

Editorial Page of the Canadian Labor Press

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A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER.

"BUILDING AND DESTROYING."

NEVER lacking evidence that the western reactionaries are doubtful of the correct course to their "Utopia," the latest action at Victoria, B.C., to dissolve the Federation of Labor, clinches the point of erratic movement pursued, and that doubt forms a large part in the movement, with failures and dissensions standing out pre-eminently.

A scrutiny of the Trades and Labor Congress records of years past will attach the formation of Federations to western initiative and persistency, the latter being much to the fore through their representatives when the painted grandeur and effectiveness of Federations for all the provinces was the panacea to cure all ills and cement the Labor forces. It was also shown how obsolete was the system of provincial executives, it being worthy of note are in vogue today in the majority of the eastern provinces. Not alone are these executives in existence but showing results of advanced legislation gained by this means.

If a new school of the retrogressive ranks was in evidence, with an entirely new set of leaders and pupils, perhaps some justification for these changes could be conceded, but such is not the case, as we find names prominently identified with the destroyers of the Federation were formerly among its strongest advocates. One point of consistency was the request for financial assistance from the Congress, made annually to aid the Federation to carry on its work.

As previously stated records show that since Congress, chartered Federations of Labor, the howlers for disbandment at the present time were formerly eulogistic for its support. Right in the City of Vancouver at the convention, 1915, the Federation officials after elaborating on the work undertaken and accomplished, wound up their report as follows:

"We desire to point out that Congress, having at the beginning of the year, rendered us financial assistance to the extent of two hundred dollars, has materially assisted us in our work under the present conditions. We also desire to express our appreciation of the attention and assistance of the Executive of Congress, and the Parliamentary Representative, which has been given to us in matters pertaining to Dominion law and matters coming under the departments at Ottawa.

"The work of the Federation affects all branches of Labor, the interests of all organizations being to a great extent similar, and we desire to call the attention of international officers, and the representatives of international organizations, that have locals in the province that are not affiliated with the Federation, to the importance of the work that is being attempted, with the view of securing their co-operation in our efforts to have the affiliation of all local unions in the province, to the end that greater efforts may be made to secure to the workers legislation that will safeguard their lives and liberties and their economic position as far as possible, under the present competitive system."

Now the B. C. Federation ceases to exist, among those responsible were formerly some of its strong advocates demonstrating clearly a lack of discernment of the correct path to success, which is abundantly in evidence where the sure method of International Trade Unionism has been utilized.

PROBLEM SOLVED.

A NEW football, the eight-hour day, has been thrown into the active arena of politics, Federal and Provincial. Owing to its being one of the planks as presented by the Labor group in the League of Nations, it must of necessity be dealt with and cannot be given the hoist or any other means employed for its relegation. Covering the shorter workday proposition with any amount of legal verbiage, attempting to pass it on to the other group, or employing any of the old or new methods of dispensation, is found to be an exceedingly difficult task.

Whilst there are those who may enact legislation and continue to play with this football, there are apparent the relievers of the situation in full view, the trade union and its membership, who, where it has not adopted the eight-hour day has come mighty near and all signs point to accomplishment in every instance at no distant date. This is not a long journey to go as there are but few members of the organized forces throughout this Dominion who work more than the eight-hour day at the present time.

With this in mind the easy way out of the difficulty for the people's representatives seems to be to put out the S.O.S. sign, calling for assistance from the International Trade Union Movement, and ask them to finish the job they have almost brought to a successful issue.

POLITICS and PEOPLE THROUGH THE TELESCOPE OF LABOR

OTTAWA, March 17. — Labor legislation was before the House on two or three occasions during the week, but so far no intimation has been made as to the prospect of legislation. Hon. N. W. Rowell pointed out that Canada as a member of the League of Nations was compelled to bring before the House the legislation agreed upon at the International Labor Conference, called in connection with the treaty of peace in reply to a question from the leader of the Opposition, he stated that the International Labor Conference differed from other such conferences in that it was absolutely necessary that the Government be represented, whereas on former occasions attendance was voluntary.

