—said we should not trouble them, they are so busy with their fall business, but if we would wait until their busy season was over, they would have more leisure to attend to our demands. Who ever heard of workmen getting an increase of wages in slack times? Why, sir, they would laugh at our demands. I think you will agree with me that it would be a great stretch of generosity on their part to increase our wages in slack times.

Then their complaint of the want of sufficient time to consider the scale of prices submitted by the workmen to their employers is merely a subterfuge and a sham. Surely three day's consideration of a tailor's demand for an advance of wages in very dear and expensive times, ought to be quite sufficient for men of intelligence, and would be, had they

only the inclination or desire to honestly meet our just demands. In conclusion I may say that I alone am responsible for this communication, hoping that it will be received in a friendly spirit—the spirit in which it is written—believing that it may help a little to bring about an early settlement. Oh! if that golden rule that was brought down from Heaven by the Son of God—of doing to others as we would wish that they should do unto us—was more generally observed through the world, in all the large centres of trade, there would not be so many strikes as we hear of in our day.

Hoping, sir, that you will award me space in your widely circulated journal, I sign myself—Your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH BONDIER.

Toronto, Sept. 30th, 1873.

### BANQUET IN THE TRADES' ASSEMBLY HALL.

The banquet in connection with the Canadian Labor Congress took place on Wednesday evening, 24th inst., in the Trades' Assembly Hall, which was appropriately decorated. The chair was occupied by Mr. J. W. Carter, President, and the vice-chairs by Mr. D. J. O'Donoghue, of Ottawa, and Mr. Magness, of St. Catharines. Over one hundred were in attendance. After full justice had been done to the bounteous supply of edibles, furnished by Mr. Raffignone, the usual loyal and patriotic toasts were drunk and responded to.

The Chairman proposed the toast of "The Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales and Royal Family," in a few terse remarks, stating that he believed there were no men more loyal to Her Gracious Majesty than the Workingmen of Canada. The sentiment was received with applause and the toast drunk with enthusiasm.

After the next toast, "The Governor-General and the Lieutenant-Governors of the Provinces,"

Mr. Macduff favored the company with a song, which was well applauded.

The toast, "The Canadian Volunteers," brought Mr. A. McCormick, of the Queen's Own, to his feet, who responded in fitting terms on behalf of the "brave boys."

Mr. Wm. Magness, of St. Catharines, rendered, in capital style, the beautiful poem, "Bingen on the Rhine."

The Chairman then proposed the toast of "The Visiting Brethren," which was received with loud applause.

Brief and interesting responses were made by Mr. Craig, of Hamilton; Mr. Bridge, of London; Mr. Robertson, of Ottawa; Mr. Edwards, of Seaforth; Mr. York, of St. Catharines; Mr. Dunsheath, of Bowmanville; and Mr. Hunter, of Cobourg.

The Chairman then, in some well-timed remarks, gave the toast of "The Press," especially connecting therewith the *ONTARIO WORKMAN* and *Leader*. Those two journals more particularly advocated the interests of their class in a spirit of fair play; and he considered the *WORKMAN* should be part of every workman's weekly outlay.

Mr. J. S. Williams, of the *ONTARIO WORKMAN*, spoke of the pleasure it afforded him to reach home in time to be present at their gathering. He had long advocated the holding of such a Congress and was exceedingly gratified that the scheme for inaugurating a Canadian Labor League had become a reality. They might justly claim that so far as matters had gone their most sanguine expectations had been exceeded. He hoped that the League would take up some vital question relating to labor and carry their views to a successful conclusion. They should not have too many irons in the fire at once, but stick to some particular object until it was effected. The press was the great means through which the agitation necessary to secure their rights must be carried on. He urged upon the delegates present the necessity of disseminating the principles of unionism by means of the press.

The other representatives of the press, also responded.

Mr. Rouse sang in a very humorous manner, "Think of your head."

The Chairman then proposed the Presi-

dents, Secretaries and Officers of Unions all over the Dominion.

Mr. D. J. O'Donoghue, of Ottawa, President of Ottawa Typographical Union, responded in a very effective speech. After alluding to the labors and objects of the Congress, he remarked that however small in comparison, their numbers might be at present, yet the time would soon come when those who had taken part as pioneers in this grand movement, would regard with feelings of pride, the fact that they were thus associated with its earliest inception.

