

THE LABOR ADVOCATE

A WEEKLY

LABOR ADVOCATE PUBLISHED

Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 10, 1901, under Post Office No. 125, N. S. 111.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

GRIP PRINTING & PUBLISHING CO.

24 & 25 FRONT STREET WEST, TORONTO, CANADA.

Yearly Subscription, \$1.50, in advance, Single Copies, 5 cents.

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Mr. E. H. Anderson and Capt. W. J. Collins are authorized to take subscriptions for the Labor Advocate in this city and neighborhood.

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TORONTO, CANADA, MARCH 13, 1901

WHY THEY OPPOSE CIVIC MANAEGEMENT.

If the workmen of Toronto are blind to the significance of the movement for the operation of the street railroad by the city, it is evident that the capitalists are not. The proposal meets with the outcries, better, determined opposition of every man who belongs to the parasite order who live upon the labor of others and exploiting the toiler by means of rent, interest or profit. At a meeting of the Council of the Board of Trade held on Monday a resolution was unanimously carried, declaring that it would be detrimental to the commercial interests of the city to have the street railway system managed by the corporation.

The reason why plutocrats and profit mongers oppose the city taking over the road is not far to seek. It is not that they are so particularly averse to the interests of the city, or that they fear civic management would result in a deficit and increase their taxes, but because they realize that the operation of public services in the public interest by the representatives of the people is the thin end of the wedge of Nationalism. It is the principle underlying the agitation that they dread. All their acquiescence in the selfish fears are aroused by the thought that when once the people get enlightened to the idea, that whatever can be done by the people's representatives better, cheaper and more satisfactorily than it can be done by private monopolists ought to be done, their investments, monopolies and special privileges will be in danger. They realize that every successful experiment in the working of public services by the community, educates the people as to what can be done in directing profits from the swollen hoards of millionaires and speculators to the pockets of the actual producers.

The sharp-angled selfishness of the commercial class is quick to appreciate the danger to their unjust privileges and stolen accumulations of the earnings of labor, should the nationalist idea of doing everything by the people's representatives for the public service once get a foothold. And therefore purely as a matter of class interest, and to continue unimpaired their power of sweating labor, and drawing large profits for very slight services, the Board of Trade and the entire caste of swindlers, profit mongers, schemers and caterpillars on the leaf will naturally and instinctively oppose civic control, and come to the rescue of beleaguered monopoly. This is not all. In addition

to the late feeling which finds expression in the action of the Board of Trade Council, it is well known that a number of the members of that organization have strong personal interests in the leasing of the road, as stock holders in projected companies which hope to obtain the charter.

If the workmen only understood their own interests and the moral of fact of our ownership of public franchises, the question would long since have been settled, and settled the right way. But, unfortunately, while organized labor is pathetic, divided and distracted with false and misleading causes, capitalists never for an instant relax their vigilance or allow itself to be diverted from its sinister aims.

ORGANIZE FOR POLITICAL ACTION!

FIGHTING great combinations of capital by the old fashioned methods of the strike and the boycott in this age is a good deal like opposing a force armed with Armstrong guns and Winchester rifles, with flint lock muskets. The capitalists everywhere are organizing in opposition to labor unions. It is hard enough to fight capitalism under any conditions, but when its interests are combined in the form of trusts or federations, it is almost impossible for labor to hold its own, let alone take any appreciable advance. There is a time of trial ahead for organized labor under the new order of things, and many defeats and much suffering will result until wage-earners learn wisdom by experience and organize for political action.

Labor agitators have been shouting "Organize!" "organize!" for many years, and the toilers have pretty well learned the lesson. But the game is one that no can play at. With the organization of capital the relative position of the parties is just about as it was before labor began to combine. And with the extension of the principle among the moneyed interests, and the increase in the use of labor-saving machinery, labor will get the worst of it so long as it persists in the futile attempt to fight its task-masters with one hand tied behind it. The day of successful strikes is fast drawing to its close.

Organization is as necessary as ever, but the methods of action must be changed and the old line of trade-unionism abandoned for a plan of campaign more adapted to the modern condition with its changed conditions. To confine organized effort to fighting employers for higher wages or shorter hours is to invite defeat. "Organize for political action," should be the watchword. Workmen must combine to use their ballots as a lever to oppose consolidated capitalism and better their condition by changing existing institutions. The only possible salvation is to secure the control of the land, the capital and the machinery. Instead of allowing them to remain in the hands of a few monopolists. And this can only be done by making Labor Reform the principal question at the polls.

As the recent election shows, the wage-earners of Canada whether organized or not, are not prepared to abandon their party prejudices and use their ballots in their own interests. They deliberately prefer to divide upon the issues presented to them by the politicians, which have little or no bearing on the vital questions of labor and wages. They do not wish to carry the Labor Reform agitation into politics.

