

=The Echo=

PUBLISHED BY

The Echo Printing and Publishing Co

DAVID TAYLOR, MANAGER.

Subscription: - One Dollar Per Year.

PAYABLE IN ADVANCE.

Single Copies - - 3 Cents.

THE ECHO has received the endorsement of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress and the Central Trades and Labor Council of Montreal.

THE ECHO is published every Saturday morning at the office, 338 St. James street, and delivered in any part of the city or mailed to any address in Canada or the United States at \$1.00 per annum.

ADVERTISING RATES:

For 12 lines (one inch) or less, first insertion, 10 cents per line; subsequent insertions, without change of type, 5 cents.

Display or contract advertisements are taken at special rates, which will be made known upon application.

Business notices published in local columns charged at the rate of 10 cents per line.

All advertisements measured by a scale of solid nonpareil.

Advertisers entitled to change of matter should send in their copy not later than Wednesday morning to ensure insertion same week.

MONTREAL, November 1, 1890.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

We are not certain that it is within the province of a paternal government, such as that of Canada is supposed to be, to experiment with machinery which, if successful, will cause a large number of her citizens to lose their situations. It is said that the Queen's Printer has made arrangements for the introduction, during the coming winter, of a number of typesetting machines, known as the Rogers Typograph, into the Government Printing Bureau. We have nothing to say against a private firm undertaking their introduction, but it looks at first sight as if the Government are anxious to decide upon the capability of the machine for the benefit of private enterprise in order to guard against the possibility of some of their supporters having their fingers burned. As we have said, the introduction of this foreign constructed machine will displace Canadian labor, but it has always been the case—Government's first care is to protect the capitalist leaving the workman to protect himself. We would like to know where the difference lies between importing cheap foreign labor to displace Canadian, and foreign made machinery for the same purpose. What would be said if the Government were to import a large number of German printers, for instance, to take the place of those now working in the bureau because they considered they were being paid too highly? Would there not be a big outcry from the general public at the injustice? It amounts to the same thing in both cases. Whether this particular machine is destined to do it or not, we are not prepared to say, but the day will ultimately come when machinery will take the place of hand in the mere matter of typesetting, and we can only counsel the rising generation of compositors to make themselves thoroughly proficient in all the branches of the art to enable them to stand out successfully against such competition.

Mr. Gladstone has definitely announced to his constituents his readiness to legislate in the direction of an eight hour working day, without qualification in the case of miners, but tempering the general demand by insisting on the need of "trade option." This announcement may be taken as the first substantial outcome of a democratic franchise in the Old Country, and is a fulfilment of the prophecy made at the time that the extension of the franchise would change the political economy of British statesmen. The "politics of the poor," which peer and bishop are alike recognizing, mean that the democracy, like other ruling classes which have preceded it, will seek to obtain for itself better and freer conditions of life, and the first real attempt to humanize its existence in the very rational demand for shorter

hours of labor. The advent of the labor element in politics will impose tests of social welfare other than, to quote Mr. Gladstone's words, "an intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power when human life is, in the great majority of cases, a mere struggle for existence."

Our English exchanges to hand present us with the following interesting item of news:

"It is said that a perfectly innocuous bitter ale, non-intoxicating and chemically pure, has been perfected after many years experience by a Fellow of the Chemical Society well known in the scientific world, and especially so in the West of England. It is claimed for this beverage that in flavor it so nearly resembles bitter ale made from malt and hops that a person with his eyes closed would not discover the difference. Arrangements are in progress for placing this drink on the market, and for this purpose a temperance or teetotal brewery is being established."

Anyone who thinks that by inventing more non-intoxicants he can lessen even in a small degree the use of ale is "away off." It is claimed for the new discovery that any one drinking it with his eyes closed will not know the difference between it and good old "bittaw beer;" but we would remark en passant that the majority of those who indulge in the aforesaid "bittaw beer," do so invariably with their eyes open—and seem to like it too. Reader, just imagine—if you indulge at present—the delightful opportunity in the near future of "closing your own eye."