Mr. Hewitt replied to the toast of the "Canadian Labor Union." He reviewed the efforts of the Trades Union men of Toronto for organization. It was three years since the Trades' Assembly was organized and now it was sought to widen their sphere of action by uniting the workmen of Canada in a central organization. The isolation of the working classes was the great cause of their depressed condition. Their design was to establish labor organizations in every town and village in Canada. The animus of the *Globe* towards the workingman was manifested in a contemptible manner by the fact that that paper had omitted to publish any notice whatever of the Congress. (A voice, "Under the name of Reform.") He deprecated anything in the way of hard feeling or bitterness. A contemptible and criminal letter had lately appeared in the *Seaforth Expositor*, threatening an employer of labor that if he did not discharge his men who belonged to a union his shop would be burned to the ground. Had a union man been the author of such a threat it would have been quoted from one end of the country to the other as a proof of the intimidating tendencies of unionism.

Mr. Levesley replied to the toast of Organization of Labor in the United States. He adverted to the benefits accruing from Trades Unions. Those branches of labor which were most thoroughly organized were those which worked fewest hours and got the highest pay. A proper system of organization would prevent the overcrowding of certain trades, by the admission of too large a number of apprentices. Referring to the progress that was made by the Machinists' and Blacksmiths' Union in the States, he stated that that association was growing at the rate of two unions a week.

The speeches throughout were interspersed with songs and sentiment, and after a number of volunteer toasts were given and happily responded to, the company sang "God Save the Queen," and then separated, all highly pleased with the entire proceeding of the first Banquet of the Canadian Labor Congress.

### THE MINK

The mink is an expert fisherman, and wo to the eel that is unfortunate enough to attract his sharp eyes! When a brook is low, this little animal can often be tracked for long distance by the dead eels, pickeral, shiners, and sometimes trout left lying along the bank; the mink only sucking the blood, and leaving the fish unutilized. One autumn some small shiners, meant for bait in pickeral fishing through the ice, were kept in an old tub set in a spring near a brook; and in one night all these fish were killed by a mink, who left them laid in a row on the ground. They looked precisely as if some person had so arranged them. But through the back of each fish, near the head, were four tooth-marks that told who had been there—this being frequently the only mark the mink makes on his victim.

### A PUZZLE

A couple of scientific Frenchmen (of course) have been posing themselves and each other with the question as to where a man who, travelling west from any place at the rate of a thousand miles an hour, would find Monday pass into Tuesday. If he started at noon on Monday the sun would always be in the meridian, because he would journey with equal rapidity with the earth's motion, and the sun would, therefore, be at rest so far as he would be concerned. It would, therefore, be always Monday noon to him, but when he completed his journey it would be Tuesday noon. These unhappy individuals cannot find out where Monday night occurs to the traveller.

### Labor Notes.

On Friday evening Sept. 12th., a general meeting of the Amalgamated Engineers of all classes of the London district was held at their committee rooms, Southwark, for the purpose of inaugurating a general movement for a rise of wages among all departments of the engineering trade.

The riveters and finishers employed in the Leeds boot and shoe trade struck work on Tuesday, Sept. 9th., owing to the masters submitting a new scale of prices by which the men allege their wages will be reduced 20 per cent. They complain that it is a great hardship, as they surrendered only a few weeks ago to the employers' terms, after being idle several weeks.

A demonstration of the various South London branches of the Labor Protection League and the unskilled laborers of the waterside, in support of the principles and objects of the League, was held on Saturday, Sept. 13th., in Bermondsey Square. About 6,000 persons were present, and these consisted of stevedores, wharf laborers, dock porters, riggers, shipping laborers, corn porters, and general laborers.

The arbitration in the recent threatened lock-out of the Manchester engineers, which was to have commenced on Monday Sept. 8th., in private before Mr. J. A. Russell, Q. C., judge of the Manchester County Court has been postponed indefinitely in consequence of the basis of the inquiry having been widened. The rates in the tool department, and this enlargement of the scope of the proceedings has necessitated the collection of further facts upon which the arbitrator's decision may be based.

The moulders employed by the various foundry masters in and about Manchester are agitating for an advance of 2s. upon their present wages, which now stand at 36s. per week. Notices have been sent in by all the men, some of which have already expired. The strike affects something like 500 men, but no definite action has yet been resolved upon by the masters, although there is some intention to resist the demand of the men. It is, however, probable that the 2s. will be conceded, and that the number of hands employed will be lessened as much as possible.

