

# Canadian Labor Press

Weekly News Letter

An Official National Labor Paper.

Labor News From Coast to Coast.

VOL. 3. \$2.00 Per Year. National and Rational. OTTAWA, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19th, 1921. Live News and Views. Single Copy 5 Cents. No. 49

## Meetings at the Labor Conference

### NOVA SCOTIA MINERS GAIN EXTENSION OF SCHEDULE

The wage schedule presently in force in the Nova Scotia coal mining area controlled by the British Empire Steel Corporation has been extended for one month, or from November 30 to December 31, by an agreement between officials of the company and representatives of District No. 26, United Mine Workers, at a conference at Halifax. The miners' representatives asked that the present agreement be extended for four months, but the company officials definitely refused to consider his proposition, declaring that in their view a new settlement was imperative before the first of the year. They, however, agreed to compromise on a month's extension and adjournment of the conference until December 15, when it is expected, prompt action to effect an issue will be taken. It is understood that both the company and the men's representatives were glad to discuss the extension and that there were no definite proposals looking to the establishment of new schedules.

The steel corporation recently announced that unless the men accept a ten per cent. cut, effective December 1st, the mines and steel plants would have to be shut down.

The official announcement that the Montreal agreement, under which the miners of Nova Scotia are now working, would be terminated on November 30th, was made by the coal operators of Nova Scotia in a letter to Secretary J. B. McLachlan, of the U. M. W., two weeks ago.

The operators, in their letter, set forth that the Montreal contract, which gave the miners certain wage increases a year ago, would be terminated for several reasons, principally because the cost of living has been reduced during the year, the trade has slumped and the selling price of coal has fallen away off.

The letter to Secretary McLachlan states that the proposed wage reduction will be discussed when the representatives of the miners and the operators meet at Halifax on November 10th. There is no mention made in the letter to the U. M. W. secretary of the amount of reduction the company will ask the miners to accept.

### Meet in Halifax

Under the terms of the Montreal agreement the representatives of both parties to the contract must meet in Halifax, 20 days prior to the date of expiration. The contract was made for a period of one year, and therefore expires on November 30th.

The operators, acting under this clause of the contract, have therefore given the required notice and the meeting will be held on November 10th, which will be the first to arrange a new contract.

The U. M. W. leaders have declared that their organization will fight any wage reduction, and the Halifax conference will therefore be one of the most important in the history of the coal industry in the province.

### The Company's Letter

The letter forwarded by the Coal Company and addressed to J. B. McLachlan was as follows:

Referring to your letter of 25th December, 1919, stating that the wage agreement concluded on November 8th last had been approved and adopted by District No. 26 and asking this company to put the agreement into effect, we now note it expires 30th November, and, according to the memorandum, both parties are to meet in Halifax twenty days before termination of the agreement "for the purpose of arranging a new understanding."

Our representative will attend at the Halifax Hotel at 10 a.m. on November tenth in conformity with this arrangement.

We think it desirable to notify you at this time that business conditions compel us very reluctantly to ask for a reduction in wages that shall be effective at the expiry of the current agreement.

In making this announcement to you we would state the company does not desire to reduce wages, and the management would be happy to continue the present rate of wages and market prices, permit, but unfortunately they do not.

We do not propose a wage reduction greater than business conditions necessitate, or that will lessen

the earnings of the mine workers to a point that will bear onerously upon them when there is taken into consideration the decreased cost of living that has developed since recent wage increases were agreed upon.

A reduction in wages is necessary to enable this company to maintain its two main avenues of disposal of coal, namely, the sales to general consumers of coal and sales to the steel plants.

### General Coal Sales

General coal sales comprise three main outlets, namely, the Montreal market, the railways and blunder sales, and in all three cases the company must meet the competition of coal producing countries where miners' wages have undergone heavy reductions in recent months, or where wage reductions will most probably take place before the opening of the St. Lawrence navigation next spring.

Apart from a likelihood that coal will be sold in the United States at the pit mouth at lower prices next spring than was the case during the summer of 1921, the lessening premium on New York funds and the certainty of a substantial reduction in railway freight charges, will combine to reduce the delivered price of coal in the Montreal market next summer, and will very substantially lower the selling price of our own coal there.

