

CANADIAN LABOR PRESS

A National, Sane Labor Paper

True Confidence and Understanding Between Employer and Employee Absolutely Necessary to Industrial Peace.

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The British Race and the Future of Canada

Prior to the war, a great deal of controversy raged backwards and forwards in Great Britain and Ireland as to inter-imperial relations and the status of Canada. The war settled that point by showing that Canada was a fully grown nation forming one of the commonwealth of Nations known as the British Empire.

The Canadian Labor Press has always held that the group of Anglo-Saxon peoples living in the British Empire have an extraordinary pioneering and civilizing function to perform by showing the rest of the world how democratic a people can be, loving liberty and spreading toleration of others' views around them.

Prior to the war, this development of Canada's Nationhood as part of the British Empire, was strengthened by the large influx of immigrants from the British Isles whose traditions and customs naturally tended to stimulate and strengthen that feeling. Since the war, the drop in British immigration must give serious food for thought to everyone who desires the welfare of Canada as part of the British Empire. In the fourth annual report of the Bureau of Labor in Saskatchewan, the records of immigration into that province for the year 1923 is given on pages 46 and 47 and they furnish a startling commentary upon the shifting base of population insofar as the nationality of the emigrant coming into this country is concerned.

During 1923, the total immigration into Saskatchewan was 12,477 on which 2,797 were classified as British, including immigrants from South Africa, Newfoundland, New Zealand, England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. From the U. S. A. classified and unclassified, here entered 3,169. Asiatic immigration amounted to 115 and from Central and Eastern Europe, there came 6,066 of which not more than 2,942 were from Russia or the Ukraine. As will be seen, almost 50 per cent of immigration into Saskatchewan in 1923 came from Europe exclusive of the British Isles and 25 per cent from the U. S. A., which being unclassified may and probably did contain a large number of people whose birth place or extraction was also from Central Europe and less than 25 per cent came from parts of the British Empire. It will be noted that the total British immigration into that province was less than what came from one part of Europe, namely Russia and these figures must forcibly impress those who desire to see Canada keep her British connection, with fear for the future they show quite clearly that unless British immigration picks up at a much more rapid rate than at present, Canada will in ten years be peopled by those who are not of British extraction and who have migrated from countries where the democratic traditions, customs and instincts of liberty loving Britons have never been practised.

The Canadian Labor Press feels that this matter is serious enough for the people of Britain and the people of Canada to pay most consideration to during the next twelve months and to impress upon those in authority, the necessity of promoting a vigorous immigration policy that will see Canada peopled in the main by those of British stock. We have no desire to exclude the peoples of other countries who are desirous of making a new home here, but we do feel that this Dominion, being a part of the British Empire, should endeavor to see that British immigrants come to Canada, even if the Governments of Great Britain and Canada have to assist them financially to get a start in this new country.

The Theatrical Amusement Tax

The Toronto District Trades and Labor Council have passed a resolution, registering a vigorous protest against the continuance of the imposition of the Amusement Tax on patrons of motion picture houses, claiming that the tax is unjust under present conditions and that it has served the purpose for which it was intended.

It has been realized for some time past by Labor organizations throughout the province that the Amusement Tax on motion picture houses was a burden that fell particularly heavy on the families of those who could least afford to pay it, as the biggest percentage of those attending moving picture houses belonged to the working class. The decision of the Toronto Trades and Labor Council to ask the Government to alleviate as far as possible, the strain on the working people of carrying this tax, and as in a good many cases moving pictures constitutes the sole relaxation of the family, has entered quite seriously into his cost of living budget.

We would also point out the fact that the Amusement Tax created as a war-time measure—and that in England for instance, when their war debt is a good deal larger than ours, the tax has been lifted on admission fees of 50c or less, thus affording relief necessary for her working people. The tax has also been lifted in Australia and New Zealand, so we cannot for any good reason see why we should still be harnessed to a now obsolete form of taxation.

Under present day conditions, it is also a hardship on that industry, that the patrons should be taxed in such a manner. The motion picture houses have had to meet a steadily rising budget of costs, due to heavier taxes and the ever present public demand for nothing better. We all realize that the quality of moving picture production has improved to a wonderful degree during the few years and we might say that the majority of motion pictures that are presented to-day are of real educational value. Moving pictures carry us into many lands that otherwise the majority of us could never see—shows us the wonderful accomplishments of nature under varying climates and conditions and demonstrates the uses of our large and important industries. In a word, through the medium of the motion pictures, the world is brought out to our very door in a manner that could not be attained through any other medium.

