Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press

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A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER.

SUGGESTIONS SOLICITED.

THERE are few subjects in which a keener or wider interest is taken than the matter of wages, probably because 90 per cent. of the men and women in this country are dependent directly or indirectly upon their own or some one else's earnings. Realizing that there is a point below which wages for women should not be allowed to fall, the Minimum Wage Board was established by act of Ontario Legislature in 1920. It has now spent some months in ascertaining just how much a girl must spend in order to obtain the necessities of life. One of the results of their investigating has been the establishing of an order governing the minimum wage which may be paid to women workers in the laundries of Toronto. Under the terms of this ruling experienced female workers employed in such laundries may not be paid wages at a less rate than $12.00 per week.

A survey is now being made of the following industries: Chocolate, biscuit, confectionery and allied industries; paper box, paper bag, stationery and allied industries; retail stores, grocery specialties, gum and jam, with a view to establishing wage rates for girls in these occupations. These orders will first apply to Toronto, but, together with the laundry order, will later be extended to the whole province. As the cost of living is lower in the smaller towns and cities of the province the orders for the province generally will fix lower minimum than for the larger cities.

Dr. Macmillan, chairman of the Minimum Wage Board, Spadina Crescent, Toronto, has announced that he will gladly furnish information to any employer or employe who may care to write to him with regard to the terms of the board's orders.

Employers throughout the province, with whom the board has come in contact, have invariably not only given their assistance but, upon learning the methods and results of the board's actions, have also given their approval.

No Social Justice in Canada

Canadian Government Holds up Legislation Recommended by International Labor Conferences.

By J. A. P. Haydon.

Social justice and humane conditions of labor, the high principles upon which the Treaty of Versailles was founded, are not to be applied to Canada. This is what the Canadian Government says in a memorandum which was laid on the table of the House of Commons on May 28, 1921, by Hon. C. J. Doherty, Minister of Justice. The memorandum was in connection with the draft conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Conference, Washington, 1919, and the International Labor Conference, Genoa, 1920.

The document is a most remarkable one, showing, as it does, the unique position of Canada insofar as advanced social and labor legislation is concerned.

From beginning to end there is an effort to "get from under" on the part of the Government. Almost all of the draft conventions and recommendations are held to fall within provincial authority, and the Government declares:

"The obligation of the Government of Canada, under paragraph five of Section 405 of the Treaty of Peace, has already been fulfilled by the reference of these respective conventions to the provincial authorities."

On November 6, 1920, an order-in-council was passed which outlined the legal aspect of the various draft conventions and recommendations. We have from time to time referred to this order-in-council, and we are not convinced that the obligation of Canada has been fulfilled by the mere reference of these draft conventions and recommendations to the provincial authorities. There must be an effort on the part of the Canadian Government, working in co-operation with the various provincial Governments, to carry out the provisions of the Labor section of the Treaty of Peace.

The Canadian Government, for reasons best known to itself, simply brought in the recommendations concerning the draft conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Conferences and laid them on the table of the House. This being done no opportunity was presented for a discussion of the Government's decision, although had the Opposition so desired, it could have voiced its protest.

Many of the draft conventions are held, in the opinion of the Minister of Justice, to "involve legislation which is competent to Parliament in so far as Dominion works and undertakings are affected." This was the opinion of the Minister of Justice when the order-in-council was passed in November last. The executive council of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada in presenting the legislative programme of the workers of this country to the Government, requested that legislation be enacted making the application of the draft conventions and recommendations applicable to Dominion Government works and undertakings. In view of the Government's declarations at the International Labor Conference at Washington in 1919, to the effect that as Canada had ratified the Treaty of Peace and the labor section therein, she intended to carry out its high principles in spirit as well as letter, one would suppose that this fair nation of ours would be the first to enact legislation leading to social justice and humane conditions of labor. But what do we find? In the memorandum as submitted to the House of Commons on May 28, it is written:

"The draft convention limiting the hours of work in industrial undertakings to eight in the day and 48 in the week, is of more importance on account of the various classes of works and undertakings in which the Dominion Government is engaged, including those in which Government employes take part, and others which are being executed under contract. This draft convention is at present receiving the attention of the Government and the SUBJECT WILL BE MADE ONE OF FURTHER INVESTIGATION IN THE INTERVAL BETWEEN THIS AND THE NEXT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT."

Twenty-five years ago the Canadian Government promised similar legislation to the workers of this country. In the Montreal Gazette, recently, under the heading "Twenty-five Years Ago," there appeared an item stating that the Prime Minister informed a delegation of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada that the Government would make the eight-hour day applicable to Govment undertakings. Twenty-five years later we have a Government stating that the question of an eight-hour workday on Government undertakings will be made one of further investigation.

