



Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press



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OFFICIAL ORGAN ALLIED TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL OF OTTAWA.

ENDORSED BY Hamilton District Trades and Labor Council.

Hamilton Building Trades Council.

Associated Federal Employees (Every member a subscriber.)

Entered at Ottawa Post Office as Second Class Postage.

The Canadian Labor Press
PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE CANADIAN LABOR PRESS, LIMITED.
Owned and Controlled Exclusively by Organized Labor. Every Member of the Executive Staff Union Men.

A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER.

THE RETURN BLOW.

WE have just celebrated the second anniversary of the signing of the armistice in a variety of ways. To all this meant victory to the arms of the Allies, by many in the price that was paid in the severance of family ties, an unfortunate reminder of their loss or losses. Under whatever conditions the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month found us the mind must have involuntarily gone back to the same period of two years ago with the relief that came with same. Just as sure as this memento of the retrospect the companion thought was there, what of the future? The war after the war with the changes to be wrought from industry turning again into the channels of peace.

Two years ago in this or other life essentials scarcity had played its part in the abnormal prices and the venturing of predictions of the time when something like pre-war conditions would prevail was common, with the seriousness that the same entailed. The two years' interval had almost gone before a retracement of step on the ladder of prices was shown. It is even now but perceptible, but the evidence of the upward limit having been reached is now obvious and the return blow struck is too loud to be unheard even by the most indifferent; the coming months present serious times almost to the point of crisis that may only be bridged by co-operation in actuality.

There is, however, every reason for the organized worker to take on an optimistic mantle avoiding stampede. The leaders of the movement have warned the rank and file of just this situation that is now upon us and have builded and solidified. The ranks have been strengthened in the numerical additions, financial reserves attended to as necessary sinews, crafts and sections of labor formerly unorganized taken into the fold, and every known effort expended in making the embankment that is to stop and break up the tidal wave which carries on its crest the move that falling prices shall be upon the worker alone. Should any breaches be found with its attendant ill-effects the fault is at the door of the destroying and reactionary element who have attempted to make for weakness with the introduction of its many issues along with its panacea conceived and born of dreams.

Appropos the present situation comes from other than workers' sources, the usefulness of holding the National Conference at the Capital, of organized labor representatives and the employers is being questioned. It would appear that the horizon is so clouded there should be no difference of opinion on this score. The old stock phrase of "nothing to discuss" conveys no meaning except in shallow thought, too pregnant is the sign of unemployment, an ally of falling prices, which has to be met co-operatively. Remembering the Turkish proverb which says: "The devil tempts the busy man but the idle man tempts the devil," by all means hold the conference, which can be the means of eliminating devil tempters, and allow this Dominion to stand at the head of the least disturbed industrially in this reaction, a position held during the war by Canada in the list of countries involved. The attitude of the organized worker is a generous willingness to aid at this period; a maxim the International trade union movement observes, but it will not carry more than its fair share. Overloading is relegated to history.

THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.

"INTERNATIONAL Federation of Trades Unions," and "International Council of Trades Unions," shows slight difference in the names, but President Tom Moore, of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, has called timely attention to the difference in their makeup and purpose, stating "that the Trades Unions in all countries continue to be the centre of attack by those in all countries who would substitute direct action and revolutionary methods for ordinary progress through constitutional channels."

That the injection of Trades Unions as part of the name of the Moscow misfit is unfair and a misnomer, is readily seen in an extract issued by this new Federation from its meeting in Moscow, August 1, 1920, reading as follows:

"Our programme is the overthrow of the Bourgeoisie by force; the bringing into effect of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of irrespressible class struggle both nationally and internationally, and to form an immovable alliance with the Communist International."

Perhaps a great danger lies in the similarity of names that matter issued from the council may be taken in a serious way as emanating from the recognized movement of which W. A. Appleton, of England, is president, and to which the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada is affiliated. President Moore has taken an effective means of showing the source from which these frothings emanate, and if rightly named this arch enemy to the Trade Union movement should be changed to "International Brigands of Trades Unions," theirs by right and effort, whether located at Moscow, Geneva or even on this continent.

Here's To Woman.

Once Our Superior, Now Our Equal—Can.

