

A. F. OF L. BUILDS ALLIANCE WITH CANADIAN O. B. U.

HYDRO WORKERS' SIDE OF CASE BEING DISPUTED GROSSLY MISREPRESENTED BY EXAGGERATED WAGE SCALE

Wages Asked by Skilled and Unskilled Only on Par With Prevailing Rates Paid Fellow Workers in Radius of Fifty Miles.

To the Editor Canadian Labor Press: Sir—Much has been published of late from the standpoint of the Hydro-Electric Commission with regard to the Chippewa dispute, but practically nothing from the standpoint of the workers, whose case has been grossly misrepresented in the daily press, whether truthfully or otherwise. The workers and their representatives have hitherto refused from making any statement on their side of the question, but it seems the time has come when the public should know something of the workers' side of the case, and the weekly in view of the unfavorable report (as far as the workers are concerned) recently submitted by the special commission appointed by the Ontario Legislature to investigate the dispute.

In the first place our case has been grossly misrepresented in the publication of an exaggerated wage scale if the demands of the workers were granted. Such figures as \$12.00 to \$14.00 per day have been quoted, which would not prevail except in the case of some of the highly skilled workers, who represent only about 15 per cent of the workers involved, and then only in the event of their having to work overtime over the basic eight-hour day, which has already been agreed to by the Hydro Commission during negotiations with the workers' representatives (prior to the appointment of the special commission), with the understanding that overtime is to be confined to cases of emergency only.

Bring Them up to Par. Furthermore the wages asked for by any of the workers, either skilled or otherwise, would, if granted, only be on a par with the prevailing rates in their fellow workers in similar work within a fifty-mile radius, and is barely a living wage.

The highest possible daily earnings under the eight-hour day for the workers would, if their demands are granted, not be more than \$13.00 per day, while for the laborers it would not be more than \$8.00 per day. Special Commission in their report state that they have investigated the financial condition of the Hydro project, and claim that the case will not warrant a further increase of the wage bill without having to increase some metals and metal products; but there were increases in others.

The departmental index of wholesale prices rose to 256.8 for May as compared with 253.1 for April, 254.1 in May, 1919, and 250.3 in May, 1918. It returned to the average cost of a family budget of staple foods in sixty cities was higher, rising to \$16.45 at the middle of May as compared with \$15.95 at the middle of April, and \$7.43 in May, 1914. The chief increase was in potatoes, which averaged \$4.15 per bushel as compared with \$3.75 in April. Sugar also advanced substantially, averaging 21.7 cents per pound for granulated as compared with 19.5 cents in April. There were slight increases in some meats and in several of the other lines, with coal and coal oil were also up, and rent averaged considerably higher.

With regard to the housing and the food supplied to the men who live in the camps, I will not take up much space, as this letter is already a lengthy one, except to say that I cannot understand how an investigation commission can pass over the matter of such serious importance in such an offhand way, for as a whole the sleeping quarters in the camp are in a filthy, unsanitary and badly ventilated condition, and the food an abomination, and still the workers under these conditions are expected to be efficient and contented.

There is one thing that the commission have recommended that may bear fruit, and that is a round table conference between the Hydro Commission and the Workers' Committee, but even this is doubtful, seeing that they claim the financial features of the case will not permit the outline in this matter is indeed not very promising for a satisfactory settlement of the dispute.

I trust the same publicity will be given to the presentation of the workers' side of the case as has been given hitherto to that of the Hydro Commission.

Yours truly, W. G. POYLESLEND, International Vice-President, International Brotherhood of Blacksmiths and Helpers, 239 Beattie Street, Toronto, Ont.

WORKERS' RIGHT TO ORGANIZE MUST NOT BE INTERFERED WITH. It is inconceivable that the workers as free citizens should remain under automatically made law within industry and commerce as it is that the nation could remain a democracy while certain individuals or groups exercise autocratic powers.

MATTY WOLL ON REPUBLICAN PLATFORM. The Republican platform adopted in Chicago is declared "an outrage and an affront to the working people," and "a document with which Wall Street and the Steel Trust ought to be highly pleased," says Matthew Woll, vice-president of the A. F. of L. in a statement issued on Friday.

The platform, Mr. Woll asserts, "is a smoke screen to deceive the people," but it now remains to be seen whether the first step can be detected by an effort so bold and brazen. "It provides for compulsory labor in the Government and Government services," continued the statement, "but is profoundly and impressively silent on the great question of the right of the worker to organize for the benefit of organized oil, mineral and mining appetites."

