

RAILWAY COMMISSION CHAIRMAN IN WRONG

GENERAL GOVERNMENT CENTRE OF CALLS FOR RELIEF

It is in certain places contemplated for, it is said, the purpose of financing this Department and the Government in the matter of taking advantage of the relief of unemployment, and it is earnestly suggested that the Government should proceed promptly to continue work on certain contracts awarded by the late Government during the closing weeks of its control over such matters. The Labor Department hopes that all citizens of Canada, and especially laboring men, will appreciate that everything consistent and possible will be done to assist in creating employment for the unemployed, and to carry at least one-third of the expenditures authorized by municipalities and approved by the provinces for the relief of conditions growing out of unemployment where employment cannot be secured. The Labor Department cannot, however, be influenced into hasty or improper action either in the matter of recommending the issuance of contracts, possibly unnecessary, or in supporting the action of the late Government in awarding what may be found unnecessary and improper contracts during the closing days of its authority. Unemployment, originating whether through the misunderstanding of employment, or on the suggestion of concerns or interests who desire to force action on contracts, will not change this position. It is consistent that the general situation in regard to contracts, either as proposed by the late Government in its dying hours, or new contracts to be issued, should of necessity be given full consideration on merit in order to ensure that the public funds may be protected as they should be. Ten dollars per family for immediate relief has been granted by the town council of Glass Bay, which is facing a serious situation as a result of extensive unemployment in the coal mines of the district. A committee will interview the Dominion Coal Co. with a view to obtaining co-operation in relief work. In reply to urgent messages, Premier Murray, of Nova Scotia, advised as follows: "Telegram received re unemployment calleries Cape Breton. Whole matter re-creating serious consideration."

EMPLOYMENT SHOWING IN ANGRY MOOD IN NOVA SCOTIA

A body of 200 workers raided the Dominion Coal Company's store at Aberdeen and carried away, mostly groceries, to the value of one thousand dollars. The raiders, mingling with the bar shoppers, proceeded to take the loot away from the store. No force took place. The members of the Dominion Coal Company's store at Aberdeen being sworn in as constables at the time of the raid. Further disturbances broke out at Aberdeen near Glass Bay, where a group of men looted the Dominion Coal Company's store of value at \$2000, and again Saturday evening made another raid, carrying off goods worth \$5,000. The second riot six police were injured by flying stones and pieces of ice. No arrests were made. More reports of warehouses being looted and some shooting. The trouble started about ten o'clock Saturday morning when a group of 150 men entered the store. A smaller delegation went to the bank for some cash to be used to pay the credit that would be extended to unemployed miners. Manager McPhee replied that the credit question was beyond his jurisdiction. The delegation then came downstairs and a man shouted, "Well boys, help yourselves." The crowd immediately raised the grocery department. In the evening the crowd again advanced on the store, wrecking the place, and attacking the police with a volley of stones and ice, six policemen being hit. "Tranquillity prevails at New Aberdeen, Glass Bay, where sporadic rioting and looting have been in progress since noon Saturday. A heavy storm, which set in at 10:30 Saturday night, dispersed the mob, who looted about two hours, and there has been no disturbance since. Officials of the Dominion Coal Company are considering reopening their store, which was the centre of the attacks. In all five raids were made on the store, one at noon Saturday, another Saturday night, and three on Sunday night. Two warehouses adjoining were also looted, and the windows of the Government Post Office nearby smashed. The total damage is believed to be in excess of \$90,000. The rumors of a projected attack on a company store at New Waterford, but no trouble has developed yet.