As you know, if we bank coal during the winter it cannot be sold before the summer of 1922, and payment will not be received until the company until July or August of next year. The wages paid to the mine workers during the coming months must therefore be calculated on the selling price of next summer, and it is necessary to effect a reduction in wages before this company can plan a program of output and banks for the coming winter. No banking program can be undertaken under the Montreal agreement, as the coal would cost us more than we could sell it for.

### With regard to coal supplied to the Steel plants, we may state briefly that at current rates of wages at the mines we can supply steel plants at a cost which will permit coal to be used to manufacture steel under commercial conditions.

While the Company is compelled to ask for a reduction in wages in order to enable it to sell its product, it is fair to point out that the increases given to the workmen since 1914, were successively asked for and granted to meet the increased cost of living.

These increases have totalled 150 per cent in general application, but in individual instances have been much greater.

The increase of last November was given to meet the rapid jump in market prices as well as cause general idleness at the collieries. With a reduction in wages sufficient to meet market prices the Company will be able to avail itself of its usual market.

The likelihood of fairly steady employment under a lower scale of wages or work for one or two days per week under the existing scale of wages, are the alternatives imposed by the business conditions of the market, conditions that are not within the Company's power, or the power of your organization to modify or control, and we submit this to your earnest consideration.

### Wages Advantages

Wages are therefore 120 per cent. above 1914 figures, and living costs are from 50 to 60 per cent. above.

As the Company has no fund from which it can pay wages unless these are at least equalled by the selling price of the product, it has no alternative but to reduce wages, but in view of the substantial decrease in the cost of living, the management feels that no hardship will be imposed upon the workmen.

The alternative to a reduction in wages is such a restriction of the Company's ability to produce coal at market prices as will cause general idleness at the collieries. With a reduction in wages sufficient to meet market prices the Company will be able to avail itself of its usual market.

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### More than 10,000 signatures of farm workers have been secured by S. W. Wright, agricultural organizer of the Workers' Union for Berkshire, in a petition to the Government to establish the Wages Board, the Conciliation Committees having proved unworkable.

The petition further calls upon the Prime Minister to fulfill his promise to the farm workers in respect of the guaranteeing of an adequate minimum wage.

### STRIKE OF GARMENTS WORKERS

Sixty thousand garment workers of New York were called out on strike on Tuesday last, in protest against the piecework system which was to be put into effect today by their employers. There were many indications that the struggle might be a prolonged one.

Officers of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union met their representatives in the 8,000 shops involved early this morning and gave the final instructions for the conduct of the strike.

All efforts at arbitration of the controversy have failed. Secretary of Labor Davis, United States senator and State Industrial Commissioner Sawyer, have ineffectually tried to conciliate employers and workers.

Louis Lustig, president of the Cloak, Suit and Skirt Manufacturers' Protective Association, in a statement last night, charged the union workers with failing to aid the employers in their efforts to increase production and thus lower prices of women's clothing. The strikers in turn charged the employers with violating a trade agreement which left the question of working conditions to a bi-partisan commission which was to have reported November 1. The piecework system means a return of the "sweat shop," they declared.

Observers of the situation said that the strike would have little effect on the prices of women's clothing for the time being, although if it were prolonged it would undoubtedly affect prices for the next year.

Montreal Locals 13, 19 and 61 are also on strike. Police action followed on the arrest of four strikers who were picketing a shop, and who, it is reported, came to blows with a relative of the proprietor and the arrest of a striker on a charge of common assault on a "scab" worker.

### Several Canadians have been appointed to serve on committees of the International Labor conference now in session at Geneva.

Col. E. B. Smith has been appointed chairman of the committee on white labor, and Hon. Walter Rollo, of Ontario, a member of the committee on unemployment and agriculture. Hon. M. A. Gallepeault, Quebec minister of public works, is acting on the committee on technical agricultural training. It is understood that questions which will be discussed by the committees in which Messrs. Rollo and Gallepeault will participate will come mainly within provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. S. R. Parsons, of Canada, speaking at the Conference, objected to the retention of agricultural questions upon the agenda on the ground that any restrictions would tend to prevent the agricultural development of Canada. Legislation upon the subject could not be enforced, he said. Agriculture was a seasonal industry and could not more be regulated than could wind, rain and snow. It would be unwise, he thought, to adopt conventions which the various governments would not pass into legislation. He declared that while English laborers earned thirty shillings weekly, Canadian farm laborers received \$60 monthly, in addition to board, and sometimes double that amount.

