

Saskatchewan Labor's Realm

ENDORSED BY THE REGINA TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL

Vol. 1, No. 18

REGINA, October 11, 1907

Annual Subscription \$1.00
Single Copy, five Cents

THE SASKATCHEWAN LABOR'S REALM

A Weekly Labor and Social Reform Newspaper.

Justice, Truth, Fraternity. "Labor Omnia Vincit."

HUGH PEAT

EDITOR.

THE Capitol buildings, which are to be erected next year in the city, will probably cost somewhere in the neighborhood of a million dollars. Employment will be afforded to a vast number of men, and the workers in all branches of the building trade are assured of a busy and prosperous season.

The building record of the city during the last two years is a wonderful one, and no class of citizens is more proud of the city's progress, or takes a greater delight in speaking of our public buildings, than the artisans and craftsmen whose ingenuity and skill have been instrumental in raising these monuments of beauty and solidity, which stand to mark the course of evolution and progress in the capital city of Saskatchewan.

The condition of a city is the condition of its workers, so that when the wage-earners are busily employed and earning good wages a period of prosperity is a natural consequence in every department of business. The retail dealers have an increasing demand for their goods; real estate changes hands for higher prices; houses are built and homes are established and a general tone of prosperity pervades everything and everybody. It is therefore natural to assume that it is to the advantage of the business men and traders of the city to have as large a working population in the city as possible, all working for good wages and spending their earnings proportionately.

This brings us to an interesting subject which is worthy of the consideration of business men as well as workmen, and is one that should be taken up without delay and urged upon the powers that be to ensure the working men of Canada generally and of the City of Regina particularly, having their full share of the money to be earned out of the erection of the new Capitol buildings. That subject is—The quarrying of the stone to be used on the Capitol building—to be done in Canada, and the employment as far as possible of Canadian workmen to do that work, as well as the work of cutting the stone preparatory to placing on the building.

The Northern Bank, the New Post Office, the Y.M.C.A., and the King's Hotel are fine looking buildings, and are calculated to raise a feeling of pride in the breasts of all who behold them, and especially in the breasts of those who helped in their construction; and yet, it must be with any other feeling than pride or pleasure that the stonecutters of Regina will contemplate these buildings, for this simple but very effective reason, that, in spite of the magnitude of the work, it has afforded employment to only some eleven or twelve men all told. And why? Simply this: instead of the stone being quarried in Canada, and our own men of the Dominion being given an opportunity of making money and adding to the wealth of the country by spending the money here where it is made, the bulk of the stone for the buildings referred to has been obtained from Bedford, Ind., U.S.A. Not alone has the stone been imported to this country, but almost the whole of the work required to be done on that stone was done in America by American workmen. This may be, and no doubt is, a very satisfactory arrangement from an American workman's point of view, but we fail to see where the Canadian stone cutter is to get any satisfaction out of the matter.

A considerable amount of money will be spent next year on the stonework of the Parliament buildings, and it will certainly be a reflection on the workmen

and on the quarries of the Dominion if the stone for those buildings is obtained from America and the work to be done thereon executed by other than Canadian workmen.

All loyal Canadians have but one motto: "Canada First," and so long as it is possible for us to obtain the commodities we require in our own land it is our plain duty to obtain them and help forward the development of the country to the utmost limit. We question if there could be found many buildings in America erected and completed with stone from Canadian quarries, and why should we send money out of Canada to be spent in industries in which we ourselves are proficient, and when we can obtain the necessary material here.

Our own stonecutters aver that for beauty and durability there is nothing to equal the stone which can be obtained from Tyndal, Man., and there is also an excellent building stone to be obtained in Calgary. This being the case there is surely no necessity to import stone from the States and thereby rob our own workmen of the opportunity to earn a few dollars.

With regard to our workmen it would only seem fair to assume that they are competent in their particular branch of labor, judging by the little amount of work they have been given the privilege of doing; and the work on the new City Hall will remain as a lasting tribute to the masterly skill of Regina's workmen.

We want more men in Canada—more skilled men—men who can by their superior efficiency command high wages, for these are the men who help to make a nation great. And if we are to get these men here, and keep them when they get here we will have to provide the work for which they are fitted when they come. Our old friends, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association are daily wailing out their parrot cry for more skilled men; their pleasantest occupation seems to lie in drawing harrowing pictures of our fair country's foe, the trade unionist, who, they allege, is responsible for the dearth of skilled labor, and to which is attributed the absence of greater industrial enterprises. And yet, in spite of all their wailings we have had stonecutters in the City of Regina during the last year working as laborers for laborer's pay whilst the work that was being done on the buildings intended to adorn our city was being done by other workmen in America. Truly a very satisfactory and beneficial arrangement for the citizens and taxpayers of the city. Truly an edifying sight for competent men to work as laborers and pay rent and taxes in a city where his craftsmanship was sacrificed to afford employment for strangers in another country. From a business standpoint alone it is up to those who are interested in the well-being and progress of the city to use every endeavour to remove the necessity for our craftsmen to become laborers, and see that a clause is inserted in the contract for the Parliament buildings next year stipulating that all the stone used in those buildings shall be quarried in Canada, and that as far as possible the work done on that stone shall be executed by Canadian workmen. In all probability two hundred men would be required for a period of one year cutting the stone for those buildings. This would mean that there would be two hundred additional men in the city, all requiring food and lodging, and this in itself will be a source of revenue indirectly to the city which must not be lost sight of.