MINION UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASED LAST MONTH

Unemployment as reported by the unions to the labor department at the beginning of December 1921 was 1,183,000. It has risen to 1,208,000 at the beginning of January, 1922. The increase in activity as compared with the preceding month was due to a slackness among garment makers in Quebec, though the mining, transportation and construction trades also were less busy. All provinces reflected less favorable conditions than at the beginning of November, but Quebec, with 10 per cent less employment, showed the greatest contraction. The figures were tabulated from 1,208,000 men, whose membership aggregated 164,107 persons, 18,133 of whom were out of work at the beginning of December, a percentage

SOUTH AFRICAN CONFERENCE ABORTIVE

The conference between the South African Chamber of Mines and the strike leaders in an effort to end the trouble at the coal mines so far been without success, said Reuters' correspondent at Johannesburg under Sunday's date. The much-advertised strike procession through the town was disappointing. Only 2,000 persons assembled at the mass meeting of the Miners' Union, and 95 per cent of those present were Dutch and most of the speeches, which were moderate in character, were in Dutch. Resolutions were unanimously adopted calling for a sympathetic strike appealing for a government intervention which would uphold the "white standard" in South Africa. Sir Abe Bailey, in a vigorous speech to the strike committee for the West Rand, said the fact that the miners go to the mines without due expenses was so obvious that there must be something else behind the strike. He was sure the Nationalist politicians were using the miners for their own political purposes. The Nationalists were thirsting for office and making every effort to bring about the downfall of General Smuts' government. Sir Evelyn Waller, president of the Chamber of Mines, informed Reuters' correspondent that the gold mining industry did not wish to abolish the color bar and had no intention of doing so. The abandonment of the status quo agreement would mean mainly the gradual retrenchment of a certain number of the most robust men whom the industry could not possibly retain and continue to exist to its full extent. The gold industry, he said, desired to see mining preserved on the largest possible scale that the country could support. After deliberations lasting throughout Saturday, the Johannesburg council succeeded in obtaining 750 tons of coal which the Miners' Federation decided was not "scab" or blacking coal. This will ensure the town's light and water services being maintained for a week. Everything is quiet, the men's leaders exhorting them to maintain law and order. Nearly 20,000 native workers have already been returned from the mines to their homes in Northern Union territory and Portuguese East Africa, which means unemployment for over 2,000 white workers. This gives some idea of the appalling amount of unemployment which each additional day of the strike will mean.

FEDERAL MINISTER DENIES ADVOCATION OF PATRONAGE

Hon. W. R. Motherwell, federal minister of agriculture, denied a statement that he had "hinted" the King administration might make use of what is termed the "patronage system," attributed to him in a news despatch from Regina. "No," said Mr. Motherwell, "I did not suggest Canada should return to the old patronage system. But I did point out that, in our laudable desire to correct the admitted evils of this system, we should avoid swinging the pendulum to the other extreme by practically abolishing one of our most important functions of government—the selection of competent, expert officials—to a life-appointed tribunal, however good, responsible to no one."

Items of Interest from Overseas

AGRICULTURAL WAGES. The deadlock between the National Union of Farmers and the Agricultural Workers' Union as a result of the dispute over the question of wages to be paid this year has been broken, according to a statement of a representative of the former. Agreements have been reached by twenty-three counties extending generally over three months, while in the case of the county of Pembroke the agreement extends over a year. The fact that agreements are being made for longer periods has encouraged the hope that stability is being reached in the agricultural industry of the country. The average rate of pay agreed upon is sevenpence halpenny per hour and this is understood to be a proper standard of living. He asserted that 120 miles a day was enough for anybody on an engine footplate, and declined to discuss how English locomotive workers could go 300 miles a day without endangering their health. Another witness said the North British Railway Workers were prepared to negotiate with the companies regarding the length of the work day at railway stations. There have been many dismissals since the railways were released from government control.