Unemployment insurance is dealt with in a similar manner and in the memorandum the Government states:

"The subject of unemployment insurance is at present being studied in the Department of Labor and it is intended to give further consideration to this subject in the interval before the next session of Parliament."

Reference was also made to unemployment insurance in the speech from the throne on Feb. 14. No official announcement was made as to what action was intended to be taken by the Government on this all-important question. The Prime Minister on the occasion of the introduction of amendments to the ex-Soldiers' Insurance Act, made some definite declarations concerning unemployment in Canada. He stated that the question of unemployment was one that followed all wars and Canada was a little better off than other countries However, the Prime Minister declared that so long as the municipalities continued to do their share in providing for the unemployed, there was no need to worry. "So long as the municipalities continue," said the Prime Minister, "we will continue to give relief. When they cease, we cease." From this we are to understand that the matter of unemployment insurance is not one of the needs for social justice and humane conditions of labor.

One of the recommendations of the International Labor Conference concerning unemployment is in regard to the recruiting of bodies of workers in other countries and consultation with employers and workers in each country in the industries concerned. The Canadian Government states:

"The whole subject of immigration is at present engaging the attention of a special commission of the International Labor Office, which is to report next fall. The Canadian Government is represented on this commission, and it is felt that the decision of Canada on the recommendation concerning unemployment should be reserved for consideration of the work of the Immigration Commission."

With this view we will agree. The workers of this country are much concerned in immigration and its views are well known. There is no need at present for skilled craftsmen in Canada and we are of the opinion that all our industrial labor needs can be filled through the Government employment offices.

"The obligations of Canada are fulfilled for the present," says the memorandum, "by laying on the table of the House the recommendation concerning reciprocity of treatment of foreign workers."

All of the other draft conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Conference, Washington, 1919, are held to fall within the competence of the provincial authorities.

Following is a list of the Draft Conventions and Recommendations of the Washington Convention:

Draft convention limiting the hours of work in industrial undertakings to eight in the day and 48 in the week.

Draft convention concerning unemployment.

Draft convention concerning the employment of women before and after childbirth.

Draft convention concerning employment of women during the night.

Draft convention fixing the minimum age for admission of children to industrial employment.

Draft convention concerning the night work of young persons in industry.

Recommendation concerning unemployment.

Recommendation concerning reciprocity of treatment of foreign workers.

Recommendation concerning the prevention of anthrax.

Recommendation concerning the protection of women and children against lead poisoning.

Recommendation concerning the establishment of Government health services.

Recommendation concerning the application of the Berne Convention of 1906, on the prohibition of the use of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches.

The draft conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Conference, Genoa, 1920, deal with maritime matters entirely.

The application of the eight-hour day to the fishing industry is held to fall within the jurisdiction of the provinces. Other recommendations to be adopted will require certain amendments to the Canada Shipping Act and "the matters will receive attention between this and the next session of Parliament," says the memorandum.

It will be noted that throughout there has been a desire on the part of the Government to delay as far as possible the enactment of legislation which will lead to social justice and humane conditions of labor, the high principles upon which the Treaty of Peace was based.

The concluding paragraph of the memorandum is a most remarkable one. It states that "under the terms of the Treaties of Peace no obligation rests upon the member states of the International Labor Organization to ratify the individual conventions and recommendations which may be adopted at the annual conventions."

There may be no legal obligation compelling the Canadian Government to enact legislation along the line of the draft conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Conferences, but certainly there is a moral obligation. The Canadian Government has been represented at all of the meetings of the International Labor Organization. Its representatives took a very active part in some of the discussions. The Rt. Hon. Sir R. L. Borden in introducing the Treaties of Peace in the House of Commons, stated that the labor section thereof was Labor's Magna Charta. If there are no obligations—moral or legal—then we fail to see the significance of Sir Robert Borden's declaration.

Certainly the workers of this great nation of the north are anxious to have social justice and humane conditions of labor and the Government's actions have been a disappointment to the great producing masses of Canada.

Words will not suffice. Action is what is demanded.

GROWTH OF NATIONAL

Continued From Page One.

during the past year by the American Federation of Labor and international unions in maintaining this position. The situation does not permit of any relaxation of the efforts put forward during the past year, but rather an increase in the attention given to Canada wherever that may be possible.

"There are still some international unions affiliated to the American Federation of Labor which have not affiliated their Canadian membership to the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, and I take this opportunity of impressing upon them the necessity of doing so at the earliest possible moment, and give their co-operation in the work we are carrying on.

Legislation.

"The legislation desired by the affiliated members and expressed in resolutions adopted at the annual conventions of the Trades and Labor Congress has been placed before the Provincial Legislatures and the Federal Government respectively. Our efforts have been centred on unifying, as far as possible the labor legislation of the different provinces.

