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ADOPTED REPORT
OF COMMITTEE
BOARD OF TRADE
AND LABOR INQUIRY

Recommends Abolition of Alien Labor
Laws-Assisted Immigration--
Reduction of Head Tax.

The report of the board of trade committee charged with the inquiry into the labor conditions in this province was rendered at the regular monthly meeting of that board Thursday.

While the report was not of any great length, the evidence accompanying it was extremely voluminous, occupying in all over two hundred typed pages. The report recommended the suspension of the provincial and federal alien labor laws, the introduction of a plan of assisted immigration from farm laborers unskilled workmen and domestic servants from the Old Country to be evolved by the provincial government, and further the reduction of the head tax on the Chinese.

The report was adopted but it was not until after a lively discussion had taken place. There was a representative attendance of members, the president, J. A. Mara, occupying the chair. With the opening of the meeting and the reading of the minutes of the meeting before, the president called for the report of the labor committee. The report was then read by Secretary Elworthy. It was as follows:

The President and Members, Victoria, B. C., Board of Trade:

Gentlemen—Your special committee appointed to inquire into the labor situation beg to report:

At our first meeting we arranged for an advertisement in each of the local daily newspapers requesting any person, employee or employer, wishing to submit evidence to the committee, to do so. We also approved the draft of a circular letter afterwards sent to boards of trade, labor organizations and farmers' associations throughout the province, in which we asked for an expression of opinion.

Neither the names sent in or the replies received were as numerous as might be expected, and we were further disappointed with the unfriendly attitude of organized labor. As will be apparent from the questions submitted in the letter sent out, which also indicated the lines on which the inquiry was intended, your committee approached this subject with open minds and with one object, namely, to arrive at a correct understanding of the situation, and be in a position to recommend some remedial measures.

That there is a shortage of labor was the general complaint before the appointment of your committee, and the evidence taken conclusively testifies that to be the case. The shortage is acute in every industry which we inquired into, while the hours of labor and the wages paid are similar to those prevailing in the state of Washington and much higher than the wages paid in Eastern Canada, after adjustment for any difference in the cost of living.

In the opinion of your committee this state of affairs exists in consequence of the restriction of the natural law of supply and demand contained in the Provincial and Dominion statutes, and in the connection we cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that since the imposing of a prohibitive head tax on Chinese immigration there has been made for supplying this province with the unskilled labor necessary to meet its growing demands. The result is that in British Columbia Chinese are to-day actually receiving higher wages than unskilled white labor in Eastern Canada.

In the case of skilled labor, no matter what wages are paid, in case of shortage the employer must wait until the additional men come voluntarily. It is unlawful to assist them to come. Advantage is taken of this condition to demand increased wages; the cost of commodities advances proportionately and the advances in wages are demanded with the result that production in all lines is limited and the growth of the country checked.

The gravity of the situation in British Columbia can hardly be overestimated. Agricultural and fruit growing pursuits are at a standstill, while industrial contracts are forced to the United States, where the labor shortage is not so acute. Your committee recommends:

a. That the provincial and federal alien laws be immediately suspended.

b. That the provincial government immediately appoint one or more competent agents, to act under the supervision of the Agent-General, to travel through the industrial centres of Great Britain and give information as to the labor requirements and conditions in British Columbia.

c. That some plan of assisted immigration be extended to farm laborers, unskilled workmen and domestic servants, who are willing to undertake to reimburse the provincial government for an outlay in this amount.

Your committee cannot close this report without reference to the opinion of many

employers who gave evidence that a reduction of the head tax on Chinese would afford immediate relief to farmers, fruit growers and families requiring domestic labor. Your committee prefer to see this a "white man's" country, but in the event of a refusal or delay in carrying out the above recommendations your committee are of the opinion that the only alternative is to strongly recommend that the head tax on Chinese be reduced. The expansion of farming and fruit growing is already checked, and the demand for cheap labor in the construction of railways is a problem which must be seriously considered.

In moving the adoption of the report, H. F. Bullen, chairman of the committee, referred to the different interests which had been represented before the committee. They were: the restaurant business, the lumber interests, farming, fruit growing, ship building and repairing, boiler making, iron foundries, manufacturing interests generally and the wood business. Continuing, he said:

Mr. Watterson, representing the Trades and Labor Council, was in attendance from the start to the finish, and everybody, without any exception who appeared in the committee rooms while the investigation was being held, were all asked to express their views.

"I might also say that your committee in receipt of a petition containing a very large number of names of the ladies of the city of Victoria, asking that some relief be given them as regards the Chinese labor question, and urging that the head tax be reduced on the Chinese coming into the country for domestic and farming purposes."

"I might say in every instance there has been the most emphatic evidence produced, to show that there is a scarcity of labor in almost every industry."

