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"PLAYING POLITICS."

The Edmonton School Board is to be congratulated upon its deision to pay the \$1200 minimum salary to the teachers in its employ The sum asked for by the teachers' organization was a most reasonable one and by meeting the request of the Allianee the Edmonton board recorded its intention to deal fairly with the teachers. It was quarters for his wisdom in advoquarters for his wisdom in advoquarters for his wisdom in advoquarters. pointed out that the cost to the taxpayers, caused by the substitution cating that our boys should be of the \$1200 for the \$1000 minimum recommended by the old board, would amount to an average of one dollar for each tax-payer. In view of the fact that three of the four Trustees who were elected in December had the acceptance of the Teachers' request as one of the planks in their platform, the Free Press is confident that the citizens trade union. Today the trade unas a whole are behind the Board in its action of last week.

In deciding to have representatives of the teachers present at its meetings in a consultative capacity, the Board showed commendable wisdom. The presence of a representative teacher will be of mutual benefit to the Board and the teaching staff. Each will be familiar with the problems of the other and the citizens will benefit thereby

If "playing polities" means carrying out pre-election promises to the electors, then it would appear that Trustee Rea was justified in his accusation against his colleagues on the Board.

REASONABLE REQUESTS.

Agreements between the city and the several unions of civic employees expire on February 15th, and negotiations are now proceeding between the commissioners and the organizations affected. The city's work-people are certainly entitled to increased remuneration, and the adjustments proposed by the unions are in every way reasonable requests. Taking the case of a representative organization. Civic Service No. 52, the employees under the jurisdiction of that union have received an average increase since July, 1914, of only 8 per cent. If the union is successful in obtaining what is desired only. The whole Labor movement in the new agreement, the members will then have received an is the target of the big interests average increase of less than thirty-five per cent. over the salaries and the attack on the "reds" is received in July, 1914. The union is not requesting an increase on a very likely a preliminary skirmish percentage basis, but is asking for a flat increase for all the members irrespective of the salary now being received. The demand for an increase of so much per cent. would mean that those receiving the highest pay would receive the greater increase. The union does not believe that to be a fair basis of adjustment, and so is requesting necessities of decent living than that all members should receive an equal increase.

A POLITICAL PRISONER.

Some weeks have passed since R. B. Russell was sentenced to result. The rich have become richimprisonment, and as yet, with diligent study, we fail to compre. er and the poor poorer. hend just why. We have read much of the evidence and the judge's charge to the jury and its effect on our mind has been more to discredit our faith in British justice than it has to impress us with the not make use of the public library guilt of Russell. We have boasted of British liberty, but if Judge 's overlooking an invaluable op-Metealfe is correct in the things he has named as unlawful in Can-ada, then our boasting would seem to have been in vain. ada, then our boasting would seem to have been in vain.

We have considerable against R. B. Russell as a trade unionist

and we have not hesitated to condemn his actions from a trade union and we have not hesulated to condemn his actions from a trade union standpoint. We cannot easily forgive the harm that he would have cannot easily forgive the harm that he would have know the meaning of a "silent" done to our movement. But-and our opinion should not have less weight because of our opposition to his policy—we believe that Russell today has no right to be in prison if British justice means anything at all. Furthermore, we are positive that no court would in Great Britain dare to send a man to penitentiary on the evidence that condemned Russell. It is plainly evident that Canada is abandoning the British spirit of reason and tolerance in an attempt to elaborate on the "big stick" methods which we have been wont to associate with countries other than our own. Russell is plainly a political prisoner and his incarceration creates a rankling sense of injustice to kill the argument that wrongs

the latter to accomplish the end desired, but the fight is concluded without any dishonor to the unions. On the contrary the workers have greater confidence in organization than ever before. The strike is looked upon as only the first skirmish of a real effort to free the steel workers, and organization will go on until the men are in a posi tion to enforce their demands for some degree of freedom

The facts of the strike give room for encouragement. The great steel industry, the despair of unionists for years, was organized in the face of the most bitter opposition on the part of the trust. Every big mill came to a standstill on September 22nd, and the seemingly impossible was achieved. What has been done once can be done again and more effectively. We cannot but think of the old Norse King commanding the waves to recede when we see men of the Gary type planting themselves in the way of the workers' onward march to industrial freedom. They must fall back or be overwhelmed in the tide of human progress.