MINIMUM PRODUCTION CAN'T BE WAGE BASE.

A minimum wage is based on the needs of a worker to live, and this has no relation to minimum production. The above summarizes a rejection by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union of the offer of children's dress makers, and they will guarantee a minimum wage if the union guarantees a minimum production. To fall into the trap and exposed a sophistry that is being urged at the present time.

"We cannot and will not guarantee a minimum production because such a guarantee would defeat the whole object of establishing the minimum wage," the unionists reply. "A minimum wage is established for the purpose of enabling the slowest normal worker to make a living on the basis of his skill and essential prevailing requirements."

"Of course, if the worker is so slow and inefficient as to fall below normal, the employer would not be forced to employ or retain him. But when an alleged minimum wage is coupled with a condition for a specified minimum of production, the result follows: that of production falls below the established minimum, a corresponding reduction will be made from the wage rate, which thereby ceases to be a minimum wage."

"In fact, an arrangement of this kind will change the entire system of work into one of 'work or starve'."

WOMEN WORKERS A PROBLEM.

Those who hold the belief that wage earning by married women is not an American problem, overlook the economic forces and the desire for purposeful activity which are driving married women, as well as young girls, to gainful employment, says the Federal Board for Vocational Education.

"Over 25 per cent. of our working women in 1919 were married; 15.4 per cent. were widowed or divorced. Unquestionably a large part of the remaining 40 per cent. who were single, shared family responsibilities. The number of married women contributing to the family income by their labor is increasing and the period of time which women spend in industry, variously estimated from three to seven years, is lengthening."

"In 23 miscellaneous factory industries listed through 31 states, the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics found that in 1909, 12.4 per cent. of the women workers were married; of the women over 20 years of age, more than one-fifth, 22.6 per cent. were married. Of American white women in the selected industries, 9.9 per cent. were married."

PROTECTION FOR WOMEN.

Steps are being taken to form an organization by interested parties in Hamilton with a view to affording protection to unorganized women and minors employed in industrial plants. It is stated that many women are not being paid fair remuneration. We are informed that the National Council of Women and Women's Citizen League are inaugurating some scheme whereby unorganized women might come within the scope of the minimum wage legislation, proposed by the Provincial Government. Co-operation of the various I.L.P. women's branches at Hamilton will also be enlisted.

BRITISH SOVIET LEADER ARRESTED

Aftermath of Lt.-Col. Malone's Albert Hall Address.

Lt.-Col. L. E. Malone, Liberal member of the British House of Commons for the east division of Leyton, who was arrested last week in Dublin, where he had gone by invitation to speak in a debate on Bolshevism, was arraigned in Bow Street Police Court on Friday under the section of the Defence of the Realm Act prohibiting the use of language likely to cause sedition among the civilian population. The proceedings arose from a speech he made in the House of Commons on November 7, when he declared that the Russian revolution was nothing less than an "incitement to murder." He quoted the following passage from the speech in question:

"The Russian revolution 'taught us the humbug of the old Parliament. I hope the day will come when we shall meet here to pass a bill on the British revolution, and I hope that day will come when you meet here as delegates of the first all-British congress of workers, sailors and soldiers.'"

When that day comes, we to all those people who get in our way. We are out to change the present constitution, and if it is necessary to have bloodshed and atrocities we shall have to use the lamp-post or the wall. What are a few Churchill or a few Cursons on lamp-posts compared with the misery of thousands of human beings?"

"MAN TO MAN" VIEW IN INDUSTRY.

There is a fear growing faintly in the minds of many that those who work for money, and those who work with money, belong to a different species, declared Rev. Dr. Lewis Pilgoun, in an address to members of the Presbyterian Synod of Manitoba at Brandon last week. To those with influence and knowledge he said, it is quite clear that both are quite human. The problem is to bring these common human elements to surface and make them practical in the actual direction of industrial life. Most of the difficulties that have arisen in industry, asserted Dr. Pilgoun, are the breakdown of the "man to man" view.

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"LABOR BAITER" OF YESTER-YEAR SIRE OF "OPEN SHOPPER" OF TODAY

Carpenters' Organization Has Corrected Many Evils—Many Yet Exist—Progress Has Been Slow But Continuous.