### Debate Tom Moore, interposed: "You know that is untrue," to which Mr. Parsons retorted: "The figures are taken from the Dominion Government Gazette." He added that the condition of the Canadian farm laborer was extremely satisfactory.

Debate Poulton, of Great Britain, protested against Mr. Parsons' figures, which he declared were inaccurate. Tom Moore, of Canada, also protested and quoted wages paid to immigrants in Ontario as \$20 monthly, and added that if standardization of wages was possible, standardization of hours was also possible. He declared that the standardization of hours was necessary to prevent unemployment of farm workers during the winter, when they drifted back to the cities.

### LABOR RAILWAY COMMISSIONERS GIVEN WELCOME

Congratulations on his appointment to the Board of Railway Commissioners were showered upon Mr. Calvin Lawrence, former legislative representative of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, when the board convened this week, under the chairmanship of Chief Commissioner Hon. F. B. Carvell.

Congratulatory remarks, in which his appointment was stressed, were made by Mr. T. P. Flintoff, counsel for the Canadian Pacific Railway; Mr. Norman Guthrie, counsel for the Grand Trunk Railway; Mr. Alister Pringle, representing the Canadian National Railway, and Mr. D'Arcy Scott. The opinion was also expressed that Mr. Lawrence would worthily represent Labor.

Mr. Lawrence, in reply, expressed his appreciation of the appointment. Referring to his connection with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Mr. Lawrence stated that he had always striven to serve the public. He would endeavor in his present position to deal fairly with all matters coming before the board. If he had made mistakes in the past, it was due to the head and not to the heart. Mr. Lawrence was appointed by the Government in succession to the late Hon. A. S. Goodere.

### BIG PETITION

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### SEVERAL CANADIANS APPOINTED ON HAMILTON BRICKLAYERS AGREEMENT

Following a several months' difference, representatives of Local No. 1, Bricklayers' and Masons' Union, and Hamilton Branch, Association of Canadian Builders and Construction Industries, have reached a truce. The agreement entered into provides for a wage rate of 90 cents per hour until April, 1922, the principles of arbitration, union shop working conditions, and, furthermore, the union has agreed to accept the Contractors' Association as the only authoritative body with which to negotiate.

Although the unassociated contractors were asked to attend the conference, none was present. While the agreement holds good until 1923, it calls for a conference next January to deal with wages. Should both sides fail to agree, an umpire will be named to settle the point at issue.

Respecting bricklayers who were imported from outside places by members of the association, opportunity will be given them to join Local No. 1 at the ordinary initiation fee. Failing to do so, they will be denied further work by associated contractors.

Thomas Izzard, international officer, stated that the agreement entered into was the very best that could have been reached. After saying that the Contractors' Association had "come clean," he said that there was a similar agreement possible, the bricklayers at Toledo, O., who had been locked out by the contractors, would "jump to the skies."

### ANOTHER WAGE CUT ANNOUNCED

A further wage reduction of 10 per cent, affecting all employees of the Sydney, N.S., steel plant and office, was announced by E. P. Merrill, general manager of the British Empire Steel Corporation. A wage cut of 20 per cent. was made at the local plant on January 17, and a second of 10 per cent. on June 5. Company officials state that the minimum wage for a 12-hour day under the new schedule will be \$2.94 to \$3.12.

### RETURNS ON REJECTED IMMIGRANTS

In those days when much is being said of the rigor with which Canadian immigration regulations are being applied, it is interesting to note that comparatively few of the settlers who have come to Canada from overseas in the 10 years preceding March 31, 1921, have failed to meet all the requirements of the immigration regulations. In this decade, 1,054,738 of all nationalities have entered the Dominion via ocean ports, principally on the Atlantic coast, yet only slightly over one-half of one per cent. of this substantial total has been rejected. To be strictly accurate, the number is 6,646, or sixty-two hundredths of one per cent. Out of this total of rejections only 1,115 were British, yet the total number of British arrivals in the 10 years was 638,464, against 436,274 of all other nationalities, so that the percentage of rejections in the case of British is as low as seventeen hundredths of one per cent.