WAGES BOARD. The National Wages Board is now hearing the case for the railway workers in an appeal submitted by the Scottish railway companies for a revision of wages and hours. Railwaymen testified that this appeal has already bred unrest and discontent throughout the Scottish railways. It is announced that when the eight-hour day became operative the companies showed no inclination to bring it into force, and their own therefore took the law in their own hands and refused to work more than eight hours. James Kiddie, a member of Glasgow City Council for many years, and local president of the Railwaymen's Union, declared that the railway workers only now are reaching a proper standard of living. He asserted that 120 miles a day was enough for anybody on an engine footplate, and declined to discuss how English locomotive workers could go 300 miles a day without endangering their health. Another witness said the North British Railway Workers were prepared to negotiate with the companies regarding the length of the work day at railway stations. There have been many dismissals since the railways were released from government control.

SEIZE HOSPITAL. Unemployed occupied the hall and rotunda of the Dublin Hospital building, and said that they would not leave until the city authorities had provided other accommodation. CIVIL POLITICS. The campaign in connection with the London county council elections opened. The council is elected triennially and governs an area of 117 square miles around London holding a population of 4,500,000 people. The Municipal Reformers Party, approximating roughly to the Conservative section in national politics, has held a majority for a considerable time, having 80 seats. The Progressives, approximating of the Liberals, hold 46 seats and the Labor party holds 17 seats. Labor intends making a bold challenge to the Reformers' majority, but the latter will receive some support from the Progressives in resisting the Reformers' proposals. The Reformers propose a saving of a million pounds on education with other substantial economies. Labor believes in extending public ownership to transport services, an enlargement of the home building program and extended public health facilities. NEW AGREEMENT. An agreement has been reached between the employers' and workers' representatives in the building trade on extra wages, night work, country pay rates, overtime, and travelling allowances. Under the agreement the district joint councils will disappear and local joint committees and regional councils deal with urgent matters. The National Council will be the final court of appeal. This new agreement has to be ratified by the 700,000 members of the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives, and the men will vote at specially convened meetings against such a measure.

ATTACKS SOCIALISTS. Austen Chamberlain, Government leader in the House of Commons, today dispelled any idea of an early general election by telling a conference of Scottish Unionists that the Government had decided that until the legal establishment of the Irish Provisional Government and its equipment had been completed there could be no sort of dissolution of Parliament. He attacked the Socialist party as challenging the very foundations of the social order of the country, and emphasized the necessity of coalition government. Unionists, he declared, would be false to their duty if they allowed a dissolution to enter their ranks, and in alliance with their Liberal friends, Mr. Chamberlain said, he saw the greatest hope of "our national re-education and Imperial position."

TRADE COUNCILS IN ACTIVE ARRAY AGAINST MRS-STATEMENTS

Hon. Frank Carvell Has Incensed The Labor Movement. The members of the Ottawa Allied Trades and Labor Association in conjunction with the general movement are aiming high. They desire the head of Hon. Frank Carvell, chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners, owing to statements which he is alleged to have made recently, derogatory to organized labor. At the meeting of the association two resolutions to this effect were presented and concurred in, and copies of them will be forwarded to Premier Mackenzie King with a request for action. The resolutions were forwarded by the Street Railwaymen's Union and the International Steam and Operating Engineers, and read as follows: "Whereas, reports of recent date carry statements accredited to chairman, Hon. Frank Carvell, of the Board of Railway Commissioners, in which serious allegations were made against organized labor in Canada, which make us believe that Mr. Carvell is allowing himself to be used against organized labor, beyond the jurisdiction of the Board. "Be it resolved, that we request this Trades Council to take steps to urge upon the premier of Canada that a demand for a modification of the statements complained of be made, or the resignation of Chairman Carvell called for." In concurring with the resolutions, the executive committee voiced the opinion that Mr. Carvell belonged to the bygone age, and to a class which fails to recognize the necessity of the organized labor movement. Along similar lines was the action at the ninth annual convention of the Alberta Federation of Labor held January 9 to 11, in the city of Lethbridge, the delegates voted to instruct the secretary of the federation to send a letter of protest to the Minister of Labor at Ottawa against the public statements of the Hon. Mr. Carvell, chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners. The secretary's letter is as follows: Calgary, Jan. 16, 1922. Minister of Labor, Ottawa. Dear Sir:—The delegates to our recent convention, held in the City of Lethbridge, January 9 to 11, 1922, instructed me to vigorously protest to you against the public statements, credited to the Hon. Mr. Carvell, chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners, in the public press, that the employees of the various railways are laying down on the job and are not giving service. We are of opinion that the duties of the Board of Railway Commissioners do not provide for an enquiry into working conditions on the railways, and further that the honorable gentleman is making rash and unwarranted statements regarding matters in connection with which he has no first-hand knowledge. It must be generally known that employers of labor do not keep on their staffs individuals who do not give service, particularly at a time when the labor market is overstocked and replacements are easily obtained. What the gentleman had in mind when making the statements, we are at a loss to know, but this we are sure of that any person who will give public utterance to such unwarranted statements is not, in our estimation, a fit and proper person to hold the responsible position of chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners. We would therefore request that you use your good offices to see that only persons who have a correct viewpoint are permitted to hold positions of trust. Respectfully yours, W. SMITTEN, Sec.

