

NATIONAL CONFERENCE BOARD FOR THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

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First Step Toward Permanent National Industrial Council Taken at Conference at Hamilton Last Week—Congress Takes a Hand.

Perhaps the most advanced step towards standardization of working conditions and wage standards in Canada has been made in the establishment of a National Joint Conference Board in the building industry. This is an entirely new venture in Canada and will have an important bearing on the building industry in the Dominion in the future. It is true that local Joint Industrial Councils have been established in many centres, Ottawa being one of the first to be established, but nothing of a national character has been attempted until now. In Great Britain national boards or councils have been in existence for some years. President Tom Moore and Secretary P. M. Draper, of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress have striven for years to bring about a similar condition here.

In a statement issued this week President Tom Moore said that the formation of a National Joint Conference Board, composed of representatives of the employers and employees of the building trades, and before which disputes will be heard, will prove of great assistance in settling troubles.

The most important conclusion reached at the Hamilton conference was that the formation of a national joint conference board, the formation of which is the subject of the present conference, will be able to settle a great many of the minor disputes and some of the major ones.

President Moore said the members of this board had not taken any action, but they would do their best to reach an equitable settlement of all differences.

The idea that this conference will be able to entirely eliminate strikes is entirely wrong. President Moore said that the National Joint Conference Board at Ottawa last September asked the Government to establish an office in the Labor Department for issuing propaganda and to supervise the formation of industrial councils where desired. Very little was done by the Labor Department in this respect.

Members of the building industry took the matter in hand, President Moore pointed out, and formed a national joint conference board. It is hoped that the central board will be able to strengthen existing industrial councils and create new ones.

President Moore believes that these councils will create a stronger tendency toward arbitration, and that in this way many strikes will be avoided.

The central council will not endeavor to act where its services are not wanted.

President Moore expressed the hope that the Government would accede to the request of the Hamilton conference and appoint a committee to the central board and perhaps assist with the financial end. It is hoped that this board will ultimately be replaced by a permanent national industrial council.

O. B. U. LOSSES CASE BEFORE MANITOBA'S COUNCIL OF INDUSTRY.

Preventive rather than remedial is the function of the Manitoba Joint Council of Industry, Dr. C. W. Gordon, chairman, announced last week in declaring the decision of the council at a public hearing of the grievances of the painters' unit of the Ope Big Union against the Master Painters' Association, to be that the wage of \$7 1-2 cents per hour was a fair and equitable wage.

This decision upsets the award of the Fair Wage Board, the painters asked \$5 cents an hour.

The Impartial Painters' Union in Winnipeg accepted the wage rate of \$7 1-2 cents per hour and has an agreement with the Master Painters until April 1, 1921. The Joint Council of Industry in a statement said: "The Master Painters' Association, feeling that their relations with the International union had been satisfactory up to this time, did not desire to have the matter of negotiations with any other body, and the council did not conceive it to be its duty to deny the master painters the liberty of choice in this matter."

MANITOBA'S JOINT COUNCIL OF INDUSTRY WORKING.

Rev. D. M. Solandt, deputy chairman and secretary of the Manitoba Council of Industry, made the following official statement with regard to recent sessions of the council: "The machinists, with H. Campbell, president of the International Association of Machinists, and other representatives, appeared before the council in connection with the dispute of the Winnipeg Electric Railway, asking an increase of pay from 48 cents an hour to 55 cents per hour. They presented their claim and the statement by the company, which will be made at a later date. The Canadian National Transportation Company has been having some difficulty with its men regarding the time of unloading at the sheds. It asked that the Joint Council of Industry and a hearing took place with representatives of the company, the men and P. G. Donahoe, of the Board of Trade. The dispute arises out of a difference of opinion in the interpretation of one of the clauses in a contract between the company and the teamsters which stipulates the time at which the men can quit unloading at the sheds."

AMERICAN RAILWAYMEN LOSING PATIENCE.

