

## MONTHLY TRADE REVIEW

## INTERNATIONAL LABOR NEWS

## Monthly Trade Review

At a time like the present, when business conditions are uneven, it is difficult to make any statement which will apply to the Dominion as a whole. The year 1923 we look on as having been a moderately good one, with certain striking exceptions, some favourable others the reverse. We believe that 1924 is commencing with fundamental conditions sounder than they were at the beginning of 1923, and with sections of our weakest territory—the Middle West—in a vastly improved position. Finally, we see no reason why the improvement should not continue in moderate degree throughout the fall twelve months of the present year.

**British Columbia.**  
During December, the lumber business continued active, the demand being fully equal to the supply.

Prices have been fairly steady, with a slight improvement for cedar, fir and hemlock are in good demand, and there was also a moderate increase in the demand for shingles.

The mining output for 1923 is estimated to represent a value of \$39,000,000, as compared with \$35,000,000 in 1922.

According to the B.C. Packers Association, the past year's salmon pack totalled 1,337,256 cases, as against 1,200,000 cases over 1922. The market for the "sock-eye" variety continues poor. Shipments of salted salmon and herring to the Orient continue to be quite substantial.

Agricultural conditions are unchanged, low prices resulting in very small profits for the farmer.

Large expenditures are being made on the port of Vancouver. The grain export business continues to be largely in excess of 1922, and it is predicted that 50 million bushels of the 1923 crop will be handled.

Improvement in port facilities and the large volume of outgoing freight will bring to Vancouver a share of the incoming freight business, which formerly was handled almost entirely by rail from the coast.

Retailers report Vancouver holiday business to have been better than in 1922, but outside the city

sales did not show an increase. Collections are reported to be fair to good.

**Middle West (General)**  
The approximate disposition of wheat from the 1923 western crop, delivered up to December 28th, 1923, is as follows:

In store, Country elevators, December 28, 1923, 50,500,000 bus. Shipments Ft. Wm. P.L.A. Sept. 1st to Dec. 28, 1923 183,213,909 bus.

In store Ft. Wm. P.L.A. December 28th, 1923 34,386,000 bus. In transit Ft. Wm. P.L.A. & West (estimated) 22,417,744 bus.

Interior Terminals (estimated) 2,500,000 bus.

Vancouver shipments Sept. 1st to Dec. 28th, 1923, 10,854,257 bus. Consumption of mills (estimated) 18,250,000 bus.

Total 322,221,910 bus. Deducting requirements for seed, it would appear that at the beginning of the year some 90,000,000 bushels of wheat still remained in western farmers' hands.

**Alberta.**  
The shipment of wheat continued steadily during the month of December, and it is estimated that 60 per cent. of the grain had gone forward by the first week in January. Flour mills are running to capacity, and sales are reported to compare favourably with those of 1922.

Wholesale business in all lines showed a substantial increase in December, dealers reporting the following approximate increases over 1922: drygoods 15 to 25 p.c.; hardware 50 p.c.; boots and shoes 20 p.c. The outlook for the next few months is favourable.

Retailers generally report a gratifying increase in their December trade, the seasonal business in some cases being the best experience for four years. Through the liquidation of goods and a steadier market, merchants should now be in a better position than they were a year ago.

Except for a small local demand for feeders, there has been no improvement in the livestock situation which continues unsatisfactory on account of low prices. Some improvements can be looked for in 1924, as there is ample feed in the province, weather conditions so far have been favourable, and losses this winter should be but a minimum.

Wholesale and retail houses are generally satisfied with the payment of collections during the month, but difficulty is being experienced in obtaining reductions on old outstanding.

**Saskatchewan and Manitoba.**  
The volume of business handled by manufacturing concerns during December was apparently slightly below the figure for the corresponding month last year. No marked activity is looked for in the immediate future.

Wholesale business in December was not up to expectations, and while some reports indicate a showing equal to or better than last year, turnovers have been as a rule from 1 to 15 p.c. lower. Clothing and footwear show heavy declines owing to continued mild weather.

