

be made in the carrying charges of raw materials, and in particular the transportation costs of coal.

No reasonable person will deny that the railways must have more revenue if they are to continue to fulfill their proper function. The mining industry, as the great producer of raw materials, stands to lose more than any other branch of industry if our transportation system break down through lack of financial strength, and all who understand the elementary requirements of prosperity in mining industries include efficient transportation facilities among them. The railway companies will not meet with any biased or thoughtless opposition from mining men to such rate increases as the Railway Commission may concede to be required to meet increased wages and increased costs of material, but there seems a possibility that the use of finished manufactured articles as typical instances of the effect of the expected increase of railway charges discloses a solicitude for manufactured goods in relation to freight charges that may imply a lack of realization of the far-reaching effects of freight increases on raw materials, and, in particular, on coal.

These remarks refer, of course, to those instances where it is necessary to transport coal by rail. Wherever it is possible coal should be transported by water. The railways admittedly do not like freighting coal, and regard it as a necessary nuisance, and—wherever a competitive or alternative water-route exists—the objection of the railways should not be disregarded. There are indeed railways in Canada whose running costs would be much lessened if they developed water transportation for locomotive coal to a larger carrying capacity than it has yet reached.

BRITISH LABOR AND POLISH FREEDOM.

Despite the biased and incomplete cabled reviews on which Canadian readers have to base their opinions of British politics, it has for sometime been clear that Britain would not declare war upon Soviet Russia. Britain has other fish to fry, she is dead-tired of war and war's consequences, and there is a widespread disinclination in Britain to interference in other people's political experiments.

Therefore the hysterical demand of the Laborites that there should be no war with Russia has fallen rather flat, and the country is generally amused at one section threatening revolution to obtain what is the very general desire of all the people.

The action of the Labor Party is not logical. They state first: "We are not concerned with the form of the Russian Government. We have no concern about the merits or demerits of Bolshevism." Later the Council of Action was instructed to remain in being until, among other things, "recognition of the Soviet Government" is secured. Recognition and approval

of a constituted government are usually regarded as inseparable. It is one thing to protect against military interference in national affairs, and another thing to solemnly approve a foreign government.

These phases of the event should not however obscure the gravity of the step taken by organized labor, which, as it is characterised by H. J. Thomas himself, is "a desperate and dangerous method" and a "challenge to the whole constitution of the country."

The danger consists in acceptance by the Labor Party of a theory that was precisely enunciated by Robert Williams, who said to the assembled delegates: "I tell you solemnly and seriously that you are infinitely more representative than the House of Commons, and you may be summoned to sit permanently as a Committee of National Safety." Those outside the ranks of organized labor may challenge this statement as being untrue, and the issue will then be straitly drawn. The interpolation of the Russian situation will then be recognised as distinctly irrelevant and merely confusing the true issue.

The decision of organized labor to form a Council of Action, which is merely another term for a Revolutionary Committee, doubtless is a reflex of the Miners' Congress at Geneva, and is a sign of the growth of the international movement in labor politics, and the temporary discount of national sentiment that is a natural result of comparing of notes between representatives of European nationalities after the dreadful experiences of war.

If the labor groups in all civilized countries unite in denouncing war they will find few opponents of their course, and there is no doubt that a general strike of coal miners would most effectually paralyse all war effort. Labor has a long way to go yet, however, before it can guarantee national rights and national independence against aggression by autocrats, either monarchical or ostensibly proletarian, or against the armed forces of uncivilized races and those nations that while they have accepted Western civilization have not accepted Western ethics. The British workman is secure in his nationality and in his island, but closer proximity to chaos and the kindergarten of child races that are at this time experimenting with forms of government in eastern Europe and western Asia would modify his enthusiasm in the singing of the "Internationale."

The taste of British laborites for Russian methods is as mysterious as the bygone enthusiasm of certain literary circles for Russian literature, and it is a singular turn of events that links Ludendorff with the British worker against Poland and Lloyd George. Considering the momentous nature of the laborites' decision to adopt direct action one could wish they had chosen a more definite issue, but, for the peace of Britain, it is perhaps fortunate the issue is clouded and not urgent.