SELFISHNESS

Organized Labor is the very antithesis of a selfish movement. "One for all and all for each" is the dominant spirit of trade union. ism. The very nature of organization and the manner in which the unions function, entirely eliminates the selfish or personal consider-

But how about the non-unionist? "I'm earning as much wages as if I were a member of the union," says one. But even allowing for the fact that such is the case because of the standard created by the union, what is such an individual doing to create a better standard of living for his fellow toiler? Suppose he can "get along without the union," does the non-unionist consider that his fellows are handicapped by getting along without him? Consciously or unconsciously the man who has the opportunity to join a union and does not do so, is by his selfishness retarding the progress of his fellows.

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT?

Canada is fairly well represented in legislative halls by lawyers. But our neighbors to the south seem to be even more horribly afflicted with lawyer rule. There are 435 members in the United States congress, and of this number 269 are lawyers; that is to say, the lawyers sitting in the present congress have a clear majority of fifty-two over all others combined.

Now we have nothing especially against the lawyers, but we certainly object to their exclusive right to govern. The lawyer is a valuable expert in a very narrow field and what this and other countries. tries need is governmental representatives who have a practical knowledge of the problems with which the mass of people are forced to contend. With all due respect to the lawyers we would like to see about nine-tenths of them make way for legislators who have a better opportunity to know the needs of the people. The needs of the workers, for instance, require knowledge which the average lawyer does not and control presents. not and cannot possess.

One of the counts on which Russell was convicted was that of One of the counts on which Russell was convicted was that of being a public nuisance. About the greatest nuisance to Mr. Average Man these days is the folks who are responsible for the H.C. of L. But we haven't heard that any of the newly made Toronto millionaires are serving terms on the nuisance count. That of course is different.

EDITOR'S NOTES.

Judge Metealfe informed the jury in the Russell case that if a man advocated a change in government that would probably be 101 Purvis Block resisted by the members of the jury, then the person advocating the change would be guilty of se-JANUARY 31, 1920 dition because he openly favored something that might cause a breach of the peace. But, as a prominent member of the U.F.W.A. stated at the convention in Calgary, a noted general may advise trained to kill or be killed

> Time was when it was dangerous to admit to membership in a ionist is proud to declare his association with organized Labor. A movement that is founded on principles of justice and right is bound to succeed in the face of any oppo-

The position of the teacher with regard to salary is very much in the public notice at this time. Would it have been so if the teachthrough organization

It would be childish to think that the war that is being carried on against the so-called radicals in the United States is aimed at them!

What virtue is there in a bulkier necessities of decent living than Q did the thinner one of other days?

Inflated prices have had the one

The man or woman who does

We are told that Labor and

In November last five Socialists were elected to the State Assembly of New York and up to the present they have not been permited to take their seats in the house. It would seem that the reactionar-

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with countries other than our own. Russell is plainly a political prisoner and his incarceration creates a rankling sense of injustice to kill the argument that wrongs can all be righted through the use of the ballot.

A SKIRMISH.

The steel strike in the United States is officially at an end, but the campaign for the emancipation of the enslaved steel mill workers the campaign for the emancipation of the enslaved steel mill workers is not to be abandoned. The odds against the men were too great for organization of the Labor Party.

Notice was read last week to Mold-carleton No. 26, Hamilton, Ont., of the expulsion of Harris Bennett, of Carleton Place, from the union there is in spector also, and that when necessary he has the authority to engage assistance with the work. The necessitional that they must not affiliate with the O.B.U. on pain of expulsion from the I.M.U. The public works committee is rec

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