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OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SOCIAL - DEMOCRATIC PARTY

New Series, Vol. 1, No. 5

TORONTO, CANADA

January 13, 1917

REGISTRATION And the Social - Democrats

REGISTRATION.

Attitude of Montreal Trades Council to National Service

Montreal, Jan. 5.—“That we, the members of the Montreal Trades and Labor Council, while realizing the importance of the question at issue and feeling that the interests of the workers have not been sufficiently safeguarded, do again reaffirm our unqualified opposition to the proposals of the National Service, and that a copy of the resolutions be forwarded to the Executive of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.”

This is the most outstanding clause of a resolution carried at last night's meeting of the National Trades and Labor Council by a roll-call vote of 43 to 20. The motion was introduced by President J. T. Foster, representative of the Machinists' Union, who left the chair for the major part of the evening—and seconded by Delegate Maguire. A number of spirited speeches on both sides of the question were delivered, some within the range of the subject, others going as far back as the invasion of Belgium by the Germans.

The vote of Council carried with it a strong denunciation delivered by President Foster against the members of the Dominion Trades Congress Executive. He felt it was time that the workmen should be represented different. He attacked the Government, saying that an order-in-Council was thought sufficient to deal with the “man power” of the country, but when there was a demand to deal with the means of production Sir Robert Borden had retorted that that was a matter for Parliament. There was no order-in-Council, went on Mr. Foster, to force the manufacturers to produce shells at the commencement of the war, and the manufacturers had done so only when they found there was plenty of money to be made.

Z. Lesperance, delegate of the shoemakers, disagreed with Mr. Foster's views and said that as a British subject he would immediately sign his cards. He felt that was the proper course for him, as he was proud of being a British subject. This was a universal war, said he, and he did not want it said elsewhere that the French-Canadians had failed to respond.

Winnipeg Council Passes Resolution— “Tricked by Government,” Delegate Says.

Winnipeg, Jan. 3.—At a meeting last night of Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council, the council went on record “as being of the opinion that the best method to oppose registration is not to sign the registration cards.” There were several dissentients.

R. A. Rigg, M.P.P., Western Labor representative at the Ottawa conference, addressing the meeting, said that in view of the reported speeches by Sir Robert Borden and Hon. Robert Rogers on New Year's “could only come to the conclusion that the congress executive had been tricked by the Government.”

The council passed a resolution expressing its confidence in Mr. Rigg, and its belief that in its action on registration the Dominion Trades Congress Executive “erred in its judgment, and that its action be repudiated.” One man objected to this motion.

The speeches referred to were informal addresses given at a banquet that was tendered by the management of the Chateau Laurier, at Ottawa, to returned soldiers. The Premier intimated that more drastic measures would be employed in mobilizing the manpower of this country for the successful prosecution of the world-wide war. Hon. Mr. Rogers said that he realized that the days of voluntary recruiting were practically at an end and more efficient measures would have to be taken.

The Premier, in his statement to the labor delegation, said: “You have asked for an assurance that under no circumstances will conscription be undertaken or carried out. As I stated to you at our interview, I must decline to give any such assurance. I hope that conscription may not be necessary, but if it should prove the only effective method of preserving the existence of the State and of the institutions and liberties which we enjoy, I should consider it necessary, and I should not hesitate to act accordingly.”

Mass Meeting at Port Arthur Resolves Against Signing the Cards.

(Canadian Press Despatch.)

Port Arthur, Jan. 5.—At a mass meeting of about five hundred men held here under Socialistic auspices a resolution was passed against signing the National Service cards. Everything in connection with the National Service idea was roundly abused by several speakers in the English language and one in the Austrian tongue.

Inclination Seems to be to Await Personal Assurances From the Delegates to Ottawa.

Winnipeg, Dec. 28.—Following are expressions of leading labor men, after hearing of the result of the conference of their representatives with the Dominion Government at Ottawa on national service:

Controller Puttree—“I am not sure how it will affect the situation here, but it seems to me that the action taken by the delegates in Ottawa will very largely govern matters.”

D. J. Dixon, M.P.P.—“I think we should pursue a policy of watchful waiting until we hear from them down East, but my stand is good no matter what action they take. He characterized as “encouraging” the news that the Government proposed to place an additional tax on capital.

Opposed to It.

Ald. W. B. Simpson—“Personally I am opposed to signing the cards, but if the Government is going to make concessions then I would consider it.”

P. MacDonnell, acting secretary of

the Trades and Labor Council—“There will be several meetings held on Sunday and we will deal with the matter as it is presented to us by our delegate, R. A. Rigg.”