Railway employees of the United States must be granted prompt wage increases regardless of cost to the carriers, or the entire railway industry will face complete disruption, W. N. Doak, vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, declared last week before the Railroad Labor Board which is conducting hearings into the demands of the employees.

Mr. Doak declared that present wages were inadequate and cited several instances of trainmen who were receiving less than the wages they were receiving. Mr. Doak declared the railroad industry faced its "present" and that the men had to be passed from one board to another since the men made their demands about a year ago. The cost of living has increased with the result that the men were rapidly losing patience and soon would reach the point where they would no longer stand for present conditions, he said.

AMERICA'S CALL TO ARMS.

The American Federation of Labor has issued its expected call to arms for a "war" over the "right" to work.

Under the signature of President Samuel Gompers, the current issue of the American Federationist, the official organ, carries an indictment of Congress and the executive departments for "incompetence and inefficiency" in the handling of the "war" against unemployment.

Presenting an itemized list of corporations, similar to that recently presented by a speaker at the Labor Congress, of Kansas, President Gompers declares that while 21 enumerated corporations last year received a profit averaging 435 per cent, the normal average cost of living increased 98 per cent, and the average union wage 55 per cent.

NEW UNIONS ADDED.

The Plumber, Gas and Steamfitters' Journal for May reports the following new unions: Shamokin, Pa.; Corpus Christi, Texas; Boston, Mass.; Laddsville, Michigan; Chatham, Ontario; Connersville, Indiana; and Orlando, Florida.

WELLAND CARPENTERS' NEW AGREEMENT.

The Welland Builders' Exchange has reached an agreement with the Welland Union of United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, that will remove any cause for friction between the two organizations.

The object of the agreement is to promote efficient workmanship, and to maintain an equitable wage, to discourage labor disputes, to provide means for their speedy adjustment, and in general to develop a better understanding between contractor and men, to the general good of the community.

The principal provisions of the agreement are:

1. It is to remain in force until May 1st, 1921, and if neither party gives notice before February 1st, next year it is to remain in force for a second year.
2. The week is to consist of 44 hours, at 55 cents an hour and double time for overtime work.
3. Members of the union working in mills or shops may work 9 hours a day.
4. One apprentice to each group of five.
5. Wages to be paid weekly.

The union agrees to supply men when required, and non-union men may be employed only when union men are not available.

BEST NONE TOO GOOD FOR SEAMEN.

Cooks and stewards occupied first class cabins in the steamer Augusta Victoria when that vessel sailed for New York last week. The luxury enjoyed by the galley and dining room staffs resulted from a controversy over accommodations between the cooks and stewards and the officials of the steamship line, which delayed the sailing of the vessel for several days. Finally the company agreed that the men should have the best accommodations available on the trip, that they would immediately build new and more commodious compartments for their employees on the steamer.

TO CONSIDER POWER DISTRIBUTION AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

The special committee to consider H. P. Hill's proportional representation bill and other phases of the question of proportional representation will be composed of: From Ontario, Hon. W. E. Roney, Hon. Manning Deberry, Hon. Peter Smith, Hon. Edgar Watson, North Victoria (Farmers); T. Toomey, Peterboro; and Karl Horn, South Waterloo (Labor); From Ontario (Conservative): John Marshall of Lincoln, John O'Neill of Southeast Toronto, and Dennis Racine of Russell (Liberal).

NEW YORK BARBERS SHAVE PRICES AS WELL AS CUSTOMERS.

Prices of shaves and haircuts in New York will soon be cut to 15 and 25 cents respectively, according to a full meeting of the Executive of the International Barbers' Union. The cut rates will be made in new barber shops which, he said, will be the price for a massage, shampoo, singe or manouevre.

BRITISH RAILWAY WORKERS TO CONSIDER PROBLEMS WITH ALLIANCE.

The executive of the National Union of Railwaymen of Great Britain has issued a statement that it considers the whole question has been made most difficult in Ireland by the refusal of the members of the Irish National Union of Railwaymen to assist in any military operations.

