

STUPENDOUS WORK BEING PERPETRATED BY INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION

Canada's Objection Was Not Against Expenditure But Allotment, Says Minister of Justice—Mr. Albert Thomas, Director-General of the International Labor Office Explains Its Functions.

By J. A. P. Hayden.

The press in Canada has given much publicity to the work of the International Labor Organization. Little has been said of the work being carried on by the great international body, either as to its importance or vastness. When it was learned that the cost of maintenance would amount to about 2,000,000 gold francs, some of the editorial writers of Canada said at great length to discredit this great international organization. The press despatches would lead one to believe that the Canadian delegates at the League of Nations Assembly protested against the expenditure of the International Labor Organization. Hon. C. J. Doherty, one of the Canadian delegates who attended the assembly, informed the writer that the Canadian delegates did not protest against the expenditure, but they did protest against the share allotted to Canada. If press despatches would lead one to believe that Canada was protesting against the work being performed by the International Labor Organization, they did so without regard to the facts.

While the League of Nations has many friends in Canada, it nevertheless has some enemies, and these are to be found chiefly amongst those who are opposed to Labor. The International Labor Organization is a part of the League of Nations, and while its name might lead one to believe that it was a Labor organization, the facts are to the contrary. The International Labor Organization is composed of Government representatives, employers' representatives, and workers' representatives. At its conventions each nation is entitled to two Government delegates, one employer's delegate, and one workers' delegate. Canada was represented at the First International Labor Conference at Washington in the fall of 1919 by Mr. Hon. W. W. Rowell (then President of the Privy Council of Canada) and Hon. C. D. Roberson, Minister of Labor, as Government delegates; Mr. S. R. Parsons, as the employers' delegate, and Mr. P. M. Draper, as the workers' delegate. The fact is perfectly true that international industrial affairs are discussed at these conventions and a common understanding established. The Washington convention, as most people in Canada well know, adopted many draft conventions which are now before the various Governments in Canada for consideration.

The work of the International Labor Organization was explained to the Financial Commission of the Assembly of the League of Nations by Mr. Albert Thomas on Nov. 20, 1920. Space will not permit the publication of his speech in detail, but the following observations of the Director of the International Labor Organization are worthy of note. Mr. Thomas said:

"A certain number of the members of the assembly considered the round sum of 7,000,000 gold francs, proposed by the governing body, to be excessive, but it must be realized that this figure was really a moderate one."

Mr. Thomas pointed out that the secondary organizations which have been or were about to be established by the International Labor Organization were clearly defined in the Treaty of Peace, which was not the case with such organizations that might be established in connection with the Secretariat-General of the League of Nations.

The Director of the International Labor Office explained the main lines of the organization of the office. There are three chief divisions, namely, the Diplomatic Division, the Scientific Division, and the Technical Services.

The duties of the Diplomatic Division were chiefly to organize the General Conference and meetings of the Governing Body, and to supply the requisite secretariat for them. It drew up, in collaboration if necessary with the competent technical services, the questionnaires on the various points of the agenda of the conferences. By means of the replies to these questionnaires, it drew up the text of the draft convention or recommendations to be submitted to the conference. After the sessions of the conference, the records of which it published, this division also corresponded with the governments with a view to securing the ratification of the draft conventions and the execution of the recommendations. It then kept itself informed as to the application of the various conventions and recommendations incorporated in the national legislations. It received complaints made against states in case of failure to carry out conventions which

had been adopted, and it took the necessary steps in connection with commissions of enquiry. The division was further entrusted with all correspondence with the governments and with the League of Nations, and it also published the Bulletin. The total credits provided in respect of this division for 1921 amounted to 328,444 francs.

The Scientific Division (Article 394 of the Treaty of Peace) included, first of all, an Intelligence Section, the organization of which was partly based on a similar organization in the British Ministry of Labor. Its duty was to examine minutely and methodically all periodicals and other publications dealing with questions of labor, and also to reply to requests for information; it also prepared the International Annual Directory of Labor. The Translation Section would include in 1921, 11 translators (three French, two German, two Spanish, one Italian, and three English). It must not be forgotten that the office must translate not only into French and English, but also into other languages, especially German. The Statistical Section consisted at present of two persons, but there was no doubt that it would greatly develop. The Library now comprised 25,000 volumes; the total expenditure of the office, which the International Association for Labor Legislation had collected since 1917.

The office continued the series of legislative publications which had been begun at Basle and had been temporarily suspended owing to the non-payment of the subsidies promised by various states. This publication was undertaken in three languages. The total expense of the Scientific Division was estimated at 892,376 gold francs for the year 1921.