Retail business was below December of 1922, according to most reports, but several points advise sales equal to or slightly better than last year's figures. Conditions in Saskatchewan and in Ontario, West of the Great Lakes, are more satisfactory than in Manitoba, where sales generally are reported from 20 to 25 p.c. down from last year. The holiday trade was fairly good, but was limited to a very short period.

Collection results, while perhaps slightly better than at this time last year, are not yet satisfactory, more especially in the wholesale and retail business. Current accounts are coming in fairly well, principally as a result of better discrimination in respect to credit. It is reported that mortgage payments compare favourably with last year.

Conditions in respect to employment have been good so far this winter, and there are few men unemployed in the larger cities.

**Ontario.**  
Owing to the exceptionally open weather, autumn work on the farms was facilitated, and the farmers are better prepared than usual to make an early start at field operations in the Spring. There is an abundance of fodder to carry all classes of livestock over the winter, but low prices are said to take the profit out of the business.

A slow improvement is in evidence in the manufacturing industry in certain lines have been fairly busy. Shoe manufacturers find the demand for their output, both for immediate and for Spring delivery, to be better than a year ago. Producers of automobiles have been unusually busy, and the same applies to the rubber manufacturing industry; some of the plants in the latter trade are operating three shifts of eight hours each.

December was a seasonably quiet month in the lumber trade, but retailers benefited by the mild weather, which allowed outside construction work to be carried on until an unusually late period.

This late season, however, affected the winter business of wholesalers and retailers. Christmas trade was active, although it is probable that the value of sales per capita was lower than in 1922, cheaper goods being obviously in demand.

Collections are only fair.

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## THE U. M. W. AND THE REDS

The action of the United Mine Workers of America in endorsing by an overwhelming majority the stand taken by President Lewis in opposition to the outlaw strike of 1923 in Nova Scotia should have a helpful influence upon the efforts now being made to compose the differences between the Cape Breton miners and the coal company. Twice during the present convention in Indianapolis, a radical group in the U.M.W.A. has challenged the action of Mr. Lewis in deposing local officials of the organization in Cape Breton and upon both occasions the President has triumphed. He has charged that thousands of dollars sent by the U.M.W.A. into Nova Scotia for relief work were used by the former officials for the circulation of propaganda of the Red Internationale of Moscow, with which the Nova Scotia extremists had had sought to ally themselves. He has unsparringly condemned the policy of striking-on-the-job which was preached and practised in Nova Scotia, and he declares that nearly every provision of the union's constitution was broken by those responsible for the strike, pumps and boilers had been deserted and sea water was entering the mines; "the honor of every member of the United Mine Workers of America was pledged to the fulfillment of our contract."

The U.M.W. has none too lustrous a record in regard to strikes and accompanying violence, and the present executive does del in resisting acts and movements of local organizations which recall some of the uglier chapters in the union's history. Had there been no red element in Nova Scotia, there might still have been wage controversies, but there would not have been the same bitterness, nor would the problems have been of the same character, because the political motive by which McLachlan and his associates were actuated would have been lacking. The contention of President Lewis that, but for McLachlan's socialistic sympathies and activities, the wage reduction in the Nova Scotia mines would not have occurred, is not as clear as it might be; a substantial cut in wages was shown to be a necessity in view of the condition of the coal market, and that necessity was acknowledged by impartial investigators. Mr. Lewis was determined to score against McLachlan, and he did score, but lower production costs were essential to the operation of the coal-mining industry in Cape Breton last year, apart from the desirability of checking the red movement, and it would seem that Mr. Lewis was talking for effect and not quite by the book when he declared that, had he acted sooner, "the mines of Nova Scotia would not be working today with one cent reduction."