The eight-hour question arose at the evening session on Monday. It came up again on the motion of Mr. Birkham (previously before the House on a couple of occasions (in this session) favoring a national session) favoring a national eight-hour day, subject only to the effect of the international labor conference.

During the debate, Mr. Rowell placed where he was wanted, owing to the lack of accommodation. No precise information was available as to the number of building trade operatives still in the army, but the number was now inappreciable. The remainder, who were internationalized, would be released within a short period.—Daily Herald.

Across the Atlantic.

What Our Brothers in the Motherland Are Doing.

"BLACK COAT" WORKERS' FEDERATION. The movement among "black-coat" workers towards closer organization for the protection of their own interests has gained strength in the last few months, and in Liverpool where it seems to have much vitality—efforts are being made to strengthen the Federation which came into existence last year. Of the various guilds of clerical, technical, administrative and supervisory workers in Liverpool which entered into federation in August some had been in existence for some time and others were of more recent formation.

The Federation is now composed of the Shipbuilding Clerical Staffs' Guild, the Association of Engineers, and Shipping Draughtsmen, the Liverpool Law Clerks' Society, the General Clerical Staffs' Guild, the Shipping, Engineering and Steel Commercial Staffs Association, the Accountants' Clerical Staffs' Guild, and the Liverpool Municipal Officers' Guild.

It is the purpose of the Federation to assist in the formation of other organizations of commercial and technical workers, to consider matters of policy affecting the workers and to co-ordinate their activities, and on matters of common interest to voice the opinion of the guilds. In some instances, the initiative made by the Federation has not been so easy as some of its members wished. It has encountered a certain amount of apathy and indifference among the workers whom it seeks to enrol.

Recently the Federation held its first general meeting, mainly in order to quicken interest among "black-coat" workers in Liverpool and to impress on them the advantages of organization. The speaker, the secretary of the Federation and members of the enrolled guilds were chiefly exhortatory, an insistence, with few variations, on the theme that there is a demand must be collective if it is to be effectual. Mr. J. Southern, a member of the General Clerical Staffs' Guild, presided. It was really time, he said, that the "black-coat" workers organized themselves in furtherance of their interests. Throughout the country, changes were being slowly worked into a series of trade unions.

MINERS NOT UNANIMOUS FOR DIRECT ACTION. On the day previous to the opening of the special session of the British Trade Union Congress the Miners' Federation in Congress decided by 524,000 votes to 246,000 to support the policy of direct action. Although the men have not yet been voted the vote roughly represents what may be called an alert and conscious feeling in the coal fields.

An analysis of the above vote shows that even in the coal fields the miners themselves there is a strong element against direct action and it would be a difficult task in view of this strong opposition to call an effective general strike.

NEARLY 400,000 PERSONS OUT ON STRIKE IN FRANCE. It is estimated by officials of the French Federation of Labor that nearly 400,000 persons in all are on strike in France at the present time. In the Lyons region several thousand hands in the silk mills have gone out, bringing the number of strikers at that centre to a total of 60,000 in the various industries. In the Department du Nord, some 20,000 coal miners have struck in sympathy with the strike of an equal number in Pas de Calais, and this development has strengthened the hope of the radicals among the Labor leaders that a general coal strike may be brought about.

Strikes of from 2,500 to 5,000 building workers are reported, several from various regions, among them Angers and Toulouse.

25,000 MEMBERS BUILDING TRADES UNIONS U.S.A. In view of the Premier's allegation that the British building trade unions are responsible for a shortage of labor and are preventing the building of the new Government House in Ottawa, Mr. Herbert Morrison, Secretary of the British Building Trades Unions, has issued a statement in the House of Commons recently, when he stated that on February 12, there were 25,000 building workers out of employment. Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, said the Minister of Health if he would state how many men in the building trade were at present out of employment, and how many skilled and unskilled workers were still in the army.