On the 7th of Sept. a body of workingmen delegates started from Rome to visit the Vienna exhibition. Their expenses were paid by the municipality of the city, who voted £400 for this purpose. Twenty two workmen started on this interesting journey. They had been freely elected by their respective trade corporation, the municipality having wisely refrained from attempting to influence this election. The delegates are to stay at least twenty days at Vienna, and they have the option of remaining thirty days if their funds are found to suffice for such a prolongation.

On Saturday, Sept. 6th., an aggregate meeting of the London, (Eng.) laborers mostly of the building trade, was held in Trafalgar-square in favor of an immediate strike unless the concession of 6d. an hour should be at once made by the employers. Several speakers held that if the concession should not be given by next Saturday the strike should be on this day week; others maintained that it should commence at once. There evidently was a strong feeling in favor of immediate action. The grounds on which the rise was demanded were that the artisans in the building trade had their rise, and that the heightened prices of things could not be met with the present pay.

Monday evening, Sept. 8th., the adjourned meeting of the delegates of the London house decorators and painters was held at the Three Doves, Berwick-street, Soho, Mr. Myerson in the chair. Mr. Skipton, the secretary, reported from the committee that, with a few very insignificant exceptions, the whole of the West-end employers were now paying the advance wages of 8½ per hour. This advance had been gained without any strike, and the

whole expense attending the movement, including the expenses of the committee and delegation, had been under £13. Last year, to obtain the advance of 8d. per hour, there were several strikes, and the cost had been nearly £700. This was a most favorable contrast, showing the power of union and organization.

**THE LONDON TRADES DELEGATES.**—The quarterly meeting of the delegates of the trade societies appointed by the London Trades' council was held on Wednesday evening Sept. 10th., at the Rose tavern, Old Bailey; Mr. Warren in the chair. In opening the proceedings, the Chairman stated that unless Government did justice to the trade unionists by repealing or amending the existing penal class legislation against them, a demonstration upon a much larger scale would take place next year, and the unionists would vote against every candidate at the next election who upheld the present unjust system. Since the last meeting, the amalgamated tailors, cane dressers, portmanteau makers, and postal and telegraph servants, had become affiliated to the council. The reports of seventeen committees were then presented, and the delegates proceeded to consider a proposal emanating from the Sheffield Trades' council, for a federation of all the trades councils throughout the kingdom; and eventually it was agreed that the question should be adjourned until the next meeting, and that in the meantime it should be considered and reported upon by the council.

**THE DIRECT REPRESENTATION OF LABOR IN PARLIAMENT.**—At a meeting of representative workmen held on Friday at the offices of the Labor Representation League a proposed plan of action for the coming autumn and winter was submitted, and formed the principal topic of discussion. The committee recommended that active steps be at once taken wherever the efforts of the league may seem likely to be successful in procuring the direct representation of labor, especially at Blackburn, Newcastle-under-Lyne, Wenlock, Whitehaven, Bolton, Hartlepool, and Salford. Local committees should be left to choose their respective candidates, and in various towns public meetings during the ensuing winter was recommended. The report was adopted, subject to the assent of the Council of the League. In the course of the discussion a question was mooted as to what the league should do in the case of a candidate who, though not a working man, was known to be an earnest friend of working men. The general opinion was that, in cases where the return of such a candidate would not interfere with the promotion of the working men's interests, he should be supported, provided, of course, he could be reckoned upon as a friend of the working classes.

### INTERESTING.

A scientific writer has recently collected a group of facts illustrative of the effect of oscillation on powerful bodies when not frequently broken by vibration. In crossing large suspension bridges it is esteemed necessary that processions should break step in order to insure safety; and it is told, in illustration, that when the first suspension bridge was building in England, a fiddler offered to demolish it with his fiddle. Striking one note after another, he eventually hit the vibrating note, or fundamental tone, and threw the structure into extraordinary vibrations.

Only recently a bridge went down in France under the tread of a regiment of infantry who neglected to break step on entering it. Three hundred persons were drowned. The experiment of breaking a tumbler or other small glass vessel, by frequent repetitions of some particular note of the human voice, belongs to the same class of phenomena.

"Your honor," said a lawyer to a judge, every man who knows me, knows that I am incapable of lending my aid to a mean cause." "That is so," said his opponent, "the learned gentleman never lends himself to a mean cause, he always gets cash down."