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CRITICISM AND HISTORY OF THE COMPENSATION ACT

(Continued from page 1).

took this action they had not a good case and instead of receiving damages they were forced to pay large fees. But this was not the worst feature, we found each of our insurance companies keeping a lawyer on their staff probably as a claims adjuster who when an accident occurred for which his company was liable immediately set out to find just how little it would be possible to settle the claim for. The maximum amount payable in case of a fatal accident was \$1800.00 but this was rarely paid, the usual procedure was for the adjuster to visit the widow and offer to make a settlement, say for 1200 with the threat that if this was not accepted the case would have to be decided in the courts, the result usually was, particularly where the deceased workman was not a member of organized labor, that the offer was accepted, there being the fear that less might be obtained through the courts and the knowledge that if it were more the difference would be eaten up in lawyers fees. When we know that it cost the United Mine Workers \$7000.00 per year for litigation, an average of nearly \$2.00 per member, we will realize how pernicious this was.

New Measure Enacted.

The workers long recognized the necessity for a change and kept up a persistent agitation for a new measure. In 1917 as a result of the persistent demands made by the Alberta Federation of Labor a commission of enquiry was appointed and a new Act was adopted at the 1918 session of the Legislature.

What are the marked changes in this from the 1908 Act?

Abolition of common law rights in regard to industrial accidents;

Elimination of Liability Insurance Companies; Compulsory State Insurance Administration of the Act by a commission from whose decision there shall be no appeal; Provision for all necessary medical aid to injured persons; Fixed rates of compensation regardless of the wages earned by the injured person.

While this measure is not all that is desired by the workers still we have the basis of a very good Act, the underlying principles are sound and with some necessary changes we will have a very good measure.

Heavy Expenses Saved

By the abolition of common law rights we have eliminated a lot of friction and have saved a large amount of money that was wasted in lawyers and court fees; by eliminating liability insurance companies there has been saved large overhead expenses such as canvassers, legal advisers, and the upkeep of a number of offices for now our collections are made from one office; by compulsory state insurance we have provided the machinery whereby collections can be made from all and have assured payment of compensation to all who come within the scope of the Act; Provision for all necessary medical aid to injured persons is a measure of great relief for often under the old Act men who received an injury were faced with a doctor's and hospital bill far in excess of the amount of compensation they received; The system of fixed rates is also to be commended. We are getting by this a little nearer to what is desired; that is, a recognition that the requirements of the unskilled laborer, in so far as the maintenance of himself and family are concerned, are on a par with any other section of the community.

Many Changes Required Yet.

While as I said before we have the basis of an excellent measure there are a number of changes required, for instance the payments are far too low, we find the pensions provided for our military casualties more than 100% higher than the indemnities provided in this Act, the requirements of our industrial cripples and dependents are not different from those of the military, further there is no reason for a maximum amount that should be paid for an injury, payments should continue as long as there is a need, then we find a per centage of the workers who do not come within the scope of the Act, why, no one as yet has demonstrated to my

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF RAISE FOR SCHOOLTEACHERS

The following arguments lead the United States senate to vote to raise the basic salaries of Washington school teachers:

- 1—The future of America depends upon efficient education.
- 2—Teachers earn higher salaries than they are receiving.
- 3—Teachers should be self-supporting.
- 4—Other more remunerative occupations are depleting the teacher training schools and drawing from the rank and file of trained teachers.
- 5—Men are not attracted to the profession, and men are needed.
- 6—Teachers have always been underpaid.
- 7—Even raising salaries 10 per cent. would not pay for value received.

PURPOSES OF THE WESTERN CANADA TEACHERS' ALLIANCE

(By H. C. Newland)
(Continued from last week)

Now when we admit that the organization of teachers' alliances is likely to solve the problem of low status, we cast upon teachers themselves the blame for their present unenviable position. And this is by no means a new proposition; we have been told it times without number by business men, professional men, and labor leaders. "Stop whining to the public," they say, "and do something yourselves." Moreover, there is, apart from the everlasting higgling and bickering over salaries, a deeper aspect of this problem, viz. the fact that teaching, if it is to attract the best brains to the profession, must, under modern conditions, hold out handsome rewards than it at present can do; and per contra, that it will not be able to offer better rewards unless the personnel of the profession becomes more capable and efficient—a vicious circle, surely, which only those within can break. It is the teachers themselves who, through union and organization, can do most to build up a strong, virile profession, composed of men and women of first-rate ability. May we not infer, then, that if they succeed in raising salaries to a point where the ablest and most capable men and women can be retained within the ranks of the profession, teachers' alliances may hope to justify through increased efficiency a claim to shape and control educational policy?

Such a claim on the part of teachers is what is meant by self-determination. It is in some respects parallel to the demand of present-day industrial workers for a voice in the management and control of industry. That is to say, teachers aim at co-operation with their employers, the public, in the serious business of education. Yet the work of education seems to be a purer and more disinterested form of social service than industry. It demands a philosophical and historical point of view, a wider outlook upon the functions of society as a whole, and a more experienced technique. Self-determination for teachers is thus suggested rather by the status of the medical or of the legal profession. One might, for instance, conceive an Ontario Federation of Teachers fashioned in the image of the Law Society of Upper Canada, or a Alberta Teachers' Alliance constituted after the fashion of the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of the Province of Alberta. Further, if the medical profession in Canada were to become "nationalized" (an idea by no means new in England), self-determination for teachers would mean almost precisely what it would then mean for doctors; teachers and doctors would then approach an equality of status from opposite directions.