The members of the Board of Trade, or at least a large proportion of them, are very much annoyed at the recent appointment of a son of Ald. Kennedy to the vacant position of Canal Superintendent, rendered so through the death of Mr. Conway. The appointment is a fortunate one for the party concerned. It is made on political grounds only, and simply because the "old man" is supposed to exercise an important political "influence" in Montreal Centre, and therefore very necessary to the gentleman who represents that constituency. Whether it is a fortunate one for the public remains to be seen, but the most that can be said of it at present is that it is lucky Superintendent Kennedy is the son of his father. The Council of the Board of Trade met the other day and passed a resolution condemning the appointment and expressing their regret that a gentleman nominated by themselves had been overlooked.

The British War Office is greatly exercised over the serious deficiency of officers for the volunteer corps of the country, and this deficiency is regarded with the greater concern now that all the corps have been allotted to clearly defined points under the new scheme for home defence. The War Minister should direct his attention to the domain of Uncle Sam where he will find "colonels" and "captains" lying around loose in great abundance. With a volunteer strength of 50,000, Scotland is deficient to the extent of 224 officers, from which we infer that the "canny Scot" is not ambitious to carry a sword.

Since assuming the direction of the British Board of Agriculture, Mr. Chaplin has done a good deal to foster the growth of allotments—a large and important increase having taken place during the present year. Twenty years ago there were less than a quarter of a million persons in possession of allotments, and now it is estimated the number exceeds one million and a quarter. To be sure the majority are garden lots, but their is a fair proportion with the added luxury of a cow. During the last four years the rate of annual increase has been three times as much as it was preceding that date.

The latest feature in insurance business is the establishment of a Credit Indemnity Company in the United States which, for a small percentage, guarantees the transactions between merchants and manufacturers against

possible loss. The company of course will not—if they know it—insure bad or doubtful credit, and the mere fact that they are willing to accept the risk would be good evidence of the uselessness of the indemnity.

A great meeting in favor of disestablishment was held in Edinburgh recently, and it was clear from the proportions of the meeting and the enthusiasm aroused that a great struggle has been inaugurated for the placing of all religious bodies on an equal footing in Scotland. The speakers were men of the highest eminence and they predicted an early finish of the strife.

We are in receipt of the printed proceedings of the Sixth session of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress just issued, and in connection therewith our attention has been drawn to the appendix to the pamphlet bearing on the credentials of two or three of the delegates. The appendix is reported as approved by the Executive Committee, yet the President, as a member of this committee affirms that he never saw the document in question, and therefore it could not have been before the committee.

THE ECHO is mailed to subscribers at a distance every Friday evening, and delivered in the city early on Saturday. Parties not receiving their paper regularly should communicate with the office.

Workingmen would do well to notice that, in order to make their votes good at the municipal elections their water tax must be paid before the 28th of November.

THE WATER TAX QUESTION.

The committee appointed by the City Council to investigate the water tax question met last Tuesday evening, when Mr. Helbronner, representing the Trades and Labor Council, was present by invitation. The reception he met with, however, is not calculated to advance the enquiry or to increase the public confidence that justice will be done, and has been made the occasion of the Trades and Labor Council withdrawing their representatives from the meetings of the committee. Mr. Helbronner states that, with the exception of Alderman Stephens, all the others are seemingly anxious to arrive at a settlement of the question. The gentleman named conducts the investigation, and pretends to know all about it. He is a lawyer and tries to block the investigation by putting questions to the representatives so that they may make compromising admissions, and will not allow necessary explanations, saying: "That is an argument, we don't want any." On the contrary, Mr. Helbronner says, the City Treasurer was allowed every latitude in the way of explanation, and he (Mr. Helbronner) was prohibited from putting questions to that official under the fear that such questions might destroy the effect of his evidence, and his right to refute the statements of Mr. Robb was refused, although the latter gentleman admitted that it was statement against statement, and would require the services of an accountant to get at the truth. Instead of the investigation being directed against the Finance Department, it was in reality directed against the Trades Council. Mr. Robb calculated the interest on the water works debt at six per cent., while Mr. Helbronner maintains that four per cent., the rate paid on Corporation bonds, should be charged, which would alone make a difference of two or three hundred thousand dollars. Both Messrs. Robb and Stephens said the water tax was not on property at all, and Mr. Helbronner offered to prove by the City Charter that this

was incorrect. It is not customary to hold property responsible, but it is the law. On the whole, Mr. Helbronner is of opinion that the enquiry is illegally conducted, contrary to the course of procedure in such cases, and intended to bring about useless results. As far as the Trades Council is concerned they will leave the committee to themselves, relying upon a thorough investigation in the courts before an impartial judge.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

CHILD LABOR IN FACTORIES.

