

Union. In this way a standard of wages is adopted which must be paid to every man alike. But it is patent that the net result of a day's work varies very much with the varying capacity of men; and it would seem fair that the Union should grade its members so that there should also be a fair standard of production. Much interesting discussion on this point took place with the men who from time to time were deputed to call upon me on various matters, and they all seemed clear as to what should be called a fair day's work. It was admitted, in fact it was advanced by them, that 5,000 ems was a moderate day's work for a man to set, correct and distribute. The standard at Washington is nominally higher, but I doubt whether, as a matter of fact, their nominal average is really attained. The men who called upon me admitted that the Government was entitled to require at least that standard of production, and seemed surprised to learn that the composing rooms did not turn out work at that rate. The men seemed to think that occasionally compositors not up to that standard got into the Bureau through the recommendation of influential friends. They said that when such men were appointed they could not refuse them admittance to the Union even when they were indifferent workmen, if they were otherwise in good standing, because to do that would be to prevent them getting a situation, which would evidently not be just. This view of the matter from a Union standpoint will no doubt be interesting to those who are subjected to solicitations for recommendation to the Bureau. The pay in the Bureau is satisfactory, the conditions of work are satisfactory, and the standard product of a day's labour should be satisfactory in proportion.

Wages.—It became necessary to make careful inquiry as to the rate of wages paid in the Bureau in consequence of a request made by the men which seemed not quite reasonable. The keen competition which prevails among private firms and the incessant struggle to cheapen all products would bear heavily upon the working classes if they were not held in check by organization upon their part. A private firm struggling for its own profit could, no doubt, grind more out of its work-people than a Government staff; for the Government, while it should insist upon a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, is not compelled by competition to wring more than that out of its employés.

The conditions of labour in Ottawa closely resemble those in Montreal, for here, as there, the French and English races intermingle and influence the labour market each in its own way, and, moreover, the cost of living is about the same. The conditions of labour in Toronto are different, but should also be taken into account, and, therefore, I sent a special messenger there to report upon the rate of wages paid. The result of my inquiries was to convince me that the rate of wages in the Bureau is somewhat higher than in Montreal or Toronto, and that so far as the Government is concerned it is paying a generous rate of wage. It goes without saying that if the average rate of payment is higher than in Toronto it is higher than anywhere else in the older parts of Canada; the conditions of labour in the North-west and Pacific provinces are essentially different. In this connection it is well to remark that the congestion of work at the Bureau is fast approaching an end. The completion of most of the departmental reports enables me again to fill up the voters' list room to its complement of forty hands. As soon as the revision is over that room will be closed, and the rising of the House will besides release forty more men. The proper course would seem then to be to retain as far as possible the services of those men