Despite the value of the motion picture, there are so many other attractions to-day that it is well nigh impossible for motion picture houses to keep income up with expenditures and this has acted seriously upon the standing of the Motion Picture Operators, which has led to the protest against the Amusement Tax. The reason for the protest is that as many houses even have to close up in the summer when everyone turns to our-door sports, but the coming of the radio, which is at its best in the winter as well as in the summer, has formed a chain of circumstances which is anything but pleasant. We must not forget too, that we have been passing through a siege of depressed business conditions and the Operators feel that if the Amusement Tax could be lifted it would help to offset the many difficulties encountered by their industry.

The various District Trades and Labor Councils throughout the province should therefore add their resolutions of protest to that submitted at Toronto in order that an appeal may be strengthened.

Old Age Pensions Among Demands

Trades and Labor Congress Will Make Representations to Federal Government

Toronto, Ont.—Preparing the program which it has presented annually to the Federal Government, containing its demand for legislation, the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada will bear in mind that the Government may appeal to the country after the coming session of the House of Commons. The executive of the Congress held a meeting in Ottawa over the week-end, and local members upon their return have intimated that the Congress would place a lengthy list of demands before the Cabinet, in view of the proximity of a general election.

These demands will include one for old-age pensions and another for unemployment insurance. In addition there will be a demand for a thorough study of unemployment, and of particular interest to the organizers of the trade union movement will be the forceful request that the law on picketing be more clearly defined. The question of picketing arises through injunctions secured from Judges in Montreal and Hamilton, which did away with the usual conception of picketing.

James Simpson and Bert Merson are the local members of the executive.

The World's Labor Parliament

By L. P. Mair

Five years ago, there came into being, with the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, a Labor Parliament for the whole world, in which all the nations were to meet annually in conference and frame measures to secure those "fair and humane conditions of labor," which they are bound by that Treaty to maintain. Efforts to promote international labor legislation had been made before the creation of this International Labor Organization, but their effect was necessarily limited because they were made either by voluntary associations, which could do little more than organize and educate public opinion, or by meetings of technical experts who were not plenipotentiaries of their governments and therefore could not bind them to action. In the International Labor Organization, there exists for the first time a body on which the Governments, the employers and the workers of each member-state are represented, created for the definite object of securing by international agreement a universal minimum standard of labor conditions.

The need for a world standard in labor legislation is two-fold. Its more obvious advantage is in its effect on conditions in backward or newly industrialized countries where the rights of the worker are not yet taken for granted. But there is another side to the picture. It is as much the work of the International Labor Organization to safeguard the interests of the worker in enlightened countries as it is to champion his cause in those whose industrial system is behind the times. The introduction of better labor conditions in one country has often been delayed by the fear of competition from a neighbor whose standard is lower. Sometimes, even, a retrograde step in one country, such as an increase in the hours of the normal working day, has had to be initiated in self-defence by its trade competitors. Every time the members of the world's Labor Parliament agree, in one of their Conventions, to recognize the universal application of a principle, and ask their governments to ratify the Convention and put it into practice, they eliminate one of these forms of unfair competition.

In the five years of its existence, the International Labor Organization has dealt with a vast number of subjects, such as hours of work, the employment of women and young persons in dangerous processes and at night, the employment of women before and after

childbirth, the fixing of a minimum age for child workers, the protection of workers in a number of dangerous occupations, factory inspection, some international aspects of unemployment, and special provisions for seamen and agricultural workers.

In its first Conference at Washington in 1919, it set up the "corner-stone of international labor legislation" when it embodied in its Hour of Work Convention the principle of an eight-hour day and forty-eight hour week as the normal working hours. Although the general principle is accepted in many countries, their Governments have been slow to ratify the Convention and bring in the legislation which ratification would entail. This year, however, the question became acute with Germany's decision that she could only carry out her reparation obligations by working a ten-hour day. Germany, it is worth remembering, although not yet a member of the League of Nations, was admitted to the International Labor Organization at its first session. The effect of her decision was that Poland declared herself forced also to adopt a ten-hour day, while Austria has applied economic sanctions in a novel form by imposing a high tariff on goods from countries where the eight-hour day principle is not applied. The whole principle of the regulation of hours of work seemed to be threatened by Germany's action, and the other Great Powers were anxious lest their own standard of labor conditions should be effected. In September, however, the Labor Ministers of France, Belgium, Germany and Great Britain met at Berne and agreed that "full and sincere ratification" of the Convention was both possible and desirable. Bills to this end were introduced during the year into both the French and British Parliaments, and it is possible that next year may see its general application.