It is evident from these figures that the quality of the settlers who have come to this country in recent years was of the highest, for the immigration regulations not only demand the qualifications of good health and soundness of education, but also the elements of good character.

It is apparent that the very low percentage of rejections at ocean ports arises from the Canadian system of waiting and inspecting on the intending settler before he sails. While Canada does not waive the right to reject a settler at the Canadian port of entry, the foregoing figures clearly demonstrate that British settlers usually see to it before leaving home that they are well able to qualify for landing in Canada, and hence the percentage of rejections is very small.

### The International Labor Office favored the adoption of a recommendation instead of a convention on the ground that many countries were not possessed of social insurance for any workers, and that, therefore, the authority of the International Labor Organization would be weakened by the adoption of a convention which could not be generally applied. The motion in favor of the recommendation instead of a convention was adopted by 55 to 35 votes. Practically all workers' delegates voted in favor of a convention.

The conference adopted a convention guaranteeing to farm workers the same right of association and combination as the industrial workers enjoy.

The Australian and South African Government delegates, Sir Thomas Oliver and E. Barrett respectively, and the Australian, Canadian, and Japanese employers' delegates, Messrs. Cookson, S. R. Parsons and Kosaku Tamura, respectively, opposed the convention.

The conference adopted a convention giving the farm workers the benefit of the laws providing compensation for accidents, and also adopted a recommendation urging Governments to extend to farm workers, sickness, invalid, and old age insurance.

### LABOR ALLEY

Bristol.—The Bishop of Bristol, opening his speech to the unemployed, addressed the men as "comrades."

At the bottom of the present evils affecting the national position, he said, was a wrong way of looking at what life was meant to be. It should be a solidarity.

As proof that the Church was deeply concerned with the problem, he instanced the inquiry and report to which George Lansbury, Albert Mansbridge, and E. Tawney had subscribed, declaring that the life of man should be one of brotherhood and service, not of selfish competitive struggle. That report had favored the establishment of a living wage and adequate leisure.

The Bishop was heartily cheered.

### FALSE STEP

The speech in which Tom Mackley, Gainsborough's Labour candidate, suggested "burning the Bible" to promote rural education, aroused a storm of criticism here, and Mackley has now answered his critics.

He complains that a few words were torn from their context, and says that if his speech had been reported in full, it would have been clear that the statement attributed to him was a mere figure of speech. The speech in question was made at an educational conference, and Mackley says: "...I stated that the chairman of the conference was the chairman of the Notts Education Committee, which offered farmers to close village schools when the farmer wanted cheap child labor. I said this was typical of what had happened down the ages, how certain types of squires and parsons had dominated rural life and prevented the spread of education."

"I said I could understand the squires and the farmers, but the parson I could not understand because he preached to the poor 'to be meek and humble to their betters and be content with the sphere to which it pleased God to call them. I protest that this was opposed to Christ's teachings."

"I protested against how the parson forced members of our society into public-houses by his refusal of the school for branch meeting purposes."

"I said that if the child of the worker was going to be deprived of education in the future, as he had been in the past by his unholty trinity, then 'the best way to enhance education was to pull down the shambles, burn the Bible and assassinate the parsons.'"

### VERBIAGE COVERS MISTAKE OF THE INJUSTICE TO PRINTERS

In a carefully worded resolution, adopted at concluding session of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service of the Methodist Church in Canada, is outlined the attitude of the Methodist Church toward the present printers' strike. As unanimously approved by the board, the document reaffirms the general principles enunciated in the labor resolutions of the 1918 General Conference, declines to indulge in dogmatic statements on "technical matters," such as the wage or hour suitable to particular conditions, and states that misunderstanding and not faith is responsible for the situation that has arisen.