OTTAWA TRADES COUNCIL IN SESSION

At the regular meeting of the Ottawa Trades Council, after the disposal of the Railway Commission Chairman's statement, the question of the system dealing with the unemployed was under fire. The delegates present are also far from satisfied with the manner in which the unemployment situation is being dealt with, some of them directly charging that patronage is being exercised by aldermen and controllers, instead of civic labor being engaged as agreed upon by resolution of city council, through the Ontario Government Employment Bureau. President Haydon said the civic advisory committee on unemployment had met and again taken this matter up, but had not been able to get anywhere. He suggested a committee of five, including himself, be formed to investigate the complaints, then, as suggested by Secretary Lodge, they could "go to the mat" with those responsible. Delegates Brown and Kavanagh said that the agreement by which groups of civic employees would be alternately laid off so as to provide as much employment as possible for all the out-of-workers was not being followed out, in that many were being kept employed permanently. President Haydon and Delegate Johnson intimated they knew this to be correct. Then Delegate Kavanagh said he knew where men had been given employment directly from the city hall. Delegate Rowe supplemented this by citing an instance where one of the controllers had given a man a job, who had a family of eight, after investigating the circumstances in connection with the case, and finding much destitution there. "Do you think that is fair?" queried President Haydon. "There are probably five or six hundred such destitute men awaiting their turn for work, through the employment bureau," he declared. "The man in question rode over their heads to a job through controller's patronage? That is just what we are complaining of." Finally, after more discussion, a committee composed of Delegates L. Charter, M. Cain, R. Wilson, and C. Brown, with President Haldon, was appointed to investigate complaints, after which action will be taken. President Haydon remarked that Ald. McElroy had told him he had got "Hail Columbia" from the municipal association in his ward for supporting civic employment being given through the employment bureau. He said the aldermen had said that Haydon and organizer labor wanted it, the municipal association had said they didn't give a hang what labor wanted. Non-Residents Employed? An investigation will also be made into charges, denied by the employing non-residents, in connection with which Delegate Leckie said it should be made clear the Ontario Government Employment Bureau was not responsible, as most of them were employed directly by the city officials. Delegate Johnson, of the Bureau, explained that the official from the city who wanted men was empowered to pick and choose from the list of available men. "Then it is the men at the city hall who are doing all the choosing," said Delegate Robertson, "and it's them we have to get after." (laughter). It was decided to donate \$10 to