A delicate question was that of publications, which was certainly very expensive to print. The publications of the office were, however, modest. These were the weekly Bulletin, describing the official activities of the office, and the Journal of Studies and Documents, published in two languages. From January onwards a Scientific Review would be published under the editorship of Dr. Royal Meeker, the distinguished American formerly responsible for the publications of the Federal Labor Department at Washington. The Daily Summary of the Press was published in two languages; it had been the object of criticism, particularly on the ground that the news it contained could not reach the Antipodes till very late. But this daily information had been asked for by the manufacturers and the chief employers and workers' organizations, who, moreover, had become yearly subscribers (at the rate of 500 francs per annum); with the money thus collected and with the proceeds from advertisements, it might be hoped that a total sum of 100,000 francs might be recovered of the expenditure (200,000 francs) on this head. The Governing Body had decided unanimously that these publications should be undertaken. The Technical Services, which

dealt with the study of special questions with a view to preparing for conferences and the preparation of materials for publication, included experts on emigration, unemployment, industrial hygiene, agriculture, maritime questions, social insurance and co-operation. The number of sections, which was originally fixed by the governing body at 14 was now 8; but this might well vary according to need, since there were not necessarily permanent organizations. For example, the important Maritime Section, which had been formed in preparation for the Genoa Congress, was now reduced to one official who had to maintain a liaison with the Joint Maritime Commission and to keep the Labor office abreast of maritime questions. The role of the Russian Section was not, as had been stated in America, to disseminate Bolshevik propaganda; the League of Nations and the International Labor office had conceived the plan of sending a mission of enquiry to Russia, in order to collect information on the conditions of labor in Soviet Russia. It had made a scientific examination of some 1,500 to 2,000 bibliographical documents, constituting a unique collection of written evidence. Secured by all the missions which had been in Russia up to date, a first volume had already been published, and a second volume would be ready within a few months. An enquiry into production had also been undertaken. The cost of the Technical Services for 1921 was estimated at 512,102 francs.

The conference had further decided on the creation of commissions of special experts. The Emigration Commission, which carried out its work by correspondence, was composed of delegates from 15 countries; it would only meet almost immediately before the general conference of 1921. The Commission on Unemployment was meeting at the moment in Paris. The Joint Maritime Commission included, since the Genoa Conference, representatives of the ship-owners and seamen. These commissions had been set up by the general conference. They had a total expenditure of 417,573 gold francs.

Correspondence offices have been set up in Paris, London, Rome and Washington to enable the Central organization to keep regularly informed on the questions which it was interested in and as Mr. Thomas said: "Above all in order to avoid the fatal errors which might be committed if conclusions were drawn entirely from information obtainable at Geneva."

That it will be realized by every thinking man and woman that the International Labor Organization is carrying on a stupendous task. While the results of its labor may not be noticeable in Canada it is certain that in the days to come the International Labor Office will grow in importance and influence in the industrial affairs of the world, and we join with Mr. Thomas in declaring that "the International Labor Office has sufficient prestige to ensure that ratifications will gen-

AN INDEPENDENT VIEW OF CANADIAN TARIFF

Christian Science Monitor Makes Some Observations.

BOSTON—The Christian Science Monitor says:—"Is the present tariff in Canada to be reduced? That is the main topic of discussion in political circles in the Dominion today. The position is briefly this: The present government under Mr. Meighen is in favor of having a tariff high enough to protect Canadian industries from foreign competition, the chief argument being that Canadian industries should be encouraged so that fewer goods will have to be imported and more goods can be exported. In this way it is hoped to rectify the present unfavorable position of the Canadian dollar in terms of American currency. The chief opponent of this theory is the United Farmers' Party. The farmers' reply is a simple one. As agricultural produce comprises 35 per cent. of Canada's exports, the increase of agricultural produce is more important than that of manufactured goods. Therefore, the tariff should be lowered, and let the people buy manufactured goods in the cheapest market. Perhaps the tariff commission, whose report is expected soon, will be able to give some guide as to which tariff policy will be better for the Dominion as a whole."

HAMILTON MACHINISTS SHOULD FIGHT TO RETAIN CONDITIONS.

HAMILTON—That the laboring men should fight to retain the conditions which they contested for so long, and that wages should not come down, was the opinion expressed at a mass meeting arranged for by the local machinists and attended by several hundred Hamilton union men.

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HOUSING PROBLEM IN TORONTO

With the opening of the building season, Toronto finds itself, after three winters of discussion, without any housing plan, says G. C. in the Star. Last winter, a year ago, members of the Toronto Building Trades Council brought forth a plan modeled on the Manchester, England, building guild plan.

This proposition was that the city provide the money for building houses and the Toronto trades unions would provide the labor, technicians and supervision, thus cutting out the profits of the contractor.

The Builders' Exchange of Toronto, the organization of the contractors and builders, immediately countered the trades union offer with one which proposed that if the city would provide the capital the contractors would erect houses at cost, plus five per cent.

There also has been a fight for a few pre-nuptials and damp squibs fired off in the City Council. Meanwhile, in England, eight cities are now building houses under the guild plan, exactly as suggested last winter by the Toronto labor men. Eight cities, including Manchester, are actually building, their work including a total of 1,194 houses. Twelve other cities are completing arrangements to build 1,863 houses under the guild plan. These latter include Glasgow, building 244 houses. Then eleven other cities are negotiating with their labor unions to erect houses. These are all largely in the Manchester district and Midlands.

In the London district, Walthamstow is negotiating for 350 houses; Hammersmith and Greenwich following.

But in Toronto a rather unique situation has arisen. The guild plan, the suggestion of labor, has been adopted and is growing in strength and popularity from week to week. Toronto labor men have abandoned their guild scheme and are prepared to support the Builders' Exchange plan, the contractor's plan.

Mr. John Doggett, of the Toronto Building Trades Council, stated: "We have expressed ourselves as ready to support the housing scheme proposed last April by the Builders' Exchange."

Two bodies are now considering the housing question for Toronto

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