"The statement on the strike situation is common with our people, we regret the conflict which has arisen in the printing industry, and in which our own Book Room is involved by reason of its affiliation with the United Typothetae of America. It is essential to remember that we cannot have the benefits of that full organization of industry, for which our Church has asked, without accepting some of the incidental tasks and difficult problems involved in the working out of the solution. The great principles for which our last General Conference went on record, the right of labor to effective organization, to collective bargaining, and to a voice in the determination of the working conditions—were all so secure that ere the dispute broke out they were conceded without debate. The Church has concerned itself with the valuation of men and industrial relations, but definitely declines to engage in dogmatic statement on technical matters, such as wage or hours suitable to particular conditions."

### No Arbitrary Dictation

"Our department and its officers have not failed to put forth every effort possible to secure due recognition of the principles of our Church by our Book Room, nor have we found any lack of willingness to act in accordance with these principles. We look confidently for the conduct of our Book Room, both during the dispute and in its final settlement, in harmony with these principles, which have ever found in the Book Stewart a cordial supporter. We are ready to strengthen his hands for any effort looking to generous settlement, so long as that settlement is consistent with moral obligations incurred and with our principle that an industry should be subject to arbitrary dictation either by the owner of the plant or by the men who operate it."

"It appears that in 1919 the general trend of industrial development, as indicated by the peace treaty and other documents, suggested that by 1921 the adoption of the forty-four hour week would become general in such case, it was generally believed that our own house would adopt this policy. The change in the whole situation, however, disappointed this expectation on which the hope of the forty-four hour week in our Book Room was based. We can find no indication of bad faith in either party, and regret that the serious misunderstanding should have given rise to such explanations of action on either side."

"Most of all, do we deplore the fact that a deadlock was developed owing to the inability of the Book Room to break faith with its present employees and of the union to settle the strike without securing the reinstatement of all its members."

### MINORITY REPORT OF ARBITRATION BOARD

The minority report of the Board of Arbitrators in the wage dispute between the Canadian National Railway and its employees of the C. N. R. E., signed by George D. Kelley, the member of the board for the railway company, has been issued, and in substance supports the action of the company in reducing wages last July some 12 1/2 per cent. and affecting the labor in the United States of America are bound to affect the situation in Canada, Mr. Kelley asserts. The decisions of the United States labor board, on which the wage reduction was determined, he adds, represent a close study of several months of the conditions of employment of all classes of employees and employees had every opportunity to be heard. Having regard to this, and to the decreases of wages throughout the United States and Canada, he adds, it is not surprising that the board should not do otherwise than approve the tentative agreement submitted by the Canadian National Railway to its employees. He is supported in this view, he continues, inasmuch as the company continues to emphasize its attitude of being willing to meet its employees in order to adjust what may seem to be cases calling for special treatment.

Mr. Kelley's report reviews the action of the railways in raising the scale of wages under the McAdoo award and supplement in 1918 and under the Chicago award in September, 1920, and in the award made by the United States Labor Board, he says, and it was the same board which issued the decision covering the reduction now under discussion. While the last report of the board, he says, is in the vicinity of 12 1/2 per cent, it should be borne in mind, he states, that the Canadian National Railway has not taken advantage of this full reduction.

### U. S. Board as Guide

Inasmuch as Canada has no such permanent board as the United States Labor Board, says Mr. Kelley, the workers are shortly to convene a conference of all the Regional Councils of the Joint Industrial Councils for the gas, electric, water, and municipal non-trade services, for the purpose of adopting a base rate of wages, together with a sliding scale which will ensure that wages shall not fall below the pre-war standard of living.

Meanwhile, the wages of gas workers throughout the country, numbering about 130,000, suffer a reduction of 2 1/2 per cent. as from November 7. This reduction is in accordance with the new sliding scale agreement which has been reached by the Joint Industrial Council.

The agreement establishes a cut of a halfpenny per hour for every complete variation of six points in the cost of living, starting at the figure of 128 above the 1914 standard. The cut on November 7 is based on the figures of June, July, and August, 1921.

The next adjustment of wages will take place in December, and will be based on the cost-of-living figures of September, October, and November, and will not come into operation until January, 1922. Only each full point is to count in the adjustments, but the present bonus of 12 1/2 per cent. on total earnings is to be reduced in proportion to any reduction of wages.