What he might with justice have said was that the introduction of communism as a factor in the industrial situation of Cape Breton did not make things easier for either side. If those presently in control of the United Mine Workers have set their faces resolutely against red radicalism in the mining industry, the better it will be for both miners and operators, and for the public. The absence from the present strike situation in Cape Breton of such practices as those which so discredited the strikers of 1923 is a hopeful sign. The issue is a plain one: how much can the company afford to pay for the production of coal, having regard to market prices and prospects? If the miners exact too high a wage the coal can not be sold except at a loss, and production will be curtailed. Representatives of the company and of the miners can effect a fair settlement if the question is fairly approached, and experience has shown that an unfair settlement—unfair to either party—does not establish harmonious relations and does not mean enduring peace in industry.

**I.W.W. BREAKS OUT IN B.C. ONCE MORE**

**VICTORIA, B.C.**—The Provincial Department of Labor moved to settle the strike by which the I.W.W., after several years' inactivity, are trying up logging camps in the East Kootenay country and threatening to reduce inter-lumber production seriously.

Acting on the instructions of Hon. A. M. Manson, Minister of Labor, J. D. McIvor, Deputy Minister, hurried from Victoria this afternoon on his way to the scene of the trouble.

He will visit various points in the interior during the next few days to investigate fully conditions in the lumber industry, taking advantage of every opportunity to aid a settlement of the dispute between the lumberjacks and the operators. At present between 700 and 800

men are affected by the strike, Cranbrook being the centre of the troubled district.

The strike was called about the beginning of the month by the I.W.W., who, on behalf of the men, are demanding official recognition of their organization by the employers, a minimum wage of \$4 for an eight-hour day, and the release of all classes of war prisoners in the United States. The last demand is a remarkable feature of the dispute, and the I.W.W., in attempting to justify it, contend that the majority of the lumber concerns in the Interior are owned by Americans, whose Government they hold responsible for what they regard as a grievance.

The large camp operated by the O.P.R. at Yakk is the only important lumber concern in the district not affected by the strike.

**Fear Log Shortage.**  
The condition under which lumbering is carried on in the Interior country are different from those on the Coast, it was explained here today. There the logging is done in the winter, when the snow facilitates the movement of the logs, and the sawmills, which cannot be operated while the country is in the grip of frost, are dependent for their summer operations on a sufficient accumulation of logs at the end of the winter season. Unless the present dispute is brought speedily to an end the outlook for the mill next summer is very serious.

**B.C. Lumberjacks Go Out on Strike**

**WINNIPEG.**—Dominion Government protection for workers now being recruited among the unemployed in the prairie provinces, to go to British Columbia logging camps, against alleged violence of striking loggers, was sought in a resolution adopted by western Canada retail lumbermen, at their convention here, today. A copy of the resolution was forwarded to Ottawa.

One thousand loggers in the Fernie, B.C., district, are now out on strike, called by I.W.W. leaders, delegates speaking to the resolution, declared. Violence already had been shown, and before unemployed from Winnipeg and further west could be taken to the camps, Government protection was required, it was said. The camps now are idle, and 1,000 men are being sought.

Resolutions supporting the Dominion Government immigration policy, advocating mixed farming, as opposed to wheat farming, and supporting the cattlemen's resolution, demanding abolition of the two cent a pound duty on cattle exported to the United States, also were adopted unanimously.

R. Skov, High River, Alberta, for four years vice-president, was elected president succeeding W. P. Dutton. Donald Konants was elected vice-president, and the following were chosen as the board of directors:

Alberta—George Bowker, Ponoka; E. W. Stacey, Medicine Hat. Saskatchewan—Geo. Fuller, Saskatoon; W. Mertz, Weyburn. Manitoba—Roy Roberts and D. M. McNeil, both of Winnipeg.

