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Toronto Mail
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England is on the eve of one of the greatest industrial battles ever fought for unless something extraordinary happens in the course of a day or so the vast army of English railway employees will go on strike. Negotiations between the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, represented by Mr. Robert Bell, M.P., and the railways, whose most prominent representative is Lord Claud Hamilton chairman of the Great Eastern Railway, have been going on for several months. But in all that time the two parties have been drifting further apart, and news of the railwaymen's decision to strike will not come as a surprise to anyone who has been following the progress of the dispute in the English papers.

The Great Issue.

That the railway employees of England are poorly paid and overworked according to American standards, cannot be denied, but their grievances under these heads they consider of less importance than the blank refusal of the railways to recognise the men's union. That is to say that their grievances can wait until they can secure favorable machinery for laying them before their employers. The men argue that the employers have what corresponds to recognition of their union in boards of directors, which are empowered to speak for over five hundred thousand shareholders. These directors, like Lord Claud Hamilton, are experts, and to be on equal terms with the major and minor differences that are continually arising the men insist that they also shall have the privilege of expert negotiators to represent them. The employers declare that to recognise the union means virtually to surrender the management of the roads to the men.

English Railway Wages

As regards wages, unless we keep clearly in mind the greater purchasing power of money in the old country, we can hardly escape the conviction that English railway employees are miserably underpaid. For instance the majority of firemen receive only a dollar a day, and engine drivers not more than \$1.62. Signal men average about \$6.25 a week; shunters, \$4 to \$4.35; ticket collectors \$4.75; checkers \$4.75 to \$5; porters \$3.50. Of course porters are usually "tipped," a fact so well known that at least one road pays the porters nothing. The standard working hours for drivers are 66 a week, 72 for one class of shunters, and 60 for another. Signal men work 60 hours

a week. In many cases there is only regular pay for overtime.

A Mighty Union Army

There are about 500,000 men employed on the railways in England and Wales, of whom 100,000 are members of the A.S.R.S., all of whom will stop work. The majority of the best paid employees are union men, and it seems reasonable to expect that the strike will cripple the railways. However, for a year past the companies have known that trouble was brewing and ample opportunity has been afforded them to get other men in readiness. Some of them have openly paraded their strikebreaking staffs, and have thereby embittered the men. It seems to be conceded that the only reliance of the companies is the station masters, usually better paid than the other employees, and naturally less inclined to throw up their positions. These men will be asked to step into the signalmen's places, for it requires some time to train a signalman, who has the most vital function to perform in the whole railway body. The employers realise that slack service in the signal boxes would almost certainly result in a disaster, and have the effect of turning public feeling strongly against the railways, if, indeed, it is not hostile now.

The Men's Leader.

Of the A.S.R.S. it may be said that in Robert Bell, the society has a spokesman and leader of whom it may be proud. All through the year's long controversy he has behaved with quiet firmness and moderation, not too often found in labor leaders. Not even Lord Claud Hamilton could more regret the decision to strike than Mr. Bell, but to both it may have seemed inevitable. The men's leader has been in parliament since 1900 as a labor representative, and he is one of the few labor members who is not a socialist. In this respect he differs from most of the other ruling spirits of the A.S.R.S., for the society warmly criticised him for his refusal to subscribe to the Socialists' program, although it did not deprive him of his office as general secretary. For discharging the duties of his position Mr. Bell gets something more than \$25 a week. What he would be worth in the present crisis to the railway companies is purely a matter for speculation, but he is certainly a bargain for the men at his present salary. Of Mr. Bell and his work we are destined to hear much more in the next few weeks.

COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP

Winnipeg, Nov. 1.—There was a good attendance at the Canadian Labor Party meeting on Sunday afternoon to hear, as was expected, Mr. R. Pettipiece, of Vancouver, but for some reason or other that gentleman did not arrive in the city. The company present, therefore decided to again take up the discussion of the previous Sunday, on the Socialist resolution of the Trades Congress. The resolution, which is as follows, was moved on Sunday by W. Turnock, who on the previous occasion led off in the negative:

"That the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada declares that it stands for absolute independent political action on the part of the working classes, that the collective ownership of the means of life is its ultimate aim, we believe that the best interests of the working classes can be served by granting provincial autonomy in the matter of political affiliation, the functions of provincial executives being to carry out the policy formulated in their respective jurisdictions."

Mr. W. J. Bartlett took the chair, and in his opening remarks said: Owing to the non-arrival of Mr. Pettipiece, they were thrown upon their own resources. They had decided to take up the same debate as last week, and after they had heard the various speakers he would ask them to come to a decision either for or against. Mr. Pettipiece would have been present but for the fact that he

had been called into the country. Mr. Turnock must have been converted since their last meeting as he had promised to speak for instead of against the resolution.