Sir H. Home, who replied, said that the number of men on the live register of the Exchanges as belonging to the building trades on February 13 was 25,000, of whom about half were skilled men and half laborers. These men included a large proportion of the least able workers, and exist in small numbers spread over the whole country. While there is a large unskilled demand for building labor of every kind, it is more difficult now than at any time to shift the man to the

place where he was wanted, owing to the lack of accommodation. No precise information was available as to the number of building trade operatives still in the army, but the number was now inappreciable. The remainder, who were internationalized, would be released within a short period.—Daily Herald.

WAGES AND THE HIGH COST OF LIVING.

Dear Sir—Will you kindly inform me who is right? "High Cost of Living." A bet B that the laborer is getting more money in comparison to the cost of living, this year (1920), than he did in 1914.

The wages in Pembroke, Ont. in 1914 were \$2 to \$2.25 per day and today, 1920, \$5 per day.

Editor's note—We are of the opinion that B wins. According to the figures of the Department of Labor the average cost of the weekly family budget of simple foods for the month of January, 1920, was \$15.49 as compared with \$13.78 in January, 1919, and \$7.73 in January, 1914.

Figures recently made public by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor show that since 1913 the cost of living has advanced \$2 1-10 per cent. while during the same period the average advance in wages of unskilled workers has been but 55 per cent. This calculation takes no account of workers who are not organized and whose wages, it is safe to presume, have advanced on the whole considerably less than wages of those workers who are intelligent and fortunate enough to be organized.

Speaking before the Manchester Chamber of Commerce on February 20, Sir Auckland Geddes said: "The purchasing power of money has permanently changed. I do not know what the permanent increase will be but it will not be less than 50 per cent. above pre-war level and not much more than 100 per cent."

Taking all things into account we believe that B wins. However, we will be pleased to hear what our readers have to say about this important question. Send us your views.—Ed.

Here's To Woman.

Once Our Superior, Now Our Equal.—Can.

FIRST WOMAN TRADE UNIONIST. The first woman ever admitted to a trade union in the United States which was composed of men is believed to have been Miss Mary Baker who in the late '60's was unanimously elected to membership in the Chicago branch of the Typographical Union.

TORONTO BELLO GIRLS SEEK INCREASE. The Bell Telephone operators of Toronto have asked the management for an increase.

"I have no anticipation of a strike, and don't think there will be any," said General Manager Dunstan. "I received an application for an increase of wages from the operators the day before yesterday, and it is only being considered by the company. The management of the Bell Telephone Company recognizes that the increased cost of living and so forth in the present instance, and we are duly aware of the needs of our operators. We have given repeated increases of pay, and there is no doubt the management will give the latest request of the girls the fullest consideration. We have now 2,000 girls in our service."

INCREASED SALARIES KINGSTON TEACHERS. The threatened strike of the Public School teachers of Kingston on April 1, will not take place, as their demands for increased salaries have been met by the Board of Education. The teachers had tendered their resignations but when the board intimated that the salary increase would be granted they withdrew the resignations.

AMERICAN WOMAN MAY HAVE VOTE IN NEXT ELECTION. The passage by the West Virginia Senate last week of a resolution ratifying the Anthony Amendment to the United States Constitution, made that state the thirty-fourth to complete ratification. The favorable action followed close on the adoption by the Senate of the minority report of the committee on privileges and elections, declaring vacant the seat of Senator A. R. Montgomery, who attempted to return to this state after removing to Illinois, in order to defeat suffrage.

Ratification by only two more states is needed in order to give the women the right of suffrage. The denial campaign, and the Governors of Delaware and Washington have called special sessions of the legislatures for March 21 to vote on the question. It is expected that both states will vote for the amendment.

THE COWARD.

(By W. Teignmouth Shore, in the Daily Herald.)

SCENE: Night-time in a base hospital ward somewhere in France some time during the great war. (The Doctor is standing beside a cot and looks down at a patient who seems as if at the point of death.)

