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THIRTY DAYS OF TALK YET NO LEGISLATION

Continued from Page One.

Willing to reconstruct it so that it would be of real value.

Mr. Geo. Boyce, of Carleton, Ont., contributed a rare addition to the debate when he stated:

"Look at the European nations. There is not one of them but has a twelve or fourteen-hour day."

"As a member of this House I am just as anxious for the welfare of our people as any one else. I voted for an eight-hour day I believe I would be voting against the best interests of the Dominion."

Mr. Geo. Boyce went on to do well to read a little of the conditions actually existing in Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Sweden, and many other European countries before making such another ridiculous statement. In Great Britain the farm laborers, by national agreement, have enjoyed a fifty-hour work week during summer months and a forty-eight-hour work week during the winter months for the past year, and most people are conversant with the fact that the eight-hour day now prevails to a very large degree among the industrial workers of the countries above enumerated and generally speaking by legislative enactment.

Mr. Nesbitt, of North Oxford, Ont., also showed that he did not read the statistics of the Labor Department as to strikes and lockouts when he stated:

"Employers fully realize that the labor unions are quite capable of making arrangements as to the hours of labor in the various industries. In recent years, so far as I know there has been no trouble on that score."

It seems almost incredible that with the memory of the machinists' strike of last year throughout Ontario, the long standing dispute at the Kingston Locomotive Works and many others that a member of an Ontario constituency could deliberately make such a statement. Statistics show that one of the most general causes of Labor disputes has been, through the desire to obtain shorter hours.

Mr. Cookshutt, Brantford, Ont., whilst generally sympathetic with the resolution qualified his sympathy by stating that in legislating for an eight-hour-day for Canada we must pay regard to what other nations are going to do about it and in this respect said:

"If Germany is going to work 12, 15 or 16 hours to say nothing of Japan, China and other countries who under-pay their labor and exact very long hours the eight-hour day cannot bring about the best results."

Mr. Burnham interjecting, inquired: "Do I understand the honorable gentleman to say that the Chinese must agree to that?"

Mr. Cookshutt continuing said: "I did not say so but I say it is desirable that all nations so far as possible should agree to it. I hope we are a little more advanced than the Chinese but they are coming up pretty fast, and they are competing with us, and we must have some attention to what is going on in outside nations."

The heart of Mr. John Sexsmith, of Peterboro East, Ont., also went out to the laboring masses of Canada but perhaps his final remarks are the most conclusive as to his real opinions.

"If this resolution is pressed to a vote I do not think it would be wise to say by our actions in this House that an eight-hour work day should be the standard work day all over Canada."

Mr. Chas. R. Harrison, Nipissing, Ont., made a useful contribution to the debate, placing on Hansard extra-territorial information in the United States, New Zealand, Australia, France and Italy relative to the enactment of eight-hour legislation in those countries, and wound up by saying:

"I expect the question will come up in the House in the course of the bill, and I expect to say a great deal more on it than I have to-night, but if it comes to a vote I can assure you that I am going to vote in favor of this resolution."

Others taking part in the debate were Mr. Fielding, Mr. Alphonse Verreuil, Mr. D. C. Doherty, Mr. Rowell and Mr. Doherty, the latter two speakers dealing mostly with the rights of the Federal Government in view of the powers given to the provinces under the British North America Act, neither conclusively stating that the Federal Government had power to deal with this matter, Mr. Doherty winding up by saying:

"When that convention (passed at the Washington Labor Conference) arrives at their official decision I do not think that we shall be in any very great difficulty in determining what action is incumbent upon us."

Generally speaking, Mr. Doherty left the impression that it would lie within the duties of the different Provincial Legislatures to deal with this question.

Mr. John H. Burnham, recognizing the academic nature of his resolution, withdrawing the motion stated:

"The object of the resolution has been fully attained and as it serves no further purpose than that declared by the Minister of Justice, I beg leave to withdraw the resolution."