AMERICAN COAL MINERS ACCEPT ARBITRATION PLAN.

The offer of President Wilson to appoint a commission to arbitrate the anthracite wage dispute was accepted by the miners, who voted by an overwhelming vote of the tri-district convention of hard coal miners. The mine workers, however, ask the privilege of selecting a "practical miner" to represent them on the commission.

POLITICIANS NOT FAIR, EMPLOYERS TO BLAME.

The resentment against the failure of Congress to appropriate sufficient funds to conduct the Department of Labor's "War" against unemployment, and the industry complaint that funds should be appropriated for the United States employment service partially.

PETERBORO COMPANY REFUSES TO COMPROMISE.

The Canadian General Electric mechanic offer to the company at Peterboro, to abide by the recommendation of the Board of Conciliation authorized by Senator Robertson, Minister of Labor, brought the following reply from Senator Nicholson to Mayor McIntyre on Saturday:

WILL POPULARIZE CAUSE OF LABOR.

J. Ross Clynes, British Labor Leader, some times spoken of as premier of the future Labor government, who was attacked at the General Workers' conference—because he had accepted the honorary grant of Oxford and Durham universities, declared that he should not miss future opportunities for popularizing Labor so that it can function as "even among men who are in the seats of the mighty at the centre of learning."

SEAMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

The International Labor Conference, under the League of Nations, will meet on June 15th at Geneva. The session will be opened exclusively with the consideration of the demands of the Seamen's International Conference, which is engaged on inland water-borne traffic.

BRITISH FRATERNAL DELEGATES TO A. F. OF L. ARRIVE.

The two fraternal delegates from the British Trades Union Congress to the American Federation of Labor arrived in Montreal on Monday, having reached the city aboard the C.P.O.S. liner Metagama from Liverpool. They are J. Jones, M.P., of the National Union of General Workers, and the Transport Workers' Union, and John W. Ogden, president of the Weavers' Amalgamation in the Lancashire textile district.

CARPENTERS' CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT ONTARIO.

Several of the local union reports received from Ontario are: The Monthly Trade Report of the Ontario Provincial Council of Carpenters, Peterboro and Grimsby report an increase of 15c per hour, from 90c to 1.05; Kitchener report shows a raise up to 50c in the mills and factories; Peterboro from 75c to 85c, and the gaining of Saturday half-holiday. Frontenac shows an increase from 75c to 85c. Several of the mill locals are receiving increases; Owen Sound asked for a 15% and got a 10%. Southampton also received a 10%, and with the increase at Kitchener it has 60c. Furniture manufacturers are alive to the situation and are hoping to satisfy the men with a small increase so as to take away their minds from the union agreement. It is very peculiar, but the employers always find it convenient to give an increase when the men get away with it because the men get satisfied and quit complaining, but if it is such an old trick that very few will fall for it as that now.

BOARD OF CONCILIATION FOR TORONTO ST. RY. DISPUTE.

After a conference lasting about half an hour at the offices of the Ontario Street Railway Thursday afternoon, General Manager R. J. Fleming decided to apply for a board of conciliation under Industrial Disputes Act. Those present at the conference were: General Manager R. J. Fleming and Assistant Manager Fred Hubbard, representing the company; Business Agents Jos. Gibbons and W. J. Robbins. Secretary-Treasurer A. Conn, Bert Merson, Jas. Davis and Jos. Thompson, representing the union.

SPANISH MISSION TO SOVIET RUSSIA.

A commission of three members representing the Government, employers and Labor has left Spain in order to study the social and political situation in the Russian Soviet Republic. The visit, according to the "El Imparcial" is in pursuance of the decision of the Committee of the League of Nations, ratified by the International Labor Bureau. De los Rios, a Socialist deputy, will be the Labor representative.

SAMUEL GOMPERS DEFENDS LABOR'S RIGHT TO STRIKE

Joint Debate With Governor Henry J. Allan, of "Can't Strike" Kansas, at Carnegie Hall, New York, Last Friday.