**THE GOOD-WILL ROAD**

It is stated that negotiations between representatives of the United Mine Workers and representatives of the British Empire Steel Corporation, in regard to wage schedules, were carried on in a sustained spirit of good-will. That is to the credit of all the negotiators. Too often, on similar occasions in the past, there has been far too little good-will. But the fact remains now that there has been failure to reach an agreement. Today, more than ever, there is need for maintenance of the spirit of good-will so that the interruption in the negotiation may be for a very brief time only and some solution of the difficulty may be reached.

To make the interruption more than momentary would be easy enough, to create a situation in which there would be both bitterness and anger would be easy; but there lies no profit for anybody in that direction. That way there lies only loss for the miners and loss for the Corporation, and loss for everybody in this part of the country. The hope for both parties to the difference, and for the public which is a vitally interesting third party, lies in a continuance of the spirit of good-will that is said to have been displayed in the negotiations so far so that there may be the most thorough exploration of every avenue to agreement. Fair examination of the other fellows' contentions always helps to bring light.

Agreement is always possible between men of good-will. That is one point for everyone to keep in mind. The other point is that continued disagreement means loss, loss, loss. A fight in which everybody loses,

## Canadian Labor At Inter-Empire Conference Soon

**OTTAWA.**—Canadian organized labor will be represented at the coming inter-empire conference, representative both of the trades union movement and the political labor movement, which is to be held in London during the British Empire exhibition. The executive of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, which has had the matter under consideration, has accepted an invitation to be represented at the conference and representatives will be chosen in due course.

The conference is regarded as one of the most important ever called under the auspices either of the trades union movement or of the political labor movement. Subjects under discussion will, to a certain extent, parallel those considered at the recent imperial conference, namely, development of inter-empire trade, emigration, status of British subjects within the empire, and so forth.

Special interest will be attached to the conference in view of the accession to power of a Labor government in Great Britain.

**Local Branch of G.I.A. to B. of L.E. Installs Officers**

**MONCTON.**—At a meeting in the Labor Temple officers of the Moncton branch of the G.I.A. to the B. of L.E. were installed as follows: Past Pres., Mrs. J. M. McGuigan; President, Mrs. R. T. Jefferson; vice-pres., D. C. Cook; Chaplain, Mrs. MacLaren; Secretary, Mrs. W. J. Gunning; Treasurer, Mrs. J. D. Cooke; Musician, Mrs. Herb. MacDonald; Marshals, Mrs. Horace Somers and Mrs. M. Trites; Insurance Sec., Mrs. Frank Cuthbertson; Pillars, Mrs. Sherlock, Mrs. Bannister, Mrs. John Stewart and Mrs. Henry Smallwood.

The installation ceremonies were carried out by Mrs. J. M. McGuigan, Past President, and Mrs. A. H. Fryers, Marshal. A large number of members of the local Engineers' Lodge No. 162, B. of L.E., were present and ex-Aid. John Stewart on behalf of the lodge presented the Grand Auxiliary with a hand-somely bound Bible.

Another pleasing part of the ceremonies was the presentation by the ladies of the G.I.A., of a gold piece to Mrs. J. M. McGuigan, the retiring president, as a mark of appreciation of her services to the auxiliary.

After the ceremonies social evening was spent, dancing and games being indulged in until midnight when an excellent luncheon was served.

**Says Trade Will Oppose Masons' Pay**

**VANCOUVER.**—It is officially announced that on April 1 the bricklayers, masons and plasterers of the province will demand \$1.12 1/2 an hour wages, with overtime as now, but according to the new rate. The present rate of pay is 90 cents an hour.

It was said that strenuous opposition would be made by the members of the building trades in the city to the decision of the Bricklayers', Masons' and Plasterers' Union. One member of the trade said that the builders had anticipated the coming year as a good one in the matter of construction in the city, but if the intention of the men was put into effect it would have a tendency to retard building activity. He added that it was the intention of the trade to fight the issue and the matter would receive attention at the next meeting of the Builders' Association.

**Prefer Short Time To General Lay-Off**

**MONTRÉAL.**—The C.P.R. Angus shops will close down for four days at the end of this month to avoid the necessity of laying off men. The arrangement has been arrived at by mutual agreement between the management and the men, the men preferring short time to any displacement of their fellow workers during the difficult winter season.