There is also another point that it might be as well to bear in mind, and

that is this: that cut stone depreciates not only in appearance but in value also when handled on the railroads. It is chipped, cracked, and sometimes broken. Nevertheless, it goes in the building just the same, because the cost of replacing broken parts have no place in the contractor's estimate. At the best, imported stone comes far short of the fresh, clean cut stone which has been cut on the grounds and placed in the wall with a minimum amount of handling.

The stone cutters of North America intend sending an appeal to the Department of Public Works asking for the insertion of a clause in the contract for the Provincial Parliament buildings as already stated, namely: That Canadian stone be used, and that Canadian workmen be employed as far as possible on the work. The inclusion of such a clause in the contract would be no innovation, because this is done all over the world, and particularly so in the United States. This provision, of course, will only apply in so far as hand work to be done on the job is concerned.

The appeal is a worthy one and should find a ready and attentive ear from those in authority, as well as from all those who have the welfare of the city and the city's workmen at heart. We cordially wish the petition the thorough success it deserves.

WE have just received a letter from the office of the Sec-treas. of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada calling upon all the labor organizations in Canada to levy an assessment of 10 cents on each member of their organizations to cover the cost of sending an able representative of labor to the Old Country to expose the misrepresentation of certain immigration agencies who have been busy for some time there.

Must Stop Misrepresentation This step was suggested and found ready acceptance amongst the delegates at the Winnipeg Convention, and Mr. W. R. Trotter, of the Winnipeg Typographical Union, was elected to fill that important commission. Mr. Trotter is well known throughout the west as an organizer, and his knowledge of the conditions of labor here, coupled with his ability to thoroughly explain his opinions to his fellow men, will stand him in good stead in the mission he is about to undertake. The Executive Council of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada urge the immediate attention of the different labor organizations to this matter, so that Mr. Trotter may be able to leave for England not later than December.

There is no doubt that if the labor organizations of this country had had a representative in the United Kingdom during the last year a considerable number of immigrants who have arrived in Canada carrying spurious contracts could have been prevented from embarking on a wild goose chase, and would have been spared the humiliation of finding themselves out of employment on arrival, without money and without friends, and with the unpleasant prospect of being reduced to accepting charity till such time as they would be able to retrieve their fortunes. No more worthy object could be brought before the notice of the different local unions in Regina, and we would urge the unions to get busy at once, and collect the 10 cent levy from each of its members and forward to headquarters with as little delay as possible so that we at any rate may go on record as supporters of a scheme for the protection of our interests.

If every man who resents being called a rogue resented being one this would be a world of wrath.—Bierce.

Mr. H. Hamilton Fyfe in a recent article on "Why British Columbia needs the Japanese" makes some very interesting points. He states that the trade unions in British Columbia are in a strong position, and the white working men would have been more than human if they had not taken advantage of this. Wherever labor is plentiful, wages are low. We cannot wonder at the converse being true also. Scarcity of labor naturally makes wages high.

Mr. Fyfe on the Japanese Question Of course the unions want to keep the price of wages high. Everyone who has a commodity to sell tries to get as much as he can for it. But I am sure they would be better advised to take a longer-sighted view, since for every white man they keep out of the country at least two Asiatics get in. The yellow man is at work everywhere.

A B.C. lumber mill manager says "The Japs are better workmen, more intelligent, more anxious to improve; but the Chinks are easier to deal with. They aren't so aggressive. Why do not we employ white men entirely? For one thing we can't get them, and for another we must keep our wages bill down."

I am not quoting from the speech of an agitator, but from a pamphlet written by the Hon. C. H. Mackintosh, formerly Lieutenant-Governor of the province, that is, the local representative of the Crown. His main arguments against admitting a constant stream of Asiatics are:

1. That "thousands of people do not care for a country where Mongolians are employed; many white women, adapted to service, not unnaturally object to working with them."
2. That they are not permanent settlers and do not invest their earnings in the country. "At the present time a sum exceeding \$3,000,000 a year is remitted to alien countries," i.e., to China and Japan.

Of course, Mr. Mackintosh recognises that British Columbia must get labor from somewhere. His solution is to get white settlers from the north and east of Europe, who, at any rate, would not be cut off from British population by the barrier of race.

Failing to induce our brethren in the United Kingdom, or descendants of Britishers and Canadians to return from the United States, the next best thing would be to secure Galicians, Scandinavians, and the class of foreigners who as settlers have already proved progressive, industrious, honest, and law-abiding.

Both in other parts of Canada and in the United States immigrants of this class have shown that they are ready to assimilate with the Anglo-Saxon, to work hard, and to stay in the country. As for their grateful devotion to British institutions, it is pathetic. They are proud to be called British subjects, and their children grow up Canadians, very often indistinguishable from the British born. Such settlers could be obtained by the same means as were employed to populate the north-western wheat lands. There are plenty of them ready to emigrate to any new land which offers them a favorable chance.

Surely this would be better than saying helplessly with a prominent Liberal Free Trader who recently visited Canada, that British Columbia can only realize its industrial ambitions by "giving an open door to Asia" and accepting the inevitability of its "commerce and population tending more and more to become Asiatic, and, in fact, predominantly Chinese. I hope there are not many Britons so sunk in Little Englandism that they can contemplate as calmly as Mr. J. A. Hobson the Orientalizing of this noble portion of our imperial heritage."