NOVA SCOTIA MINERS CONCILIATION BOARD

After criticizing the finding of the British Empire Steel Corporation, J. B. McLachlan, secretary of the United Mine Workers, district No. 26, told the Conciliation Board, appointed to investigate the dispute between the Nova Scotia coal companies and the miners over the recent wage reductions of 25 to 33 per cent, at its session yesterday that the ordinary workman's wife is the greatest financier in the world—the honest financier—I do not mean the other kind. Secretary McLachlan protested that it was too much to expect that the wife of a day laborer employed in the Nova Scotia mines to finance a family on \$70.00 a year, which, he claimed, would be the earnings of the laborer under the present rate of wages on a basis of 290 days of work per year, the number of days worked by the Dominion Coal company's colliers last year and a high average, he said. In Toronto a recent decision of the Conciliation Board, J. B. McLachlan declared that the British Empire Steel Corporation expected the miners to pay dividends on the high capitalization of idle steel plants at Sydney and side building plants at Halifax and Trenton, and also maintain numerous superfluous officials and a army of policemen. That the British Empire Steel Corporation had paid no dividends on its common stock and that the present outlook for a dividend was not promising, that the constituent companies' reserves of \$27,000,000 had been re-invested in plant and equip-

DEPT. OF LABOR'S COST RETURNS

A slight reduction in the cost of the average family budget, at the beginning of December, as compared with November, is shown in the figures compiled by the Labor Department for that period. The general movement in prices during December was comparatively quiet. The index number, which is a measure of the cost of a basket of goods, was 14.84 in December, 1920; 14.73 in December, 1919; 13.65 in December, 1918, and 8.96 in December, 1914. The chief changes for the month were a slight increase in eggs and butter, with decreases in meats and nearly all the other items included. Fuel and rent were practically unchanged. The cost of food, fuel and rent was \$21.49 as compared with \$21.50 in November; \$25.87 in December, 1920; \$23.49 in December, 1919; \$15.26 in December, 1918; and \$12.96 in December, 1914. In wholesale prices the index number of 271 commodities was slightly higher at 230.7 for December, as compared with 227.2 for November; 290.5 for December, 1920; 322.1 for December, 1919; 288.8 for December, 1918, and 137.6 for December, 1914. The principal changes for the month were the increases in fcodler, animals and meats, dairy products, fruits and nuts, cereals, cellulosic foods, miscellaneous metals, and raw furs, with decreases in textiles, iron, paints and oils. As compared with December, 1920, all groups were lower except raw furs. A special group of 56 important commodities, including 29 foods, 15 raw materials and 12 manufactures, was 80 per cent above 1913 prices in December, but in November was only 47.2 per cent above 1913; in October 47.7 per cent; in September 50.1 per cent; in December, 1920, 190 per cent, and in May, 1920, 160.5 per cent. MANITOBA PUBLIC UTILITY WORKERS LEGISLATION FORESHADOWED. The Manitoba government will sponsor a compulsory arbitration bill at the present session of the legislature, making strikes and lockouts of public utility workers illegal in the province, said the Joint Council of Industry, considered by the government a decision on any disputes which may arise. All employees, as defined by the Public Utilities Act as "utility workers," would be embraced in the "strike" proposal and would be prohibited from organizing themselves into an outside labor organization. This would embrace municipal, civil and provincial government workers.

QUEBEC GOVERNMENT AGAINST WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Women who are asking for the provincial vote have been definitely notified that the Government will bring in a bill. This means that if the women insist on the membership of the Legislative Assembly declaring itself on the question of women's suffrage, they will have to persuade one of the members to bring in a bill, and its fate is certain. This was learned in Government circles yesterday. It is thought a referendum on the subject will be held when the next provincial general elections take place. In connection with the demands for women's pensions made to Premier Taschereau in Montreal last Saturday, opinion among supporters of the Government is well crystallized against such a measure.

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENTS TO BE CALLED TOGETHER

Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, will call a meeting of the presidents of the international unions of the United States to plan action to check what is termed "the alarming growth" of rival labor organizations. Wm. F. Keboe, secretary of the Central Trades and Labor Council of New York, announced. Mr. Keboe said that the meeting would be held in this city next month. In New York, according to Mr. Keboe, dual unions have been organized in the American Federation of Labor unions.