Thanks are due to Mr. Burnham if only for securing from Members of Parliament, the debate on this important matter and with the information we were able to get from the Federal Government that every worker lose no time in acquainting the member for the constituency wherein he resides with the details relative to the enactment of the eight-hour legislation.

Another important bill which has been presented and already received the assent of the House of Commons is the bill introduced by the Hon. C. C. Ballantyne, Minister of Marine, amending the Merchants' Shipping Act so that owners of sailing vessels of 750 tons or less, could secure masters for the same on a less qualification than previously existed. The Hon. D. D. McKenzie vigorously attacked his amendment throughout its entire passage through Parliament, and the following statement made by him on April 6, when the bill was in committee, is worthy of repetition:

"We have only two ocean fronts in this country, one on the Pacific and the other on the Atlantic. On

LONDON'S MONUMENT TO EDITH CAVELL



The memory of Edith Cavell is perpetuated by an imposing monument erected in St. Martin's Place, London, which was unveiled by Queen Alexandra in person. The photograph, taken just after the unveiling of the memorial, shows Nurse Cavell's sister standing at the base of the shaft.

both ocean fronts there are a Master's Association and both of these associations protest against this legislation as degrading their profession. All I can do is to bring these communications to the attention of the minister but if he happens to have some influence brought to bear upon him by people who have ships and who care nothing for the crew of the vessels, care nothing for anything except to make dollars for themselves, and care not whether their masters are qualified or not, that if he is influenced by such men the responsibility is his. That is not my language, that is the language of the Halifax Board who say that if any person wants to look properly for a qualified master and will give him a proper wage they can get him but they cannot secure a first-class master for second rate pay."

Mr. Duff, Lunenburg, N.S., seemed to be the chief supporter of Mr. Ballantyne in securing the passage of this measure which, finally received its third reading in its original form on April 8.

The Franchise Act.

One of the most important measures will be before the House is the Franchise Act. This act has secured its first reading and is in the committee stage, many of the clauses already having been sanctioned. Too much importance cannot be attached from a worker's standpoint to a few of the clauses.

Clause 10 prohibits any companies or associations to contribute for election purposes. In discussing this clause Mr. Maharg said: "According to this section, no group of labor men, returned soldiers or others (then interjected some honorable members, "farmers") can group themselves together unless they become incorporated to assist financially in the election of a candidate."

Mr. Guthrie replying stated the object aimed at is to prevent men from grouping together and using their joint contributions for the purpose of assisting in an election campaign. Mr. Guthrie went on by saying:

"The former act provides that no company or association other than one incorporated for political purposes alone, etc., etc. That would prevent a group or coalition just as under the present act."

The draftsman of the present bill, Mr. W. F. O'Connor, is I must say an experienced man and he changed the language into an incorporated company or association, etc."

Mr. J. H. Sinclair strongly supported this section, stating at the same time that the real cure is publicity of campaign funds. Mr. Guthrie pointed out that there is such a provision in the new act, but it is the same provision as in the former law. By agreement this section is left over for further discussion. If this section is allowed to pass there is no doubt that contributions from labor organizations, co-operative societies, united farmers' organizations or other voluntary associations not formed exclusively for political purposes will be illegal. The millionaire partner or director of a

hugs corporation will still be able to come a great sum to political campaign funds, but the worker will be prevented from using their accumulated funds for the support of candidates. Too much attention cannot be given by workers to this section, and their protests against its enactment should be sent immediately to their member of Parliament.

Clause 11 of the act prohibits persons or electors not resident in Canada from canvassing votes or in any way endeavoring to induce voters to vote for any candidate at an election. This clause has been approved, and therefore labor organizers not resident in Canada will need to be very circumspect in advising their members to support candidates who may be favorable to labor legislation, or to oppose those who have shown their antagonism towards labor unions. The following extract from the proceedings in committee, of March 25, is very illuminating.

Illustrating Declarations.

