

Results of National Industrial Conference

Approval of Unification of Labor Laws—Desirability of Minimum Wage — Investigation of Unemployment Insurance—Doubt of Practicability of Eight-Hour Day.

The National Industrial Conference which concludes its sessions at Ottawa on September 20th, shows some direct results on questions unanimously approved and left the way open for future discussion on questions disclosing wide differences of opinion. The general results are as follows:

The report of the Committee on the need of unification of labor laws of Federal and Provincial Government was adopted unanimously. It is as follows:

"That the advantage of uniformity in the law relating to the welfare of those engaged in industrial work in the several provinces of the Dominion of Canada, be brought to the attention of the Government of Canada and of the several provinces respectively. And that this National Industrial Conference suggests the following as a means toward the end desired—namely, the appointment of a board composed as follows: (1) As respects the Dominion: (a) A representative of Government; (b) a representative of the employers; (c) a representative of the employees. (2) As respects each of the provinces: (a) A representative for the Government; (b) a representative of the employers; (c) a representative of the employees. And that the Dominion Government be requested to ask the Government of the provinces to select or have selected representatives in respect of the provision above set forth."

The report of the committee on Industrial Councils was also unanimously adopted. It is as follows:

"Your committee is of the opinion that there is urgent necessity for greater co-operation between employer and employee. We believe that this co-operation can be furthered by the establishment of joint industrial councils. Your committee does not believe it is wise or expedient to recommend any set plan for such councils. We therefore recommend that a bureau should be established by the Department of Labor of the Federal Government to gather data and furnish information whenever required by employers and employees, that whenever it is desired to voluntarily establish such councils the fullest assistance should be given by the bureau."

The following report urging an investigation of insurance for sickness and unemployment was adopted:

"This committee unanimously endorses the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Industrial Relations, that a board or boards be appointed to inquire into the subjects of state insurance against unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old-age. For the effective carrying out of the above this committee recommends:

"(1) That such board or boards shall be representatives of interests participating in this conference—viz., the Government, the public, the employer and employee, and shall include a representative of the women of Canada.

"(2) That in order to collect data the Government shall forthwith attach to the proper branches of the labor or other department concerned experienced investigators, who shall do the necessary research work and furnish to the board, at the earliest opportunity, the result of their investigations.

"(3) That the Government shall set a time limit for the receipt of the report and recommendations as to the advisability of enacting legislation.

"(4) While this committee has been appointed to consider only the questions of state insurance against unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old-age, it respectfully recommends that the subject of 'widows' pensions' be added."

The report of the committee on the Minimum Wage, which was adopted, is as follows:

"Whereas it is expedient that minimum rates of wage should be fixed throughout Canada for women and chil-

dren, whether employed at a time rate or according to any other method of remuneration; Whereas minimum wage laws for women and children have been enacted in five and are now in operation in four of the provinces; Therefore be it resolved that this industrial conference recommends to the Governments of all those provinces which have not adopted minimum wage laws for women and children the speedy investigation of the necessity for such laws, and, if so found, the enactment of such legislation. It is further recommended that the various provinces throughout the Dominion adopt a uniform law and method of application, but that in all cases the minimum of wages for women and children is to be determined from time to time, due regard being given to local living conditions.

"It is the opinion of this conference that the Dominion Government should appoint a Royal Commission, composed equally of representatives of labor, employers and the public, to investigate wages to unskilled workers, and issue a report. Representation has been made to the committee that the remuneration paid female school teachers in one of the larger provinces of the Dominion is so low as to discourage the employment of the talent necessary to the proper education of its citizens. Your committee recommends that the various provincial Governments be asked to investigate such conditions in the respective provinces, to the end that the children of all the provinces of the Dominion may have equal educational opportunities."

The Government Housing Schemes were approved by this resolution:

"Resolved that this conference, recognizing that much industrial unrest, economic loss and social suffering has resulted from poor land speculation and insufficient housing and high rents, heartily commends the action of the Dominion and Provincial Governments in their united effort to improve housing conditions and provide facilities for the proper and satisfactory housing of our people and recommends increased co-operation of and investigation by the Dominion and Provincial Governments to find a satisfactory solution of the problem."

Proportional representation was approved as follows:

"Believing that there are defects in the system of electoral representation in Canada, which defects are stated by the Royal Commission on industrial relations to be a contributory cause of social and political unrest; This conference welcomes the declaration of the prime minister, on behalf of the Government, that a Speakers' Conference will be called to investigate the merits of the proportional system, and urges that such action be taken without delay."

No agreement was reached by the committee on the Minimum Wage. In order to place their respective views before the Government, however, three resolutions were passed. That of the employees is as follows:

"That we agree with the recommendations and finding of the Royal Commission on Industrial Relations and urge the adoption of an eight-hour day by-law throughout the Dominion, with due regard and recognition of the Saturday half-holiday where same prevails and its possible extensions. In industries subjected to seasonal and climatic conditions, such as farming, fishing and logging, if it can be established by investigation that the operation of such a law is impracticable, then exemption shall be granted such industries from the operation of such law."

The employers' resolution reads:

"The members of your committee, appointed to report the employers, beg to submit the following resolution: Resolved, that appropriate Government commissions, composed of an equal representation of employers and employees of the various industrial, producing and distributing industries, should be appointed to undertake investigations as to the advisability of hours of labor,