"We are informed that in the restaurants and hotels, it is almost an impossibility to secure Chinese cooks or at such a figure that it will enable the proprietors to carry on their business with any degree of profit. The Chinese available are so limited in number that the investigation was independent and consequently irresponsible, and white cooks are not available."

"In the lumber interests, the lumbermen generally complain of lack of cheap labor, and the fact that they refer to for which they require cheap labor, they state is a class of labor that white men do not care to adopt."

"In the farming we have had a striking illustration of the unprofitability of that industry. Captain Barkley of Westholme, assures your committee that it takes the profit of from ten to twelve cows to pay the wages of one Chinaman. He says that, franc and franc, he has had to employ Chinese labor, owing to the lack of cheap labor, that is essential to the clearing of land and the general operation of the farm."

"The fruit growing industry suffers along similar lines, and men who have capital invested in fruit ranches feel that they are being taken in by the Chinese labor, and are incurring the size of their farms, and state they do not know where they can secure the labor necessary to harvest their crops."

"In the shipbuilding, repairing, foundries and the iron trades, these industries have suffered a serious handicap since the Chinese labor has been taken away. The shortage is acute in every industry which we inquired into, while the hours of labor and the wages paid are similar to those prevailing in the state of Washington and much higher than the wages paid in Eastern Canada, after adjustment for any difference in the cost of living."

In the opinion of your committee this state of affairs exists in consequence of the restriction of the natural law of supply and demand contained in the Provincial and Dominion statutes, and in the connection we cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that since the imposing of a prohibitive head tax on Chinese immigration there has been made for supplying this province with the unskilled labor necessary to meet its growing demands. The result is that in British Columbia Chinese are to-day actually receiving higher wages than unskilled white labor in Eastern Canada.

In the case of skilled labor, no matter what wages are paid, in case of shortage the employer must wait until the additional men come voluntarily. It is unlawful to assist them to come. Advantage is taken of this condition to demand increased wages; the cost of commodities advances proportionately and the advances in wages are demanded with the result that production in all lines is limited and the growth of the country checked. The gravity of the situation in British Columbia can hardly be overestimated. Agricultural and fruit growing pursuits are at a standstill, while industrial contracts are forced to the United States, where the labor shortage is not so acute. Your committee recommends:

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"I agree with everything contained in the report," he remarked, "except the last clause, recommending that the head tax on the Chinese should be reduced. I do not think that such a policy would be in the best interests of the province, and for that reason I could not conscientiously sign the report. Some other remedy can be found."

"No member of this board, nor any right-thinking man in British Columbia, believes that it would be in the best interests of the province to see it flooded with Chinese labor. I remember the time when the Chinese came into this country and into California, free. I know that the conditions in this province are better now than they were then. I am sure that if 1,000 Chinamen came into the country, 500 white men would get out at once. If we bring 10,000 Chinamen into the country we will be losing the best white labor there is. It would all leave the province."

Continuing, Mr. Henderson stated that he did not believe that the board should place itself on record as in favor of the abolition or the reduction of the head tax. The time would come when the Chinese would be asked to pay the head tax to come in, and that would be time enough to see the country flooded with them.

The amendment was supported by C. H. Lugin. He believed that if such a debatable item were included in the report the entire report would be marred and its value rendered null. Before the question of availing themselves of Oriental labor was broached the Chinese were afraid to express their views. Now they are not. Each makes the disease worse—increases the torture. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have cured thousands. They cured Mr. Henderson. Plants of Sorel. One of the most aggravated cases of rheumatism. What they did for Mr. Plante they can do for you. He says: "I was seized with rheumatism. I walked as if my boots were filled with pebbles. The pains, starting in my feet, spread to all parts of the body; my back and joints became aching. For upwards of five years I suffered the greatest agony. Often I was confined to bed, hardly able to move. Nothing seemed to help me. I despaired of ever being well again. By good chance Dr. Williams' Pink Pills were brought to my attention and I decided to try them. I got six boxes—before they were gone I felt a great improvement. I continued the treatment and my health gradually came back till now I do not feel the least pain. I am totally cured. It was a surprise to my friends to see me on the street again well and strong after five years of torture. They wanted to know what brought about the change. I told them Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I took no other medicine since I began their use. Rheumatism is a fair trial, they will surely do for you what they did for me."

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J. J. Shallocross offered an amendment. He moved that the report be adopted, down to the clause which dealt with Chinese labor, and that the consideration of that be deferred. He recognized, however, the existence of a shortage in unskilled labor, and stated that he was becoming more and more convinced that the Chinese labor was a necessary evil.

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VICTORIA TIMES, TUESDAY, MAY 14, 1907.

JUDGMENT GIVEN.

Real Estate Trial Concluded in Supreme Court Friday.