This year's Conference was particularly interesting, and resulted in the provisional adoption of three Draft Conventions, providing for equality of treatment for national and foreign workers as regards compensation for accidents, for a weekly suspension of work for 24 hours in glass-manufacturing processes where tank furnaces are used, and prohibiting work in bakeries for a period of at least seven consecutive hours during the night. These conventions will not be finally adopted till they have been reconsidered by the 1925 Conference. A recommendation on the utilization of workers' leisure time was also approved. Among other clauses, it laid down the principle that in return for normal hours of work, the worker should receive wages which ensured him a normal standard of living without obliging him to undertake paid work outside his regular employment; that spare time should be as continuous as possible; and that transport facilities between home and work should be increased.

This year has seen, also, the presentation to the national Parliaments of the recommendations on factory inspection adopted at the 1923 Conference. They have been received generally with approval. The advantage of their application will be felt principally in the countries of the Far East, where, in the absence of any effective system of inspection, the introduction of protective legislation has, up till now, been almost valueless.

The progress of ratification during the year shows how the influence of the International Labor Organization's work is growing. In 1922, 55 ratifications had been recommended by Governments and 51 had been formally registered. This year brings the total up to 133 recommended and 141 registered. The advance in registration is particularly striking; in the last year 55 have been sent in—more than the total number received in the first three years of the International Labor Organization's existence. It shows that the Governments are beginning to take these international Conventions seriously, and are no longer content to declare that as their own legislation is as good as that laid down by the Convention, ratification is unnecessary. The one which has been ratified by the largest number of countries provides for the exchange of information on unemployment and the establishment of free employment exchanges. Next to it come the Conventions which prohibit the night work of women and young persons under eighteen.

The five years of the International Labor Organization have shown what great work it can do. But it must never be forgotten that it depends on the Governments of the countries which make it up whether its Conventions are to mere pious aspirations or real laws governing the labor conditions of the world. Like the League of Nations, its rule is that of consent, not force; and the Labor Charter which it has built up has just as much strength as is given it by the public opinion behind it and no more.

S. Africa Wants No "Honors"

Decision of General Hertzog's Cabinet

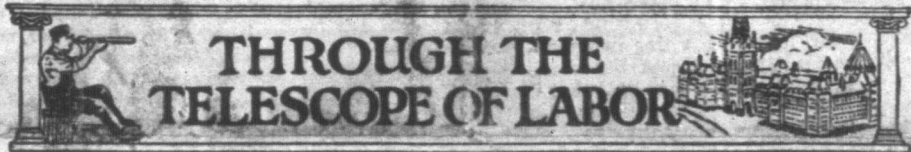
The South African Government declined to recommend any names for New Year's honors, thus following the sentiments of the Canadian Government.

The Exchange states that, with the exception of Civil servants who ren-

der their services to the State, the Government is opposed to the principle of honors.

It is stated that in arriving at the decision the Government refused several applications of prominent Nationalistic commercial men, who offered to contribute handsomely to the Party funds if their names were included in the King's list of titles.

The South African Government, headed by General Hertzog, is a Nationalist-Labor coalition.



THROUGH THE TELESCOPE OF LABOR

The Tale of a Shirt

Following out the program announced in our issue of November 29th last by which we attempted to place before our readers some details of conditions prevailing in modern industrial establishments, representatives of the Canadian Labor Press visited the New Method Laundry on River Street, Toronto.

We were met there by the General Manager, Mr. Sheedy, who very courteously conducted us throughout the entire plant. A good many years ago, Tom Hood wrote the "Song of the Shirt," a poem which used to bring tears to the eyes of its readers, but the modern song of a shirt as exemplified in the New Method Laundry brings nothing but smiles and gladness, not only amongst the customers served by it but also amongst the employees there.

