

to go into the United States duty free. Such a policy would relieve any possible congestion such as is likely to occur through the shipment of all our grain to Great Britain. It would also give the Canadian farmer two possible markets instead of one as at present.

The United States is rapidly becoming an importer of food stuffs and in a very few years her export of wheat, flour, meats and other produce will entirely cease. Canada not only possesses the greatest untilled wheat area in the world, but she is the nearest neighbor and should be the chief grain exporter to the United States. We venture the prediction that before long the agitation carried on by the Western farmers for enlarged markets will result in the removal of all duties on wheat and flour between Canada and the United States.

RECENT SOCIAL LEGISLATION IN EUROPE

By W. E. Dowding.

The influence of the Labor organisations on modern conditions is very clearly reflected in a review of the social legislation of the past year in the Parliaments of Europe. In no less than ten European countries have laws relating to wages and labor conditions been drawn up and passed—varying from the miners Minimum Wage Law of Great Britain to the Danish law compelling the employer to register his alien workpeople at the police office.

Though it is perhaps an open question whether the full flow of this tide of Labor legislation is indicative of a revolution in the mind of the worker or in the mind of the State, it is certain that some at least of its fulness is due to the compelling influence of the Trade Unions and their threats of a general strike. In Great Britain it is safe to assume that the workers are slowly but surely coming to a realisation of their immense power to influence the social life of the community and reduce it at will to a state of chaotic confusion, though timidity in the use of a comparatively new weapon—new at any rate in degree if old in kind—has hitherto prevented organized labor from pursuing its advantage to the bitter end.

As far as new legislation is concerned the strike of the Miners had its result in the Minimum Wage Act and the strike of the railway workers brought about the establishment of conciliation Boards for the arrangements of disputes between the companies and their employees. Ten years of legislation among the shop assistants has resulted likewise in the consolidation of the laws regarding their working hours and the opening and closing and regulation of shops together with the compulsory grant of a definite weekly half-holiday.

In a summary issued by the French Labor Office of the legislative proposals of 1912 dealing with the conditions of employment and wage among the working classes of Europe the influence of the Labor groups is obvious. In England a bill to extend the legal rights of Trade Unions and enable them to apply their funds and levies to political purposes, thus reversing the so-called "Osborne Judgment," has passed the Commons. A Bill was submitted to the Danish Parliament establishing State-aided Employment Bureaux, something after the fashion of the English Labor Exchanges. An interesting Bill has been submitted to the Norwegian Parliament compelling the submission to a special court of industrial disputes arising out of the interpretation of collective

tariff agreements and their execution. In Italy, Holland, Denmark and Austria bills have been introduced curtailing and regulating the hours of employment in specified trades. It will thus be seen that in Europe at any rate there is a new force which cannot be left out of count when social legislation is being considered: moreover, though the influence of organized labor will generally, if not always, be found to favour class legislation, it has not been without its effect as a spur to that rather lethargic factor in the Government of a State—the Public Conscience.

On the other hand the numerous enactments which have been formulated and passed in nearly every European country would seem to show that the public conscience has at last seen awakened in one direction at least, that is to the abuses under which the very names of Child Labor and Female Labor have become synonymous with slavery. In Italy, Sweden, Greece, Spain, Austria and Denmark laws have been passed establishing a minimum age for juvenile workers and limiting their hours of labor, while similar bills are at the moment under consideration in five or six other countries.

In Sweden the employment of children under the age of 12 is prohibited in all industries while the employment of boys under 15 and all female labor is totally prohibited in mines. Children between 12 and 13 may not be employed more than six hours daily; between 13 and 14 not longer than 8 hours; between 14 and 18, 10 hours daily. With regard to the employment of female labor in the cases of confinement 6 weeks rest must be allowed. In Greece and in Spain similar Acts have been passed while in addition a further enactment forbids the night employment of women or children, thus giving effect to the findings of the Berne Conference.

In Sweden it is sought to prohibit the employment of juveniles under the age of 14 in smelting and rolling works, and a Bill to this effect has been introduced by the Riksdag. In Denmark where large numbers of young persons are employed in the baking trade, a maximum of 10 working hours per day has been established, and night work for boys under 14 and girls under 18 has been prohibited, while a weekly rest day of 24 hours has been made compulsory. In Austria the regulations in respect to meal intervals, the payment of wages, employment of children, etc., has been extended to the printing trade and provision has been made for compulsory sick and accident insurance.

It is certain therefore that a movement, irresistible in force and world-wide in extent, is on foot to control effectively the relations between employers and employees and it becomes increasingly important that its trend should be in the right direction. This can scarcely be assured if the direction of the movement is left entirely in the hands of Trades Unions and Labor Organisers. For a resume of course such as this is, does not tell the whole story nor perhaps even the greater part of it. There is the history to be added of strike after strike, each no doubt with its small concession wrung from the employer but bringing in its train results which may effect not merely the sectional industry concerned but possibly even the national trade. A strike may result in losses which may never be recouped and it may produce a stagnation in a particular industry from which it takes years to recover. In England the Miners' Strike had the natural effect of raising coal prices: prices have never since approached to their former level. Strikes in South Wales lost to the Welsh tinplate industry temporarily at any rate the market of the United States. The Railway Strike with its consequent Conciliation Boards has set the freight tariffs soaring and food prices are going with them. And so the story goes on. When the conflict becomes extreme the Government intervenes, legislation is enacted and for a while there is calm. But the same history repeats itself again and again, in industry after industry.

In an extremity, it must be allowed that the strike may be not only a useful but a necessary weapon, but