Under the "Medical Profession Act" of Alberta, 1909, ch. 23, College of Physicians and Surgeons is constituted and from this body a Council of the College is set up with power to make rules and regulations for the governance of the College, the education and admission of students and registrants, the promotion

(Continued on page 3).

satisfaction, if it is good business to provide compensation for injured workmen in some sections of industry it should be equally so for all, there can be no justification for the exclusion of any worker from this measure. Then again the provision for industrial diseases is too narrow, compensation for sickness which is traceable to the occupation followed should be provided, further there is no good reason why the medical aid plan should apply only to injuries and industrial diseases, a scheme might well be worked out that would provide for the necessary medical and hospital treatment for all cases of sickness.

So far I have dealt with provisions for the case of injured persons but there is a factor more important than this to the worker that is the arranging that all possible safety factors be installed. It is the duty of the Board to see that measures of protection are in operation in all industries, it is cheaper to provide measures of safety than to pay for accidents. To the worker this is the important factor in an Act such as we have for with State administration we have definite authority that can compel safety measures to be provided.

In my next I will criticize the Mechanic's Lien Act.

(Fifth of a series of articles contributed to the Free Press by Walter Smitten, Secretary of the Alberta Federation of Labor).

STEEL STRIKERS STICK DOGGEDLY TO THEIR DEMANDS

The steel strike in the United States is about ended according to the daily papers, while the Wall Street Journal points out that most mills show increased earnings, though whether this was brought about by increased production or increased price of stocks on hand the latter paper does not say.

From more reliable sources, however, comes the word that the men are standing firmly together, determined that the principles for which they contend shall prevail.

The Lady Garment Workers, one of the larger bodies of workers affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, has gone down in its stocking to the extent of a quarter million dollars and handed it over with no strings attached. One hundred and fifty thousand British iron and steel workers send greeting and wishes for the success of their American brethren, pointing out that they already enjoy better conditions than that for which the strikers are contending.

Dogged determination to win on the part of the men out indicates that a settlement is in sight only when the other side is ready to reason and come across with a little justice and fair dealing.

John Fitzpatrick, the steel strike leader has been in conference with the heads of the railroad brotherhoods, and it is understood that he solicited their support.

With the coal strike now on and other industrial troubles throughout the country reaching an acute stage, the month of November is likely to bring forth some radical changes in the industrial life of the country.

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Woman's assumption of equal prerogatives with man and her entrance into "gainful occupations" are strikingly set forth in the recent estimate of the Federal Department of Labor that twelve million women are now in employment in the United States and in process of making their own way in the world.

Curiously, the assumption of business and industrial worries has been concurrent with the granting of political rights to women. As the States, one by one, granted suffrage to the sex, so the beneficiaries ventured forth from lives of retirement and from household duties, and took up the burden of business and industrial employment.

In 1909, for instance, 5,300,000 women were in gainful occupation in the United States; in 1910 the number had increased to eight million. The estimate of nine years later fixes the number now employed at more than twelve million.

War, of course, gave much impetus to the participation of women in the work of the nation. They not only attended to the wants of the sick and suffering,

but they manufactured ammunition, worked in war industries, drove automobiles and trucks, and made their physical efforts a notable contribution to the nation's cause. The ending of war diverted their efforts to the needs of peace in factory, office and farm.

The business of a nation is not at very low ebb when it can absorb four or five million new workers and call for more. And despite the help from this comparatively new source, the country finds pay-roll places for its more than three million returned service men.

Woman's work, too, alters the old equation of the family life by increasing the family income. No longer are one-half the adults of the country dependent for maintenance upon others. Thousands of young women are supplying their own needs, instead of applying to fathers or brothers. All of this is reflected in the greater volume of retail business of the country, the greater purchasing power of the public and the generally improved standard of living.

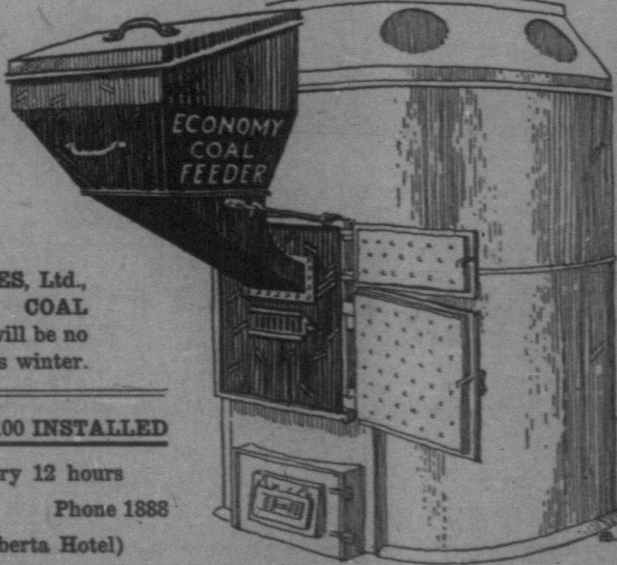
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