Mr. Power: Notwithstanding the very lucid explanation of the acting Solicitor-General, I am still opposed to this clause. I expect we will very shortly have in this country a strong Labor Party. The Labor Party are about to organize and will perhaps need in their organization the help and assistance of some members of their body in the United States.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Power: I see no reason why they should not be allowed to come in.

An hon. member: Keep them out.

Mr. Power:—to help in election by speeches. More than that, we shall also have, I think—

An hon. member: We have not enough Socialists here now.

Mr. Power:—a strong Prohibition party. I see no reason, for instance, why "Pussyfoot" Johnson, who is now in England, should not come here, and yet if "Pussyfoot" Johnson were to come here he might be put in jail and then the president of the Privy Council would be in trouble.

An hon. member: Even Billy Sunday might come here.

Mr. Power: In any of these cases it might be pleaded that intervention on the part of strangers would be perfectly legitimate. Lord Jellicoe could even come here and explain his naval proposals. I would not like to see Lord Jellicoe put in jail.

Mr. Guthrie: I would not like to see him here engaged in an election campaign either.

Clause 12 is similar to the old Election Act whereby conveyance of motor vehicles to the polls, etc., in hired vehicles is forbidden. Most of the members agreed that if this section was enforced they would possibly all be broke. Notwithstanding this the section passed as submitted. It seems to me with the quiet understanding that no one would be expected to observe it.

Hours Unsatisfactory.

Clause 15 relates to employees being given two additional hours every day in the week for the purpose of voting.

Clause 16 states that the hours for the polls being open shall be from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Trades Congress Executive for the past three years have asked for election days to be made public holidays and for the polls to be open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sir George Foster, Acting Premier, replying to the Trades and Labor Congress deputations, under date March 10, 1920, stated the position of the Government in this matter, when he said "that to make election days holidays would be an extension of the time in production and a heavy loss of wages to the workers. Consideration will, however, be given to your proposal to extend the closing hours of polls." The request of organized labor that the polls should not close until 8 p.m. has, however, been overlooked in drafting this bill. The extension of the time in the morning by opening the polls at 8 a.m. instead of 9 a.m. being of very little value to the general masses of workers. This clause has not yet been dealt with in committee, and it is hoped that when it reaches that stage amendments in accordance with the desires of the workers will be adopted. The Franchise Act is based upon the old method of voting and on previous attempts to have been made for the introduction of proportional representation.

Proportional Representation.

Mr. Desjarriers made inquiry on April 8, as follows:

"The Government taken into consideration the system of election by proportional representation, or is it the intention of the Government to take it into consideration during the present session?"

Sir George Foster, replying, stated: "This matter is at present under consideration by the Government."

In view of the statements of the Premier a year ago, intimating that a committee would be appointed to report on this question, and also that the National Industrial Conference, Ottawa, September, 1918, unanimously requested this change, and that the workers throughout the country, organized and unorganized, industrial workers and farmers, have all signified their desire for the adoption of proportional representation in the next Federal election, it is to be hoped that the Parliament will not smother this matter on the "back burner" without having incorporated the principle of proportional representation.

The Summary of some of the proceedings of Parliament is issued through the Labor Press of this country in order that the workers may be kept advised in the manner in which their representatives are carrying out the trust reposed in them by the electors of their constituencies. As parliamentary representative of the trades union movement, it is my desire to deal impartially with the sayings and doings of all parties, simply lacking in this means of giving publicity to matters in which I consider the workers will be deeply interested.

TOM MOORE.
President Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

George Lansbury has not seen a single diamond in Russia, which, we suppose, is evidence that all is well in Russia—Justice.

The Russian Army (Red) has as its leaders and what leaders—Brunslow, Paraky, Evert, Klembovsky, Cuter, Svecichin—the whole brilliant military armory of the old regime. And these men are Bolsheviks—perhaps, as if so, so much the worse for Bolshevism—Justice.

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