"The congress has had legislative representatives in the different provinces during the past year in addition to the attention given to the Federal Parliament at Ottawa. All the provinces except Saskatchewan, Quebec and Prince Edward Island have now secure compensation acts, administered by provincial commissions and eliminating private insurance and substituting state funds for their administration. Our efforts to have a similar measure adopted in Quebec have not been successful but considerable progress has been made this year in that regard.

"Minimum wage laws have been secured in Ontario in addition to British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec, which provinces had them previously.

"An act has been passed in Ontario raising the compulsory school age to 16 years.

"Eight hour day legislation in harmony with the decisions of the International Labor Body reached at the Washington conference in September, 1919, have been presented to the different Provincial Governments but have not yet been enacted into law.

"Legislation has been obtained in several provinces creating state funds for allowances to children of widowed mothers.

"Other measures being asked for include unemployment insurance, registration of union labels, one day's rest in seven, strengthening of the immigration act, amendments to the criminal code, establishment of joint councils in the civil service, etc.

Conferences.

"In May a national conference of the building industries was held at which thirty representatives of employers and thirty representatives chosen by the international unions engaged in the building industry were present.

"The Trades and Labor Congress of Canada has also been invited to name the representative to the annual conference of the international labor body, part of the League of Nations (of which Canada is a member) and I am still a member of the governing body of the International Labor Office, having been elected as such at the Washington conference, for a period of three years, pending the entry of the United States into this body.

Injunctions.

"In December, 1920, the executive of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada notified the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employes of the cancellation of their charter. This organization has been affiliated to the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada since December, 1917, and its membership chiefly includes those eligible for membership in the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks, Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employes, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen and Helpers, Hotel and Restaurant Employes' International Alliance and Bartenders' International League (dining car service), the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employes of America, United Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes and Railway Shop Laborers, International Brotherhood of Firemen and Oilers, etc.

"Immediate action was taken by the Canadian Brotherhood of Railroad Employes to apply to the courts for an injunction restraining the executive of the Trades and Labor Congress to carry into execution this revocation of their charter and decision has been rendered by the courts in favor of the Canadian Brotherhood of Railway Employes. Briefly, the grounds of the decision were that the executive of the Trades and Labor Congress have no distinct power, under their constitution, to revoke the charter of any affiliated union of this kind. Further, if they had such a power that the executive council could not take action unless they were in session assembled, and further that before such action could be taken the organization involved would have to be notified of distinct charges and given an opportunity of being present to defend itself.

"It will be necessary at the forthcoming convention of the Trades and Labor Congress to amend the constitution in such a manner as to allow of the full carrying out of the policies accepted by the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada since 1902 of holding in affiliation only such organizations as are not in conflict with those chartered by the American Federation of Labor.

"The injunction has also been used by the National Union of Portable and Hoisting Engineers against the Building Trades Council of Toronto, because of its refusal to allow its members to work on jobs where members of the national union are employed. This case is still pending at the time of writing of this report.

"International organizations are requested to especially note this development and see that their Canadian unions are fully represented at the Winnipeg Convention of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, this year, to carry out that policy previously outlined.

Permanent Congress Headquarters.

"During the past year the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada have secured permanent offices in the City of Ottawa, and now own their own building, which is clear of debt.

"Open Shop" Campaign.

"The campaign for the open shop which is being so vigorously carried on in the United States is also vigorously propounded in Canada and is designated under the title of 'optional plan of employment and the open shop.'

"Wage reductions have also been forced wherever the workers have been too weakly organized to resist them and in general the organized workers of Canada are being faced with much the same industrial problems as those existing in the United States.

"With the continued solidarity of the workers of the North American continent, as represented in the international trade union movement, the American Federation of Labor and the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, the future can be confidently looked forward to, and though unemployment is still rife and has been very serious all through the past winter, we have every reason for optimism for the future."

Labor's Enemies Fail Completely

Notwithstanding the expenditure of millions of dollars and the activities of practically every organization of employers, financial interests and their paid attorneys, the efforts of the antagonists of Labor to secure repressive legislation in the various states failed almost completely, according to the report of the executive council of the A. F. of L. as submitted to the Denver Convention which is now in session.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT FUND IS HARD HIT BY MINERS' STRIKE

British Government's Insurance Scheme is Reported to be Absolutely Insolvent—Benefits Will Have to be Reduced.