In court on Friday, a decision was reached in the trial in Bagshawe vs. Rowland. Mr. Justice Irving who tried the case, decided in favor of the plaintiff, which means that the defendant will have to pay the plaintiff the amount of the commission claimed by the latter for the sale of 110 acres of land. The commission claimed was \$25 an acre so that the whole amount of the claim was \$2,750.

The plaintiff in the case, who is a well known real estate dealer, had approached the defendant and asked him if he wanted to sell his property. The latter had given an affirmative answer and when the price was asked Mr. Rowland said he wanted \$500 an acre. Mention was made of the subject of commission but Mr. Rowland said he did not know anything that, he was entitled to his commission. The latter had given an affirmative answer and when the price was asked Mr. Rowland said he wanted \$500 an acre. Mention was made of the subject of commission but Mr. Rowland said he did not know anything that, he was entitled to his commission.

Finally Mr. Rowland refused to recognize the sale effected by Mr. Bagshawe and declared it all off.

The whole question was one of whether the defendant was entitled to his commission. The plaintiff contended that the defendant was entitled to his commission. The defendant contended that he was not entitled to his commission. The judge decided in favor of the plaintiff.

There is a likelihood that the case will be appealed to the Full court for a decision.

NEW YORK STRIKE.

Longshoremen Remain Firm and Companies Are Determined Not to Yield.

New York, May 8.—The position of the Longshoremen's union in New York is becoming more serious. The strike has not shown any sign of weakening, and the task of loading and unloading ships is becoming more difficult. As a result of the strike, the companies are being forced to pay more for the loading and unloading of ships. The companies are determined not to yield to the demands of the union.

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TORTURING RHEUMATISM

SUFFERED FOR FIVE YEARS—CURED BY DR. WILLIAMS' PINK PILLS.

Agonizing pains, sometimes in one part of the body, sometimes in another, more often in the back or joints—that's rheumatism. Do not let it trouble you. Each year makes the disease worse—increases the torture. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have cured thousands. They cured Mr. Henderson. Plants of Sorel. One of the most aggravated cases of rheumatism. What they did for Mr. Plante they can do for you. He says: "I was seized with rheumatism. I walked as if my boots were filled with pebbles. The pains, starting in my feet, spread to all parts of the body; my back and joints became aching. For upwards of five years I suffered the greatest agony. Often I was confined to bed, hardly able to move. Nothing seemed to help me. I despaired of ever being well again. By good chance Dr. Williams' Pink Pills were brought to my attention and I decided to try them. I got six boxes—before they were gone I felt a great improvement. I continued the treatment and my health gradually came back till now I do not feel the least pain. I am totally cured. It was a surprise to my friends to see me on the street again well and strong after five years of torture. They wanted to know what brought about the change. I told them Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I took no other medicine since I began their use. Rheumatism is a fair trial, they will surely do for you what they did for me."

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Continuing, Mr. Henderson stated that he did not believe that the board should place itself on record as in favor of the abolition or the reduction of the head tax. The time would come when the Chinese would be asked to pay the head tax to come in, and that would be time enough to see the country flooded with them.

The amendment was supported by C. H. Lugin. He believed that if such a debatable item were included in the report the entire report would be marred and its value rendered null. Before the question of availing themselves of Oriental labor was broached the Chinese were afraid to express their views. Now they are not. Each makes the disease worse—increases the torture. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills have cured thousands. They cured Mr. Henderson. Plants of Sorel. One of the most aggravated cases of rheumatism. What they did for Mr. Plante they can do for you. He says: "I was seized with rheumatism. I walked as if my boots were filled with pebbles. The pains, starting in my feet, spread to all parts of the body; my back and joints became aching. For upwards of five years I suffered the greatest agony. Often I was confined to bed, hardly able to move. Nothing seemed to help me. I despaired of ever being well again. By good chance Dr. Williams' Pink Pills were brought to my attention and I decided to try them. I got six boxes—before they were gone I felt a great improvement. I continued the treatment and my health gradually came back till now I do not feel the least pain. I am totally cured. It was a surprise to my friends to see me on the street again well and strong after five years of torture. They wanted to know what brought about the change. I told them Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. I took no other medicine since I began their use. Rheumatism is a fair trial, they will surely do for you what they did for me."

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Mr. Bullen here interpolated the remark that the majority of people in Victoria were afraid to express their views frankly with regard to the head tax and Chinese labor. The committee's aim in this regard was to secure relief for the farmers and for such people as required unskilled labor. If 1,000 Chinamen were to come to Victoria, 500 housewives would be able to take it easier.

Continuing, Mr. Henderson stated that he did not believe that the board should place itself on record as in favor of the abolition or the reduction of the head tax. The time would come when the Chinese would be asked to pay the head tax to come in, and that would be time enough to see the country flooded with them.

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