A. F. of L. Opposes Bolshevism and Soviet Government. The American Federation of Labor in its annual convention at Montreal on Tuesday declined to lend any support or comfort to the Soviet Government of Russia. After two hours warm and bitter debate, defenders of Bolshevism were routed and crushing defeat when the convention overwhelmingly voted not to demand of the United States Government the lifting of the blockade against Russia and the recognition of the Soviet Government. The Federation went on record as opposed to the Trotsky-Lenin regime on the ground that it is not representative of the Russian people, but is merely a military autocracy that has gone so far as to establish industrial slavery.

Family Budget Takes Jump of Nearly A Dollar in May

"In prices the general movement continued upward, increases in grain, fodder, live stock, fuel, building materials, and furnishings slightly more than offsetting decreases in eggs, milk, hides, textiles, and in raw furs," says the Labor Gazette. "There were decreases in some metals and metal products; but there were increases in others. The departmental index of wholesale prices rose to 256.8 for May as compared with 253.1 for April, 254.1 in May, 1919, and 250.3 in May, 1918. It returned to the average cost of a family budget of staple foods in sixty cities was higher, rising to \$16.45 at the middle of May as compared with \$15.95 at the middle of April, and \$7.43 in May, 1914. The chief increase was in potatoes, which averaged \$4.15 per bushel as compared with \$3.75 in April. Sugar also advanced substantially, averaging 21.7 cents per pound for granulated as compared with 19.5 cents in April. There were slight increases in some meats and in several of the other lines, with coal and coal oil were also up, and rent averaged considerably higher."

DO NOT NOW STRIKE FOR EVERY REFORM

Labor and Coalition Only Political Factors in Britain.

John W. Ogden, a past president of the British Trades Union Congress, who is attending as a fraternal delegate, the convention of the American Federation of Labor, in an interview with the press gave some "informative" particulars regarding industrial and political conditions in the Old Country. "The trade unions in our country have all been converted to political action," he said. "We believe we should not use the industrial machine but that we should use the political machine. We believe we should get representation in the House of Commons and, if possible, Labor laws on the statute books, is less costly than industrial action in short, means Labor representation and less striking. In the old days we had to strike for every reform we wanted, but we have made much headway since then."

Referring to the results of recent by-elections in Britain, Mr. Ogden said: "You may get a big Labor vote, but you will not get a big Coalition majority in another, but whatever the results are you find the Liberal does nothing at all. The whole thing seems to be a mere game of the Coalition and Labor. The old Liberal party, led by Mr. Asquith, in my opinion, is crushed between the two. It is the only party that looks upon himself as advanced and who cannot find a home in the Coalition if he wants to do any real good matter. He is a tremendous amount of concern. 'We are hoping some day,' declared the speaker, 'that this American Constitutional Convention will favor the assistance and co-operation of an international labor movement in Canada than we do now in order that the movement may be more effectively checked.'"

Mr. McClelland then spoke of the opposition to the labor movement in Canada that he had seen in the past. He said that the Canadian unions to the States were being returned to them to the extent of some of the more than three dollars for every one sent across the border. The speaker said that he generally known the workers would realize that their best interest lay in affiliating with the international labor movement.

Catholic Unions. Then Mr. McClelland turned on the national Catholic unions, which, he said, were causing workers a tremendous amount of concern. "We are hoping some day," declared the speaker, "that this American Constitutional Convention will favor the assistance and co-operation of an international labor movement in Canada than we do now in order that the movement may be more effectively checked.""

CAMPAIGN AGAINST VENEREAL DISEASE. The Dominion Government, through the Department of Health, plans to take an active part in a national campaign against venereal disease. To this end an order-in-council has been passed which was tabled in the Commons last week by Hon. N. W. Rowell, Minister presiding over the Department of Health, providing for the distribution of \$300,000 among the six provinces, to assist them in combating venereal disease.

REPRESENT CANADA ON BIG LABOR BODY. J. Obed Smith, Superintendent of Emigration in London, Eng., has been appointed to represent the Dominion Government on a commission of the International Labor Body (League of Nations), to study questions relating to emigration and immigration. The commission meets in Geneva early in 1921.

MINERS OUT OF WORK. Thousands of miners in the United States are idle and a coal shortage next winter is threatened, predicts the United Mine Workers' Journal. This trade union publication says the interstate commerce commission permits railroads to "hog" all the coal cars and assigns them to certain mines on their lines for the shipment of military coal. These cars are denied to mines that have no railroad contracts.

LABOR AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS. G. N. Barnes, speaking recently at a ball on the industrial section of the League of Nations, said that if an improvement in the conditions of labor could not be effected by the League of Nations, it was the duty of labor to fight.