LONDON—As a result of the miners' strike and the depression in the industrial situation which has followed it, in Great Britain, the Government's insurance scheme against unemployment is absolutely insolvent. The fund of £30,000,000 set aside for this scheme is exhausted, and the treasury is now finding another £20,000,000 to prevent the stoppage of benefits. Half that sum has already been spent and with a weficiency of £1,500,000 a week the remainder will not last long. The only course apparently now open is for the Government to pass legislation reducing the benefits and increasing contributions. With the alarming increase in unemployment it is doubtful if this even will meet the case which is causing alarm and anxiety.

MANITOBA'S FAIR WAGE BOARD ANNOUNCES SCHEDULE FOR YEAR

Only Two Trades Awarded Increases — Slight Reductions Are Recommended in Some Cases—Many Wage Rates Remain Unchanged.

WINNIPEG.—Only two increases over what were the fair wages recommended by the Fair Wage Board last year are granted in the new schedule which has just been issued for 1921. It applies to stone cutters and carvers whose wage was fixed at $1 an hour in 1920, while it is raised to $1.05 an hour for the current year, and firemen whose wages are raised from 60 cents to 65 cents.

No change is made in the wages of plumbers, steamfitters, asbestos workers, journeymen, and first class improvers.

The highest wage fixed is for bricklayers and stonemasons with $1.15 an hour or a reduction of ten cents when compared with last year's figures and the lowest wage is that of unskilled laborers which is fixed at 47 1-2 cents against 60 cents last year.

Slight reductions are recommended in most of the trades.

The new schedule A which applies to the city of Winnipeg and districts within a radius of 30 miles is in the main the same as that which applies to country workers.

The new wages and working hours per week are set forth in the new schedule as follows and below is also the pay for the various trades as recommended by the Fair Wage Board last year:

Old and New Scales.

	1921		1920	
	Per Hour	Week	Per Hour	Week
Concrete Puddlers	55	50	55	50
Laborers, unskilled	47½	54	60	54
Teamsters	55	60	60	60
Bricklayers	$1.15	44	$1.25	44
Helpers (mortar)	60	50	.....	..
Helpers tending bricklayers	55	50	.....	..
Stonemasons	$1.15	44	$1.25	44
Helpers	60 & 55	50	.....	..
Marble setters	$1.10	44	$1.20	44
Helpers	60	50	.....	..
Mosaic setters	$1.00	44	.....	..
Helpers	60	50	.....	..
Terrazo layers	77½	44	85	44
Helpers	60	50	.....	..
Stonecutters	$1.05	44	$1.00	44
Stone carvers	$1.05	44	$1.12½	44
Stone carvers' journeymen	92½	44	.....	..
Plasterers	$1.05	44	$1.12½	44
Helpers	60	50	.....	..
Wood, wire and metal lathers	90	44	$1.00	44
Plumbers	$1.00	44	$1.00	44
Helpers	55	50	.....	..
Steamfitters	$1.00	44	$1.00	44
Helpers	55	50	.....	..
Operating engineers, machines	$1.10	50	$1.25	50
Drum Engine men	$1.00	50	$1.12½	50
Single drum men	90	50	$1.00	50
Firemen	65	50	60	50
Sheet metal workers	82½	44	90	44
Painters and Decorators	81	44	87½	44
Blacksmiths	77½	44	85	44
Electrical workers, journeymen licensed	90	44	92½	44
Journeymen, permit	82½	44	.....	..
Helpers (experienced)	70	44	.....	..
Helpers	50	44	.....	..
Bridge and structural workers	$1.10	44	$1.25	44
Asbestos workers, journeymen	90	44	90	44
First class improvers	80	44	80	44
Asphalters, finishers	70	44	75	44
Mixers and heaters	55	50	60	50
Carpenters	90	44	95	44
Helpers	55	50	.....	..

IMPORTANT CHANGE OF TIME EFFECTIVE MAY 1ST STANDARD TIME.

Canadian National Railways announce the following changes in train service effective May 1st.

Train No. 1, "Continental Limited" now leaving Ottawa 8.20 p.m. for Winnipeg and Vancouver via Port Arthur, will leave 12.20 a.m. daily and operate via North Bay T. & N. O. Railway Cochrane and C. N. Railways. East bound train No. 2 "Continental Limited" will arrive Ottawa 7.00 a.m. daily, Montreal 10.15 a.m. connecting with "Maritime Express" for Halifax and all points in Maritime Provinces.

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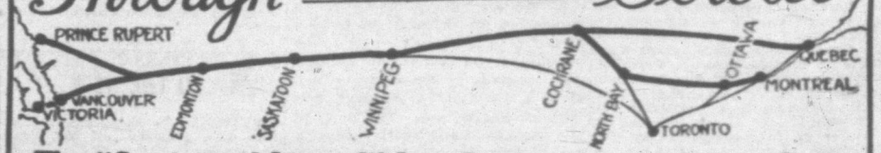

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