The Colpel of the — Stands beside the Doctor. COL: Will he pull through? DOC: I don't know. Tell you when he wakes up next time. He's done his best. Made a big fight for it.

COL: Knows how bad he let? DOC: Yes. Asked me-point blank two days ago if he was dying. COL: You told him? DOC: Told him I didn't know, but that he had just a ghost of a chance if he didn't junk. Punk's killed more men than fever—fever alone. He just emptied, and said he wouldn't snuff out if he could help it. He's not a coward, anyway. Clean grit.

COL: Let me know how he gets on. Put him through if you can—don't spare anything. Good night. DOC: Good night, sir.

RED FLAG ADVOCATES SHOULD BE TREATED AS PARIAS.

The Labor movement, my friends, must be based upon wisdom and it must be guided by intelligence and the membership of organized Labor, to be successful, must render obedience to the law. The man who tells you that the emancipation of Labor must come from battle fought under the red flag should be treated as a Pariah until the association of intelligent men. I trust that you men and that you women will shun any association that advocates direct action and sabotage, that as a means to emancipate the working class, advises throwing monkey-wrenches into machinery, putting sand and salt in sugar, axle grease in soup, using dynamite on Temples of Labor, and cracking axes with nitroglycerine.

With such admonition to Labor to be guided by reason and right and such warning against the destructive teachings of "red" radicalism, John M. O'Neill, western representative of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union, delivered an eloquent and uplifting address to a mass meeting of workers of Salt Lake City, Utah, at the Labor Temple recently.

Mr. O'Neill handled I. W. Wilson and red radicalism with unglued fists and hurled gigantic charges of logical dynamite against their mass action and force and fire theories.

KITTY'S FLEA. "Oh, mother," cried Edith. "I found a little flea on kitty, and I caught it!" "What did you do with it?" asked her mother. "Why, I put it back on kitty again, of course. It was her flea."—Lippincott's Magazine.

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Price of Coal Going Higher!

Coal-Age, under date of March 4th, says: "Coal men are generally agreed that consumers may expect to pay higher prices for anthracite from April 1 on. They argue that not only will the operators have to pay higher wages to miners, but that other mining expenses have advanced to a point that they must be taken care of in the next price readjustment. Furthermore, railroad rates are expected to advance in line with the measures of the new railroad legislation, that provides the carriers a profit of 5 1/2 per cent.

"In the anthracite field, the output of the mines in the Pennsylvania region has practically reached its maximum; and while the increase in population, especially in the seaboard states, is causing a constantly increasing demand for anthracite of domestic sizes, it will be impossible to increase that supply except by the use of briquettes and crushed anthracite"

Now you can help solve Canada's fuel problems, as well as your own fuel problems, by investigating the value of the OAKOAL method, process and product. OAKOAL is a better product than anthracite coal—we have proved it scores of times to hundreds of people in Toronto and Montreal, but if it were only as good, or 90 per cent. as good as anthracite, OAKOAL would deserve your support. Being better and cheaper, you owe it to yourself—apart from the fact that OAKOAL will pay you a handsome dividend and thus create multiplied values on your original investment and the further fact that you will save enough each year in your own fuel supply to return you approximately 30 per cent. on an investment of one hundred dollars, to investigate OAKOAL.

In addition to conserving the wastes of cities and mines, saving big money on your own fuel supply, insuring a superior fuel product, free from clinkers (doing away with ash sifting), securing a nice annual dividend and multiplying your investment, you render a great national service by aiding in keeping in Canada, for Canadian people, millions of dollars now going out of Canada for no tangible asset—the only return being heat and ashes; therefore the OAKOAL proposition deserves your investigation today.

The Company's big plant is now under construction, the machinery will arrive in a few days, and we shall be turning out large quantities for next winter's supply—from which you can secure your fuel. OAKOAL must not be confounded with ordinary briquettes. OAKOAL is positively odorless, clinkerless, sootless, and does not disintegrate like ordinary liquid binder briquettes. OAKOAL is coal's best substitute, and must be investigated to be understood and appreciated.

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