The first department visited we noted the extraordinary efficient way in which the soiled linen, upon coming in, was sorted and marked for each customer and then transferred to the laundry proper. In this connection it may be stated that mistakes are well nigh impossible owing to the splendid system employed. Next we visited the water supply, where the city water runs into large tanks and by a patent process the water is rendered the proper quality for laundry purposes. Then we saw splendid washing machines used, made of metal that cannot corrode or rust so that in the process of washing no harm can come to the clothes. From there the clothes are taken to machines that evaporate the bulk of the water from them by centrifugal force and then they are passed on to the drying machines, going in at one end with a slight amount of moisture and coming out perfectly dry at the other. From there they are taken to be ironed and mended if necessary; an extra service covered without extra charge. After that they are folded and sorted out to their proper receptacle and passed on to be wrapped and labeled and taken on large trucks ready for delivery.

In addition to ordinary laundry work, special departments deal with curtains and lace goods. The curtains after going through all the laundry processes, are stretched on a special machine that handles them without the least risk of being damaged. Another department deals with the cleaning of carpets by means of a vacuum, a special dust-proof room being devoted to this purpose alone and the process of carpet cleaning removes every particle of dust from the carpets and a special fan removes all the dust and dirt from the room so that none can settle back on the carpets.

The machinery used in the New Method Laundry is the most up-to-date obtainable, a great amount of which is automatic, thus preventing any mistakes being made by the human element and all of which is operated by electricity generated by the New Method Laundry from its own generating plant.

For the convenience and welfare of the employees, there is a large lunch room in the basement so that employees can eat their meals in comfort and for their convenience, music is provided through a large phonograph.

The type of help employed in the New Method Laundry, are girls in general who have reached maturity and are all of a sensible age. They look spick and span in their white overdresses, giving them a pleasing appearance to the eye. The great majority are Canadian born or of British extraction and are extraordinarily efficient at their work. It is a treat to watch them go at their work so efficiently, at the same time providing that the quality of their work and the care exercised, is of a very high standard. In conversation, we learned that a great many have been employed there for a number of years and that all are contented with their conditions, receiving fair wages coming under the scope of the Minimum Wage Act of Ontario, to which there has never been any objection made on the part of the management and a large number earn a good deal more than is required by the regulations of the Minimum Wage Board.

We left the New Method Laundry with a feeling that if all citizens of Toronto had the opportunity of going through an establishment such as this, it would result in every citizen pledging himself not to give his laundry work to unhygienic oriental laundries but to turn it over to an establishment such as this, where the work performed would be under the best possible hygienic conditions, of excellent quality and what is important, provide employment for Canadian men and women.

Camp Labor Demand Is Reduced

Deputy Minister of Labor States That Toronto's Unemployed Population Now Numbers 10,000

Reduction in the annual demand for bushmen and experienced lumber camp hands is largely responsible for the large number of unemployed in Toronto, according to a report of James Ballantyne, Deputy Minister of Labor, forwarded to Hon. Dr. Godfrey. Demand for bushmen for the year has fallen from 8,000 hands to 5,000 owing to the curtailed operations of the lumber camps.

Mr. Ballantyne states that the unemployed population of Toronto at the present time is 10,000, exclusive of the "floating labor" population that is always present in every large city.

Applications filled have been counteracted by new registrations at the employment offices. Not long ago there were 913 new applications, and out of 766 placed in positions, 279 were girls and women. Superintendent J. S. Dobbs reports that the ranks of the unemployed have been swelled by single men, many not Canadian-born, drifting in from outside points.

In one day there were 370 new relief cases. The head of a private employment agency states that conditions are worse now than at any time during his 20 years' experience. A circumstance which makes itself felt considerably is that the demand for workers on railway construction and in lumber camps is fully 3,500 below last year's record. The autumn harvest excursions were below standard. Construction of the Government road from North Bay has taken no men from Toronto, as the gangs employed there waited and slept in the vicinity until operations commenced. Hundreds also slept along the Welland Canal, awaiting employment this year.

Cooks Wanted
The number of women seeking positions is on a far smaller scale, and the greater demand is for casual or day workers. There are also many requests for cooks-general, and these are being well filled. A large quota of women and girls have been placed in office and factory positions.

Deaths in the coal mines of the United States during September totaled 186, according to reports received by the United States bureau of mines. There were 157 lives lost in the bituminous fields, and 29 in the anthracite fields. For the first nine months of 1924 the total number of accidents was 1,821, as compared with 1,942 in the corresponding months last year.

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