Capital, represented by Governor Henry J. Allan, of Kansas, and the worker exemplified by Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, debated in Carnegie Hall, New York, last Friday night one of the foremost questions before the American people today—the right of labor in essential industries to strike if the common welfare is threatened.

It was a no-decision affair. Politics was to play no part in it. Judge Allan E. Parker, one-time president of the American Federation of Labor, opened the debate by his neutrality.

8-HOUR DAY MORE EFFICIENT THAN 10.

The United States public health service has just published the results of one of its studies made to find out whether the 8-hour day is more efficient than the 10-hour day. Two plants, each of high standard, were investigated, one working on an 8-hour and the other on a 10-hour day.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

"When the American continentals first met in Philadelphia to formulate the Declaration of Independence, they could find no place in which to meet. They were driven to the city of Philadelphia, where the Declaration of Independence was signed."

MANAGEMENT NOT ESSENTIAL.

"Management is not considered an essential occupation" under the regulations of the Department of Labor, according to Henry Clay, president of the Canadian Bankers' Association at Toronto.

ONARIO WOMEN FORM EDUCATIONAL FEDERATION.

Upon the conclusion of the annual convention of the Labor Educational Association of Ontario, at Brantford, on Victoria Day, the lady delegates held a meeting and formed a permanent organization, to be known as the "Ontario Women's Educational Federation of Ontario," with the following officers: President, Mrs. W. F. Singer, Toronto; vice-president, Mrs. Janet Inman, Hamilton; secretary, Mrs. H. G. Foster, Hamilton.

INCREASES EXPECTED BY MAINTENANCE OF WAY EMPLOYEES.

Secretary W. F. Kerr stated last week at the close of a meeting of maintenance of way men at Winnipeg, that he was every reason for believing that the negotiations with the Railway Wage Board which are proceeding, will result in a substantial increase in the wage schedule. "The present rate," he said, "is 46 cents an hour, with 57 cents as the maximum. I defy anyone to say that the conditions are now, and it would be too bad if a Government Railway like the Canadian National insisted on keeping the pay schedule at the same old rate."

A. F. OF L. CONVENTION OPENS ON MONDAY.

Contrary to expectations that there would be great difficulty in accommodating all the delegates to the forthcoming convention of the American Federation of Labor at Montreal, no trouble has so far been experienced in meeting the applications already received by the reception committee appointed by the Montreal Trades and Labor Council.

COMMENDABLE ACTION.

As a result of failure to reach a settlement with the American Fishermen's Association of Youngstown, 21 stockholders, members of Journeymen Plumbers and Steamfitters' Union of North America have incorporated a stock company under the laws of the state of Ohio, and are now doing a prosperous business.

PROVINCIAL RAILWAYS' REVENUE HIGHER.

The total mileage in operation on the Temiskaming and North Ontario Railway at the end of the fiscal year of 1919, was 463.92 according to the annual report of the commissioners tabled in the Legislature last week. More than half of this mileage is made up by the main line from Toronto to Montreal. The operating revenue of the railway was \$2,138,752.76, as against \$2,812,316.62 in 1918. Net earnings of the line were only \$1,133.32, as against \$129,419.64 in 1918, the decrease being accounted for by an increase of more than \$600,000 in operating expenses.

WORKERS RETURNING TO CANADA.

Building trades mechanics who crossed to England following the signing of the armistice, are coming back in large numbers, says John Potbury, secretary of the Toronto Carpenters' Union.

WUENEPPE LABOR PARTY'S PROVINCIAL CANDIDATES.

F. J. Dixon, M.L.A., Rev. Wm. Irvine, and J. G. Tipping, and W. A. James will be the Dominion Labor Party candidates for Winnipeg at the Manitoba provincial election. They were nominated at a meeting of the party in the Labor Temple last week as the result of a ballot by mail of the membership, marked according to the proportional representation system of voting, and the men were chosen from a slate of nine.

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