Well, they will have to learn by experience. It will be a dear lesson to them, and their condition is likely to be considerably worse than it is at present before they realize the necessity of a change in tactics. But they may make up their minds to this, that the labor movement on the old lines has run its course, and can do nothing more for them. If they deliberately refuse a worse condition of wage-slavery than now prevails to using the ballot as a means of emancipation, that is their own affair.

PROFESSIONAL MURDERERS!

AN ORDER to the Canadian Gazette, the London organ, The Dominion, reports, the British East African Company—a land grabbing concern organized by a number of English aristocrats and moneyed men—have applied for graduates of the Kingston Military College to enter the service in Africa. Some graduates have already tendered their services to the Canadian tax-payers just barely to keep up the show than useless institution for the training of professional murderers in order to give the sons of rich men, who are too lazy, worthless and incapable to earn an honest living, a chance to become spongers and swindle-kings. There is, fortunately, as yet no house demand for the services of military college graduates in Canada, so those enamored of a military career, after getting an education at the expense of the Canadian people, have to seek employment abroad. It is, perhaps, as well that a number of these fellows should go and do the dirty work of the British land pirates in Africa. They will stand a pretty good chance of being killed off, which will be a good riddance. It is only fair to say that the establishment of the Military College is not one of the signs that Canadian Toryism has to answer for. The foundation of that hot-bed of snobbery and class prejudice was an idea of Alexander Mackenzie—one of those numerous instances in which Brits in power try to outdo the Tories in pandering to reactionary influences. Like most of his party, Mackenzie is a Liberal only in name.

CITY CLOTHING CONTRACTS.

The Trades and Labor Council have done well in taking up the case of the employees of clothing contractors having contracts with the city for the supplying of uniforms for the police and firemen. The necessity of under-bidding competitors in order to get contracts has given rise to a system of merciless swamping, the low figures at which such contracts are awarded, being cheap labor. Women are the principal sufferers, as being unorganized they are not in a position to insist upon something like adequate remuneration.

The contractors are not blameless, in the matter, of course, but the principal fault is with the contract system, which is always and everywhere the parent of unnumbered frauds and abuses. By sacrificing every other consideration to the single object of cheapness, it drives all fair minded, liberal employers out of the field, and other things being equal gives every advantage to the conscientious wrecker who figures down the wages to the lowest possible and still maintains it in order to underbid all his rivals. It is equally unfair to the honest and well-meaning tradesman, that such an alternative should be presented to him, and that he should be either forced to act as the agent of the public in robbing poor sewing women of their scanty earnings, or to give place to a low scoundrelous competitor who will do this kind of dirty work.

We do not think that the mass of the taxpayers desire that civic institutions should be made a means of oppression to order that they may procure labor at starvation wages. But practically this is exactly what the municipal contract system does. It effects itself in every way, and the gain to the city treasury by the cheapness secured is only apparent, for cheap work is always bad, and the man who will grind down his employees and cut wages to get a contract, will not scruple to swindle the city when occasion offers.

The best way to ensure good value to the public and fair wages to the workers would be to abolish the contract system altogether. But in cases where this is not feasible, and probably that under consideration may be regarded as one of them, all contracts should be let subject to the fifteen cents per hour minimum scale of wages.

There is no valid reason why sewing women employed in city work should get less than day laborers, simply because they are women.

OUR "FOUR HUNDRED"

The Canadian Manufacturer has the following in defence of the view royalty against an Abolitionist critic. The view royalist just established in Canada is always presented over by gentlemen, and the straighter it is such as obtains with favor among all respectable people, and it is a mistake to suppose that Canadian citizens and their ways are strangers to the usage of refined society. As to the innuendoes and insinuations of political and monopolist magazines who attend the receptions and dinner parties at Lillies Hall, for which the working people of Canada have to pay, the less said the better. The wealthy class, whose position gives them the privilege of attending several functions, have time and again shown their contempt for the rules of common decency, not to speak of etiquette. It is a notorious fact that the Princess Louise, at an early stage of her sojourn in Ottawa, was disgusted with the drunkenness and loathsome familiarity of men whose social and political standing entitled them to invitations to Lillies Hall. The language given under vice-regal auspices have been scenes of dissipation and excess. The stay of Princess Louise in this country was considerably shortened by her desire to escape from such unpleasant surroundings as those created by the coarseness and vulgarity of the Canadian politicians and plutocrats whom she was forced to recognize by reason of their social and public positions. Canadian citizens, male and female, are probably as cultivated and refined in their manners as those of any other country. But the trouble is that our political and industrial system throws the scum to the top, and that the set of money grabbers, tricksters and pre-teners who constitute our "self made men and social leaders, are, as a rule, ignorant, vulgar and pretentious, and apt to presume upon their money and position to sustain them in conduct which would not be tolerated for a moment in ordinary citizens.