Other points on the C.P.R. system have refused to be parties to similar arrangements, it is understood, and there will be a general laying off of men at the other principal shops throughout the Dominion. Angus shops is stated to be the only centre at which the men have elected to go on short time in preference to having a lay-off of men.

Shorter hours are also being adopted in the textile industry in order to keep the largest number of workers possible employed for the rest of the winter. All mills of

the Dominion Textile Company Limited, in the Province of Quebec will run from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. a week instead of from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. a week as formerly, to avoid laying off men.

The large quantity of English cottons coming into the Dominion is quoted as a reason why working time has to be cut down.

**J. T. Foster Heads Labor Council**

**MONTRÉAL.**—Pres. John T. Foster, of the Trades and Labor Council, entered upon his fourteenth term of office, when he was elected by acclamation by one of the largest gatherings of delegates which have met in the council's hall on Ontario street east for some time. Several other officers were returned without opposition, and all were greeted with applause by the various local unions. There was some competition for the offices of first vice-president and as there are several candidates for this post, a ballot will be taken at the next regular meeting of the council.

Nothing of a contentious nature was brought before the meeting, which accepted the report of the executive committee without amendment, and also approved the financial report of auditors presented by Gus Franco.

The delegates approved a protest formulated by the executive committee against the rate of wages paid by the Canadian National Railways to its casual laborers.

The executive also pointed out that according to information, quite a number of employees of the provincial Government are far from receiving living wages, and are without provision for sickness, old age, or adequate compensation in case of accident. The committee, therefore, recommended that the council request the Civil Service Commission, appointed to make a survey of salaries paid to officials, to ask the Government to raise the salaries of these employees, "especially those of the labor department, where salaries are far from comparing favorably with those paid in most other provinces."

A communication was received from Rene Bauset, city clerk, to the effect that the Council's letter, asking that the city recognize the right of the policemen to organize, had been referred to the Department of Public Safety. It was decided to receive this letter and place it on file.

**Appealed for Funds.**  
A fruitful source of discussion before the council, the injunction restraining the garment workers, during a recent strike, was again on the tapis. Delegate Shubert appealing to the delegates for funds to help the union take the decision to a higher court. Delegate Shubert declared that his union was fighting the cause of the labor movement, in its battle against the injunction ruling, and said that the case might even go to the Privy Council, an appeal which would require thousands of dollars.

President Foster was decidedly in favor of the garment workers' cause, but reminded the delegates that the individual unions should shoulder the responsibility as far as the appeal for funds was concerned.

Gus Franco presented the financial report of the auditors, which showed a favorable balance of \$1,646.36.

Nominations for officers were then opened.

President Foster was re-elected by acclamation, as also were the following: Richard Lynch, English recording secretary; J. A. Beland, French recording secretary; Gus Franco, corresponding secretary; J. A. Girard, financial secretary; A. Garlopy, treasurer; Joseph Pelletier, statistician; L. M. Dupont, sentinel.

Elections will be held for the following offices: First vice-president, for which the nominees are J. Duquay, H. Masse, M. A. Alarie; second vice-president, W. N. Dixon, J. St. Marie, George Vallieres.

The following were nominated for the position of auditors, of whom three will be elected: C. H. Fraser, J. McLean, B. Drolet and C. Cooney.

**Industrial Crisis In Cape Breton**

**SYDNEY, N.S.**—Whether the present acute industrial crisis in Cape Breton will result in another strike of coal miners depends entirely upon the nature of the reply which John L. Lewis will make to the advice which have been forwarded to him by the provincial officers of District 26, United Mine Workers of America.

Without international support a strike is almost impossible at this time of year, and whether Indianapolis is in a position to finance a walk-out, after the numerous debts upon the treasury through the recurring United States strikes of the past few years, is problematical.

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