Mr. Turnock, speaking to the motion said that it was like getting them there under false pretences but he could assure them that that was far from their intention. In taking his stand for the affirmative it was not as the chairman had said, that he had been converted. It did not need any apology from him for taking the other side, as he was old enough now to remember the time when the independent labor party first put in its appearance. At that time the majority of us were afraid of taking our stand for fear of public opinion. It seemed to him paradoxical that we should be shy of public opinion. There are some who are of the opinion that public ownership is going to benefit them, while there are others who are opposed to public ownership. He would ask what this collective ownership would be to them? Tom, Dick and Harry are now working from Monday morning till Saturday evening, this is not what ought to be. The working man was the one that they had to consider, and he would like to say that by the working man he did not mean only the man with the shovel, but every man who was called to use his brain. There would not be much fear of the working man losing a great deal if everything was produced under his control. It would not matter at all if the present millionaires were increased a million times; if they had not control of the means that make

WE CLOTHE THE
MEN FROM
HEAD TO FOOT

the millions they would soon take wings and fly.

Mr. R. Dixon led off in the negative. He said that in conversation with a person the other day this person told him that labor could not exist without capital. In answer he tried to point out that if the man he was talking to was wrecked on an island he would soon be in a position to work on capital. He would agree with the previous speaker in what he said about the working man. He was of the opinion that if man was only paid for the work he does there would be very little done. They were asked to believe that the C.N.R. was controlled by the Manitoba government, he would sooner say that the Manitoba government was controlled by the C.N.R. The man who owns the land owns you, but take the land from him, and then he does not own or have power over you. He expected that he would be making a good chopping block for some of those present. He would say that he was opposed to the motion on principle, and he did not think that they would get any of the socialists into their ranks by including it in their platform, as it was a well known fact that once a socialist, always a socialist, and they did not care a jot for the labor party.

The debate was continued by H. Albert, Beech, Macdonald and others, mostly in favor of the resolution. At the close a test vote was taken by a show of hands, the motion prevailing by a large majority.—The Voice.

Helena, Nov. 4.—As the result of the boycott campaign that has been waged for several months by the Montana Federation of Labor against the business houses and individuals patronizing the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Co., four of the strongest labor unions in Helena have withdrawn from the state organization. Helena Typographical union No. 95 yesterday decided to divorce itself from the organization. Howard O. Smith, secretary of the federation is a member of the typographical union and the action of the printers takes away his membership in the state organization. O. Smith and Alexander Fairgrave, president of the federation, were recently enjoined by the federal court from continuing their alleged boycott tactics, and since then the Cooks and Waiters, the Bar-tenders and the Teamsters have withdrawn from the organization, which is threatened with disruption.

TRADE DISPUTES

Although there was no decrease in the number of trade disputes in Canada during September, compared with the previous month, the loss to the community, measured by working days was not so great. The most serious dispute of the month was a strike of coal miners at Springhill, which had begun on August 1, and continued throughout September. The effect of the prolonged stoppage of work at the mines was felt throughout the province in the diminished coal supply.

An analysis of the trade disputes during the month is as follows: Number and Magnitude.—The total number of trade disputes reported to have been in existence in Canada during September was 25, one less than in the previous month, but a decrease of 4 compared with September 1906. About 95 establishments and 3,880 employees were affected by these disputes, 18 firms and about 959 workmen being involved in the disputes which began in September.

Loss of Time in Working Days.—The loss of time to employees through trade disputes during September amounted approximately to 61,900 working days, compared with 99,860 in August and 97,140 in September, 1906.

Methods of Settlement.—Out of the 25 trade disputes in existence during the month definite settlements were reached in four cases and in four others industrial conditions ceased to be affected, leaving 17 still in existence at the end of the month. Four of the disputes were settled through negotiations between the parties concerned. The remaining four ceased without any further negotiations.

Results of Disputes.—Of the 8 disputes that were terminated, the employers were successful in 3, the employees were successful in 1 and a

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compromise was reached in 2. In another, affecting a number of firms, the strikers were successful with respect to some of them, their places being filled in the case of others. Information with regard to the settlement of one dispute was not received at the department.—Labour Gazette.

The following contributions have been received to assist the Garment Workers of Winnipeg in their dispute with the Scotland Woolen Mills:—
Journemen Stone Cutters of
North America \$ 5.00
International Operative Plasterers Assn. 4.25
Amalgamated Society of Carpenters 6.05

Total \$15.30

Contributions to the above fund will be received up to next Saturday Oct. 9th, by the Secretary of the Trades and Labor Council, Box 39, City.

None are less eager to learn than those who know nothing.—Process