By Dan W. Blackwell.

Many years ago the carpenters' union was chartered in San Diego with the small number of 15 courageous mechanics, who resolved to no longer submit to the whims of the capricious employers who constituted the master builder class at that time.

Then, as now, the desire of the employers was to get as many hours of faithful toil out of the carpenters as was possible for as little pay as possible.

Economic necessity was freely used as the means, then as now, to force this undoubted little knot of defenders of human rights to defend their efforts to better trade conditions, not only for the carpenter but for all who contributed some useful thing for the comfort of society.

At the time this union was first formed, the very best mechanics were forced to work nine hours for \$3 a day, and in some cases as low as \$2.25 for nine hours. And at that time a man was never sure of receiving the pay he had honestly earned.

Many renegade contractors then travelled from place to place, gathering in money by unpaid labor bills, because there existed no law for the protection of the workers.

What the Old Times Found.

Since that time (thanks to the efforts of the trade union movement, to which this little union of carpenters has faithfully contributed) an effective law was passed that put an end to the nefarious practice of the "skin-flint" contractor, who collected but never paid.

Few of the younger men in the building industry today realize what the "old boys" had to contend with. Short pay and long hours, bad labor bills, rotten scaffolding, broken bodies with resultant loss of time and no compensation other than the small allowances made by the little union to the injured member, as well as the blacklisting by the bosses.

Then, as now, there was the ever-present, hydra-headed villain and betrayer of the workers. The "labor baiter" of the year-year was the sire of the "open shopper" of today, and possessed far more power to combat and retard the trade union effort.

Solidarity of All Crafts.

Out of the many bitter defeats of the unionist of the olden time has sprung the solidarity of all of the different crafts—a stone wall against which all the tyrants of the present or future may bump their heads.

The way has been rough and toilsome from the time this little Carpenters' union, with its starvation wages, was organized, up to the present time.

It is no longer slavery to serve at the carpenters' trade. Some may say, "Now that you have done so well, why not stop?"

They have never stopped—they will never stop. Their progress has been slow but continuous. We are as positive of future success as the "old boys" were. They were conservative and peaceable, yet constructive and aggressive. The old policy is considerably the most popular today, yet we find the Carpenters' Union getting more progressive day by day.

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SANE WORDS TO HOT HEADS

"THERE'S LITTLE TO QUARREL ABOUT—AND REVOLUTION MEANS RUIN," SAYS BRITISH LABOR LEADER.

By Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas, M.P., chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of the British Trade Union Congress.

The first thing I should say, with regard to the situation arising out of the miners' strike, is that I have no quarrel with the strikers. I have no quarrel with the strikers. I have no quarrel with the strikers.

And yet we see the whole country in a state of the most serious upheavals we have ever experienced.

It is a fact that no one can calculate the harm already done, and the dangers that may lie ahead will be obvious to anyone with a knowledge of the industrial, political and economic position of the country.

Now I say I have never known a dispute where the difference at issue was so small, and I can quite understand people asking, "What is it all about?"

I shall try to answer this question in a very few words. The miners claim a raise in wages of 2s. 6d.

They make this claim on the ground that the standard of living has been raised, and that there has been an increase in the cost of living equal to 24 per cent.

On the other hand, the Government says: "We can give you this—we can give you even more than you ask, if the increase in wages is based on a certain output from the pits."

Now this output, it is well known to everyone, has already been attained.

It was reached in the first quarter of the present year, and every responsible person among the miners, leaders and among the mine-owners themselves, have spoken to it, and it is satisfied that this output can easily be obtained immediately.

I can say more. The miners' leaders go beyond this, and declare that when a proper organization is established an output much greater than the guarantee asked by the Government will be possible.

These are the two sides to the issue. The difference between them lies here: The miners' leaders, who are not responsible for the managing of the pits, say: "We cannot guarantee a standard of output, because we have not the power or the means at our disposal to ensure that any such guarantee could be made good. Output depends on pit equipment and organization as well as on the individual miner. We are ready to join with those responsible for these things in an effort to share the responsibility. Take our word, and we will use all our influence to see that it shall quickly materialize."