LABOR MADE UP HIS MIND THAT it was going to improve conditions, but it was not to be done by avoiding some other means of dealing with the situation must be found. He referred to the recent improvements in Japan as very encouraging, and concluded by saying that the league was the only way in which we could rid ourselves of the nightmare of future war.

PENSIONS FOR B. C. MOTHERS. First payment of mothers' pensions in British Columbia will be made in July, according to the announcement made by George F. Pyke, recently appointed superintendent of neglected children, and charged with the duty of organizing and bringing into operation the new mothers' pension act.

BRITISH TRADE UNIONS DEMAND PRICE REDUCTION

Will Not Seek Wage Increases if Upward Tendency of Cost of Living Stopped.

The British trade unions would give a guarantee to the British Government that there would be no demands for advances in wages if they would stop the upward tendency of prices, the cost of living, and the profiteers, said J. W. Ogden, the British fraternal delegate to the A. F. of L. convention now in session at Montreal, in addressing that body on Monday. Mr. Ogden said that by the time the next convention of the British Trades Union Congress was held, they would have a membership of 4,000,000, which would be an achievement never known before in the Old Country. There had been an idea that the war would leave the British unions impoverished, but the spirit of trades unionism and organization was more keenly alive in Great Britain than it had ever been. Organization in almost every industry had become almost perfect and the non-unionist was almost extinct.

They were constantly and persistently protesting against the high cost of living and the constant tendency to increase it. They were told by the employers and capitalists that that was to some extent due to demands for increased wages. "The reverse is the truth," declared Mr. Ogden. "Wages are engaged in a mad race after prices. We can give a guarantee as trade union representatives to the British Government that if they will stop the upward tendency of prices, the cost of living and profiteering, we will give a guarantee that advances of wages will not be heard of in the future. It is an unpleasant thing for the trade union official to ask every few months for wage increases in order to keep pace with the cost of living, and if the Government would only use the strong hand and smash prices and smash profiteering, we will give an assurance to the Government that wages will attain some amount of stability."

Hours Reduced. The speaker said of how they had succeeded in getting the hours of labor reduced all through the country. He said that the British Government had reduced the hours of labor to 48-hour or 44-hour week.

MINERS OF DISTRICT 18 GET ANOTHER INCREASE. An agreement was concluded last week between the coal operators of the County of West Yorkshire and the United Mine Workers of America, whereby a 27 per cent increase will be given to all day men over the 12 months ending December 31, 1920. This increase includes a preliminary 14 per cent increase given last January. The contract provides for a 12 per cent increase and 27 per cent increase on the war bonus of 33 cents. This is seven per cent more than has been granted in the United States central contract.

CONDITIONS IN AUSTRIA AS SEEN BY BRITISH LABOR LEADER. W. A. Appleton, of Great Britain, president of the International Federation of Trade Unions, has sent to us his report on his recent visit to Austria. The International Federation of Trade Unions has sent several train loads of food into Austria, and Mr. Appleton accompanied one of these. He gave quite a detailed account of economic and social conditions in Austria.

Trade Unions Grow Despite Opposition. The report of Secretary Frank Morrison to the A. F. of L. convention shows record membership gains the last year despite a continued savage anti-union attack during that period.

SUFFRAGE ALLIANCE TO MEET IN PARIS. The International Woman Suffrage Alliance Congress at the closing session here this afternoon, accepted the proposal to hold the next annual meeting in Paris, France.

BRITISH MINERS DEMAND INCREASE. Under the presidency of Robert Smalls the Miners' Federation held a conference in Memorial Hall, London, last week, and decided to formulate a demand for an increase in the date of the congress, as the price of coal. The Federation also adopted a resolution protesting against the military domination of Ireland, and instructed its parliamentary committee to summon a special conference of trade unions to deal with the production and handling of munitions for Ireland and Poland.

A. F. OF L. BUILDING TRADES DEPARTMENT WILL SEND TWENTY ORGANIZERS TO COMBAT THE CANADIAN O. B. U.

Annual Convention in Session at Montreal Disposes of Many Questions—Refuses to Endorse Soviet Government—Condemns Republican Party.

Many important questions have been discussed and a motion decided upon by the 46th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor now in session at Montreal. So far as Canada is concerned, perhaps the most important announcement is that of the Building Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor to send 20 organizers of international unions will be employed to combat the One Big Union of Canada. The first part of the campaign against the "destructionists" will be launched at Winnipeg. All parts of Canada where the O. B. U. has been active will be visited and the workers advised of the progress of the International Trade Union movement. The Dominion Trades and Labor Council has a system of transfer cards adopted for that city was refused as the matter was one for the Trade Agency of the affiliated national unions. The A. F. of L. with which the A. F. of L. cannot interfere.