To the Editor of THE ECHO:

SIR,—A friend having kindly sent me a copy of your last issue, I see you do me the honor of noticing a letter I sent to the Witness.

Unfortunately, the spirit of Ananias is too often found to dominate the press of this country; but before classing your paper (which "has received the endorsement of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress and the Central Trades and Labor Council of Montreal") amongst those who have been weighed in the balance of truth and justice and have been found wanting, I beg to make you the following offer.

In your article you have made statements, probably from ignorance or through being misinformed, which are incorrect; you have made insinuations which have no foundation in facts, and you have descended to personalities which in no way strengthen a good cause.

Now, my offer is, that you should pay Valleyfield a visit. I will undertake to prove to you that your conception of the matter in point is wrong and that the opinion of "scores of higher authorities" are not safe to rest arguments upon. I am sure that, unless with you "the wish is father to the thought," your present attitude will undergo a remarkable change.

Yours truly,

LOUIS SIMPSON.

Valleyfield, Oct. 29, 1890.

[Because last week we had occasion to comment on a communication which appeared in the Witness, from Mr. Simpson, of Valleyfield, that gentleman has seen fit to favor us with the above letter. If we mistake not the same gentleman, on a former occasion, figured through the press of this city as the champion of child labor, and it is to his readiness to rush into print on every occasion the subject is broached, as the apologist for this injustice of a by-gone age, that he owes our comments. Mr. Simpson must have been scored in a raw place; he is evidently very angry, judging from the abuse he tries to heap on our head. We willingly give place to his letter, although it does not touch the merits of the question, and he is welcome to all the good it can do him. The only answer to Mr. Simpson's style of argument is: "You're another!"—Ed.]

A SECRET MEETING.

One of the most striking and peculiar features of the Comte's reception in Montreal took place at the Windsor Hotel after the return of the party from Mass. Here the Pontifical Zouaves had assembled in large numbers under their leader, Recorder DeMontigny, Chevalier LaRoque and Chief of Police Hughes. When the Comte arrived the Zouaves proceeded to the parlor of the hotel to await the Comte. Amongst those present were several press representatives, including Mr. Bannister, of the New York Herald, who has accompanied the party from the first, and the Mail correspondent. Previous to the arrival of the Comte, Recorder DeMontigny made a short speech, in which he said that it must be distinctly understood that only the Pontifical Zouaves were to be present, as this was one of the conditions made with General Charette, the head of the Zouaves. Noticing the newspaper men, he exclaimed "You cannot stay here; we do not want any newspaper men here!" On the Mail correspondent repudiating any idea of intruding and signifying his willingness to retire if the reception was not public, the Recorder curtly replied "Not only you will, but you must." There is some excuse for the Recorder, however, as he has to deal daily with the roughs of the city.—Toronto Mail, Oct. 27.

[Does this mean that the Mail classes its correspondent amongst our city roughs?—Ed.]

Evil of Indorsing.

"I affirm," says Judge Waldo Brown, in the Boston Traveler, "that the system of indorsing is all wrong, and should be utterly abolished. I believe that it has been the financial ruin of more men than, perhaps, all other causes. I think that our young men, especially, should study the matter carefully in all its bearings, and adopt some settled policy to govern their conduct, so as to be ready to answer the man who asks them to sign his note. What responsibility does one assume when he indorses a note? Simply this: He is held for the payment of the amount in full, principal and interest, if the maker of the note, through misfortune, mismanagement or rascality, fails to pay it. Notice, the indorser assumes all this responsibility, with no voice in the management of the business and no share in the profits of the transaction, if it proves profitable; but with a certainty of loss if, for any of the reasons stated, the principal fails to pay the note."

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I having come to our knowledge that certain principal dealers have of late been offering the public certain lines of Men's Socks at 80c and 90c per pair, which they claim to be Genuine "IRISH KNIT," we wish to caution those in need of REAL IRISH KNIT GOODS against above as being vile imitations. The only

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