That, very briefly, is the issue. And now I should like to say something about the attitude of the public towards the strike. It is vital to the whole nation and to every individual citizen.

The point I want to make is with regard to those who talk about "fighting this thing to a finish." This is a reckless talk.

DEBENTURE BYLAWS NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the following bylaws of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Ottawa, passed at a meeting of the Council on the 1st day of November, 1920, and that they were registered in the City of Ottawa on the 2nd day of the said month.

Bylaw No. 4564.—To amend Bylaw No. 4235 respecting the issue of debentures amounting to \$100,000.00 to provide for the cost of acquiring the necessary plant and equipment for the establishment and maintenance of a Municipal Garbage Collection system.

Bylaw No. 4576.—To amend Bylaw No. 4484 respecting the issue of debentures amounting to \$125,000.00 to provide for the cost of constructing a new bridge over the Rideau River at St. Patrick Street.

Bylaw No. 4572.—To authorize an issue of debentures for the purpose of the City of Ottawa Public School Board.

Bylaw No. 4574.—To authorize an issue of debentures amounting to \$750,000.00 for the purpose of the City of Ottawa Public School Board.

Any motion to quash or set aside any of the said bylaws or any part thereof must be made within three months after the first publication of this notice, and cannot be made thereafter.

Dated at Ottawa this 2nd day of November, 1920.

NORMAN E. H. LYTLE, Mayor.

Across the Atlantic.

What Our Brothers in the Motherland Are Doing.

OUR WEEKLY BRITISH LETTER.

WESTMINSTER, Eng. (Saturday).

The past week has seen the Government of Ireland Bill pass through its final stages in the House of Commons. It now remains for it to pass through the House of Lords. It was on Thursday, Armistice Day, that the third reading of the bill came up before the Commons. Most of the members who took part in the debate had been present earlier in the day at the unveiling of the cenotaph a few yards away, in Whitehall, and at the passing of the unknown warrior to his last resting place in Westminster Abbey, and this obviously affected the protagonists in the debate, which took place in the House in the afternoon. Herbert H. Asquith rose to highlight for which his oratory is famous and, in words which Mr. Lloyd George later described as an "eloquent and exalted appeal," tried to make of the armistice celebrations an occasion for the healing of Ireland's wounds. He advocated a frank and generous arrangement that absolute self-government would be given to the Irish in regard to their own affairs.

Mr. Lloyd George, as he rose from the front ministerial bench to give the Government's case, seemed to lack his usual readiness. There are few men who have had to shoulder so heavy and so continuous a burden as the British Prime Minister. He is, practically speaking, the only one of the "Big Four" of the Peace conference days who is still in harness.

While protesting his own and the Government's desire to come to an understanding with Ireland, he confessed that the difficulties in the way were great. It was a question of time. Ireland was in a temper. Following the example of previous speakers, and making allusion to events of the morning, the Prime Minister declared: "It may be that it was an Irish soldier who was honored today. All we ask is that Ireland should not, in a moment of anger, cast away the inheritance which is as much theirs as ours, that they should join in with the Empire they have helped to build and to adorn."

An interesting contribution to the debate came from Sir Edward Carson, who, in his low-pitched, cold and calculating voice, declared that, while Ulster would hold the Government wholly responsible for the bill, they would loyally give the Government's scheme a fair chance. Indeed, many members thought they detected in Sir Edward's speech the germs of a liking on Ulster's part for the management of her own affairs. By contrast to the Ulster leader's coolness, Joseph Devlin, the Irish Nationalist, protested against the bill with stammering passion, declaring that it would lead to a bitter and enduring fight in Ireland.

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That one word "together" is the key to our whole future as a prosperous nation and Empire.

That is why I plead and urge we should have a conference to settle this dispute.

We must have a conference sooner or later.

Why not sooner? That, in my view, should inspire the policy of the Government and the efforts of every individual citizen who values the future of our country.

Nothing less than the future of our country is at stake, and every influence which seeks to embitter or prolong without necessity this present grave crisis pays little regard to that future, and still less homage to the men who gladly died to make it possible.

There are two roads in this world, and each of us must determine for ourselves which of these roads we will walk in.

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