AN ELECTION MORAL.

The Canadian Nation deplores the almost complete subsidence of the "Equal Rights" agitation under the stress of political excitement and the strong party feeling aroused by the election contest. It is strongly impeded by the inactivity and weakness of the politicians, who a couple of years ago were vowing to act for the future independent of party, but who have nearly all been whipped back into the ranks.

Write down the names of the men who in 1898 were leading Prohibitionists. Write down beside them the honor roll of the Grand Opera House anti-temperance meeting of 1899. How many of them are today standing in the whirl of this campaign for Prohibition and Equal Rights? Scarcely wearing the colors and badge of the bounty of the old parties, but many others have gone out of politics, knifed by their quondam friends! Such, too, was the fate of the Canada First movement in this country. The political parties pressed in on all sides, cowardly, deceitful, and the brave remnant died politically.

"Ifs it not to this," asks the Nation, "that no independent political movement can live!" And then it goes on to urge that "loose, academic, non-partisan associations, in which treachery is easy and desertion a light offence can offer no appreciable resistance when the shock of battle comes."

This is every bit as applicable to the Labor Reform movement as to those referred to by our contemporary. We undertook to enter the political field, and for a new party made a very fair start. But it was too "loose and academic" in its character, and soon succumbed to party pressure. The men who were loudest in declaring their entire emancipation from party bondage, are now nine-tenths of them back in the Grip or the Tor. Aids.

"Treachery was easy and desertion a light offence." Workmen will never accomplish anything by their ball until they carry into political organization the same stern discipline they exercise in

industrial matters, and treat the "workman" party better as they do the scab.

PRESIDENT CHAS. GUY DEBEN, of the N. Y. Central Railroad, has been ousted and put under \$25,000 bond on a charge of manslaughter in connection with the Harlem tunnel accident, in which eight persons were killed. Mr. Guy remarks that he considers the prosecution "the most absurd and ridiculous thing that could possibly be imagined." No doubt he is right. It would be laughable that King Louis XVI regarded the action of the French Revolutionists in depriving him of his head as being supremely absurd. There never was a single tyrant, murderer or robber, brought to account for his crimes who didn't regard the proceeding as utterly unreasonable and ridiculous. No one day the people may get the maximum of absurdity by hanging, shooting or otherwise removing criminals of the Dewey type, with or without legal formalities, which will be a positively ludicrous spectacle and too funny for anything.

Mr. J. KROCH THOMPSON writes to the newspapers protesting against the city operating the street railroad. It would be a safe bet that Mr. Thompson is personally interested in some of the corporations which hope to acquire the franchise and make enormous sums of money out of the citizens, during the next thirty years. There is any amount of moral self interest trying to pass itself off as public spirit and solicitude for the poor tax payer in connection with this question. When a citizen is paid advertising such a wholly preposterous scheme as the handing over of this valuable franchise for a generation to any irresponsible monopoly, the natural question is, "What is his little game?" There's mighty little disinterestedness among the capitalistic class.

You might as well talk of reconciling freedom and slavery as of harmonizing the interests of labor and capitalism. The two are absolutely irreconcilable. The power by which labor is robbed of the greater proportion of its earnings. Laborers will only be reconciled to this process as long as they are kept in ignorance of their rights and powers. And the greater proportion of the profits that they are supposed to receive come from capitalism, the more they will want until they get the whole. Then capitalism will be abolished as it ought to be, and capital, the creation and tool of labor, will be under the control of labor.

A STRIKING Polish clock maker recently threw a brick upon the steps of the proprietor of a non-union shop at Jamaica, Long Island, inflicting terrible injuries. It was a brutal, Jewish act which no grievance at the hands of tyrannical employers, can, in the slightest degree atone for. But the capitalist press will probably have more columns of type in denunciation of the outrage than they have lines to spare in condemnation of the far more general and systematic brutalities of the competitive system by which tens of thousands, just as deserving of pity as the victim of this case, are annually driven to starvation or lives of shame.

The Old Flag has been triumphantly sustained at the polls and, as the result in the cities shows, largely by the votes of workmen. Evidently the country is loyal, especially the wage-workmen. All right—only next time your wages are cut down or you are thrown out of work don't go round whining for sympathy and complaining about oppressive laws and harsh tax matters. You've got your precious Old Flag and you've proved your loyalty—what more do you want!

The Journal of the Knights of Labor says in Police Magistrate Derison as follows:—"The Toronto Labor Advocate really tried to find the moral in the story of the killing of the Postmaster of that city the ridiculous sum of one dollar for an unprovoked assault