Conscientious Compliance.

At Saskatoon, Sask., former Alderman Baillie and J. J. McGrath, president of the local Trades and Labor Council, said they would recommend to union men that the cards be filled in according to conscientious convictions.

Will Want to Know Reasons.

President James McVeity, of the British Columbia Federation of Labor, said: “We will have to wait until we receive official notice from the Executive Council and we will want to know the reason for their recommendation.”

SERVICE CALL A CONSPIRACY.

Winnipeg Socialists Say So.

Protest Meetings Largely Attended by Foreigners, But Rigg, M.P.P., Resents Allegations of Alien Influence.

Winnipeg, Jan. 8.—The socialistic attack on the campaign to mobilize the man power of the nation broke out again last night. A number of meetings were held, and R. A. Rigg, M.P.P., again was a leading speaker before a number of bodies of laboring men. A morning paper asserts one of the meetings of protest was largely composed of foreigners, and the impression that alien influence is largely responsible for the attack on registration has incensed the public keenly. This imputation Rigg heatedly denied several times in his address last night.

Rigg denied that there had been any German influence behind the opposition to the movement which had developed in Winnipeg. He would not lift his little finger to help Germany, he said, but neither could he be swayed from a policy which he had adhered to all his life.

Regarded as Conspiracy.

That national service was virtually a conspiracy on the part of the capitalists to further enlist and exploit the working classes, was the contention of the majority of the speakers at the anti-registration meeting held in the Strand Theatre. With an audience composed very largely of foreigners enthusiasm ran high.

No Time to Hang Back.

The only advocate of National Service was David Forrester, lawyer, who was considerably heckled, despite the protests of the chairman. He argued that in a crisis such as the present it was no time to revive internal troubles. Germany had conscripted all her male population and was now subjecting the men of conquered countries to enforced slavery. The Empire had been provoked into war and was fighting for its existence, and this was not the time to wait until the internal wrongs of the country had been righted before taking the necessary steps for protection. He declared that every man applauded the step taken by Britain in going to the help of Belgium. This statement was greeted by derisive laughter. Later a man asked him whether Britain had entered the war to protect the Belgian workingman or to protect the interests of British capital in Belgium.

Forerunner of Conscription.

F. J. Dixon, M.P.P., argued that “the

best way to end this thing is to never begin it,” in referring to National Service. There was no question now but that it was a forerunner of conscription. The people had been the victims right along, and if conscription were put into force they would lose what few liberties they had gained. The Entente allies had not done the fair thing in not stating what their objectives were in this war. “It is up to the allies,” he said, “to come out and tell us what they want us to die for. I am not afraid to die, but I want to know what they want us to die for. I am not going to die for a myth.”

Exploiting Classes Control.

S. J. Farmer declared that it was the twelfth time that he had stood on an anti-registration platform. The exploiting classes had control of the Government, and the capitalists were more concerned about their dividends than they were about winning the war.

“I am in favor of national service,” declared Ald. Simpson, “but not national service for private interests. I am in favor of patriotism, but, like charity, it begins at home.” He expressed the opinion that the Government had not done its duty as regards the soldiers' wives. At the beginning of the war they had been awarded \$20 a month separation allowance, but this had now shrunk in purchasing value to \$13. The way in which the war had been carried on left great room for doubt as to the Government's sincerity.

Ask Borden to Resign.

Regina, Sask., Jan. 4.—At a mass meeting of working people last night a strongly worded resolution was passed expressing opposition to National Registration, and calling upon the Borden Government to resign. Particular exception was taken to the alleged change of attitude.

Left to Conscience.

Edmonton, Alta., Jan. 4.—The Edmonton Trades and Labor Council, after a warm discussion, last night decided to leave the question of filling out replies to the National Service cards to the individual conscience, so far as organized labor in Edmonton is concerned.

CITIZENS OF GUELPH, ONTARIO.

Opposed to Registration Unless All Industries Affected Shall Come Under Public Ownership.

A mass meeting was held in the Labor Hall, Guelph, to protest the action of the Government in calling for the registration of men eligible for military service. The meeting was attended largely by Labor men and Socialists, and it was agreed to call another meeting for the purpose of giving volume to the protest.

The following resolution was carried unanimously:—

Resolved: That we citizens of Guelph, in the Province of Ontario, in meeting assembled, on December 7th, do hereby oppose the scheme for national registration, unless all industries that are affected by registration shall come under the ownership and control of the nation; and all profits accruing from such industries be used for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

(Continued on page three.)