The agreement can be terminated by three month's notice from either side, unless the cost of living falls below 70 points, when only one month's notice is necessary.

### AGRICULTURAL BILL

The full text of the Agricultural Workers Bill, which has been introduced into the House of Commons by Walter Smith, M.P., (president of the National Union of Agricultural Workers), supported by J. B. Glynes, Arthur Henderson, George Edwards and W. B. Boyd, is now available.

The Bill provides for a term of three years, statutory minimum wages for able-bodied agricultural workers, whether males or females, and for a statutory maximum of 48 hours a week of 8 1/2 hours a day (meal-times not included).

The minimum wages proposed are as follows:

Males—Age 21 and over, 50s. between 14 and 21, amounts increasing from 18s. to 48s. with each year of age; under 14, 12s.

Females—Age 18 and over, 30s. an hour; between 14 and 18, amounts increasing from 4d. to 7 1/2d.; under 14, 3d. an hour.

Overtime on week-days is to be paid at the rate of time and a third; on Sundays at the rate of time and two-thirds. No worker shall be employed on overtime except at harvest or "in case of emergency, provided that proof of such emergency shall rest upon the employer."

Every agricultural worker shall be entitled to a half-holiday every week and a week's holiday every year.

The Bill foresees the existence of district courts "of summary jurisdiction," which shall adjudicate matters in dispute under its provisions, and which may issue certificates to industrial workers, exempting them from the provisions relating to the minimum-wage of wages.

A further important clause will, if passed, do away with one of the worst horrors of the agricultural worker's existence—the tied cottage.

### MONTREAL VENUE FOR RAILROADERS DISCUSSION

The International Brotherhood of Railroad Stationers, which recently entered into a tentative agreement with the Grand Trunk Railway Company, will meet the company between November 16 and 20, the day to be decided by the employers, for the readjustment of inequalities in the wage scale. These inequalities result from the uneven allocation of the general reduction in July of twelve per cent., under which some grades suffered less reduction than twelve per cent. while others were reduced from 25 to 30 per cent.

The general committee of the union, in a meeting held in Toronto, formally ratified the agreement recently entered into with the company, following negotiation proceedings in Montreal. Reports were received at the meeting that the agreement had been ratified also by the International Brotherhood of Railroad and Steamship Clerks and the International

### BRANTFORD WORK SITUATION

Employment conditions have changed little at Brantford, although there were but 150 unemployed at the employment bureau this morning. Massy-Harris is giving week and week about to some of the old employees, and the Cockshutt Flour Company has taken on a few more. Casual farm labor is no longer in demand, but there are openings for men for six months' or yearly contracts at from \$25 to \$40 a month.

### MINERS' REQUEST

Premier Lloyd George's sympathetic but firm refusal to approve of a further state subsidy to the miners met with a chorus of approval. Although the premier uttered not a single sentence of reproach to the deputations that recently waited upon him with regard to the question there are not a few critics today who tell the miners that the present undoubted hard straits of the experienced workers in many districts is largely due to the miners having been badly misled by those whose avowed object is to play with the industry's prosperity. The miners asked that the three million pounds balance of the post-war debt should be devoted to breaking the inevitable fall in their wages. A spokesman of the miners argued as though this three million pounds was in the bank, but the premier showed that if it were granted it would have to be borrowed. It was quite certain that parliament would not vote it.

A Fortium Hope

The proposal had already been turned down by the cabinet, but the miners' approached the premier, rather as a forlorn hope. They now talk of pursuing the matter in parliament, presumably by lobbying among the general body of the members. However, the cabinet seems

### LABOR REPRESENTATIVES

The Labor members of the Sheffield City Council opened the municipal year by resigning bodily from all the committees as a protest against the alleged unfair representation accorded them on the principal committees. The leader in the council is Cecil Wilson, head of the famous silver-smelting firm, whose father was Lord Mayor, and a noted philanthropist. His speech was at one time a noted member of Parliament for Holmfirth.

Bradford, for the third time, elected a Labor Lord Mayor.

### GAS WORKERS WAGES

The National Federation of Gas