SEAMEN'S CONFERENCE IS OPENED AT GENOA. Proposal of the United States Meets Defeat. The International Seamen's Conference opened at Genoa, Italy, on Tuesday with delegates from many countries present. Canada's representatives are: G. J. Dewar, Deputy Minister of Naval Service; Robert Robb, secretary of the Shipping Federation at Montreal, and C. J. Gauthier, president of the Montreal Local Masters, States and Pilots' International Union.

At the preliminary session, a proposition submitted by the United States delegates, which they declared was designed "to make seamen all the world over free men," was defeated. The British, French, Belgian and Spanish delegates voted against it, and it was supported by Italy, Holland, Norway, Germany, Sweden and Japan.

While the nations, the proposition had a majority of 15 to 13, with five refusing to vote and 18 absent. The speaker said that the status of seamen, being unable to enjoy the liberties and rights acknowledged as belonging to all men, is said to be one of the most degrading of the world. The Seamen's Act was passed, not for the purpose of getting foreign sailors aboard American vessels, but to protect American seamen from the sea, which, he said, they were not that of free men. As a result of this law, he declared, native American sailors to sea have increased from about seven per cent to 47 per cent in the last four years.

STRIKE-BREAKING CANNOT BE MADE RESPECTABLE. Strike-breaking as a paid profession has long been in disrepute with honest people, says Samuel Gompers in the American Federationist. As a profession it is about on a level with pocket picking, purse snatching and kidnapping. There is no reason to suspect that volunteer strike-breaking can be made more respectable than paid strike-breaking for the simple reason that the principle involved is the same. As a matter of fact, the two varieties of strike-breaking the volunteer is the less respectable because the volunteer usually has back of him no economic urge and no background of ignorance, poverty and distress such as is usually found in the case of the professional.

ARMIES OF VOLUNTEER STRIKE-BREAKERS are not destined to become popular in the schools for training them will probably never reach a stage of actual establishment.

ONLY ONE ROAD TO PEACE. HALF DAY OFF FOR THE "HIRED MAN." J. R. Clynes, M.P., was the principal speaker at a meeting in Aberdeen, Scotland, recently, in support of the League of Nations. Some of the speakers were subjected to occasional interruptions, but Mr. Clynes and the Labor representatives had a cordial reception.

Mr. Clynes said the most astounding thing revealed since the end of the war was that the statement of Europe had not yet established an effective footing a League of Nations working to maintain the peace of the world. He said the war was fought as a war to end war.

The horrible losses of that war should have driven the most cynical political leader to support any effective organization for making any other war impossible.

The faith of peoples in their leaders was shattered, it is the supreme matter. Parliaments, Presidents, and Cabinets failed to make a real organization which would prevent the mischief always following in the train of secret diplomacy.

Organization of workers leads to better wages, fewer working hours, improved working conditions. It develops independence, manhood and character; it fosters tolerance and real justice and makes for a constantly growing better economic, social and political life for the burden-bearing masses.

In countries where wages are low, education, and in the wealth of the people generally. All for wage-paying countries contrasted with America is proof for this statement.

ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS THE ONLY WAY. Organization of the workers leads to better wages, fewer working hours, improved working conditions. It develops independence, manhood and character; it fosters tolerance and real justice and makes for a constantly growing better economic, social and political life for the burden-bearing masses.

The cultivation of a spirit of peace and the building up of a belief in the equitable adjustment of rival claims were the only means by which we could stave off the wrongs that war had inflicted, and by which we could begin urgent work of reconstruction.

The American Federation of Labor on Saturday went on record by resolution in favor of a work week of 44 hours and a half holiday on Saturday for all workers. It was pointed out, however, that production of the country must not be endangered by any "shorter work day" movement.

The convention pledged its "full assistance" to any organization demanding a shorter work day, even though it be for a six-hour day, in order to find employment for all its membership.

The resolution also provides that all workers shall receive time and a half for overtime. Attempts to place the convention on record in favor of "double time" for overtime were defeated.

LADY GARMENT WORKERS TO ESTABLISH UNION FACTORY AND STORES. The Executive Board of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union decided at the quarterly meeting, last week in Montreal, to appoint a committee to carry out the necessary arrangements for the establishment of a Union factory and Union stores in fulfillment of a recommendation of the last annual convention of that body.