

RENEWED AGITATION IN THE LONDON BUILDING TRADE.

A fully-attended meeting of delegates from the London carpenters and joiners was held recently at the Brown Bear, Broad Street, Bloomsbury, Mr. T. Davies, of the General Union, in the chair. The meeting had been convened by the Watch Committee appointed by the delegates of the late nine hours movement.

The Chairman said they were all aware that in reply to a memorial sent in last year for a week of 51 hours at 9d. an hour, they had accepted for the time a compromise of 52 1/2 hours per week at 8 1/2d. per hour. The Watch Committee considered the time had now arrived for the trade to decide whether they would go in for the original terms of the memorial this spring, or for the 9d. per hour, and leaving the working hours as they now were for the present. Provisions, coal, and all other necessities of life had increased in price since last year, and if they were then justified in asking 9d. per hour, which he contended they were, they were still further justified in asking for it at the present time. Then there was the code of working rules, including the question of "grinding money," which required to be placed on a more satisfactory footing. He trusted that whatever course might be decided upon would be taken only after due consideration; and that that course would be carried out firmly but moderately.

A long and animated discussion ensued, and several resolutions were submitted to the meeting; but the delegates from several of the large firms stated their constituents had not given them any definite instructions upon the question, and it being considered necessary that on so important a point perfect understanding should prevail, and that the decision should be as unanimous as possible, it was ultimately resolved to adjourn the meeting for a fortnight, and that in the meantime each delegate should obtain a distinct vote from their constituents.

It was also decided that prior to the adjourned meeting special meetings of the London branches of the General Union and the Amalgamated Society be held, and their votes taken upon the matter.

The Laborers' Committee are awaiting the reply of the Master Builders' Association to a request sent in by them that their wages be raised to 6d. per hour on and after the 1st of of March next.—*English Exchange.*

THE ENGLISH FRIENDLY SOCIETY OF IRON FOUNDERS.

BROTHER MEMBERS.—In bringing before your notice the 223rd Monthly Report, you will see that the number on the Donation and Sick Benefits are lower this month than last; at the same time we are compelled to admit that trade is not so good as it appeared to be in the December Monthly; nor can this be wondered at, when we consider the unsettled state of the market for coal, coke, and iron. As yet there is not much to complain about, but there can be no doubt that, if things continue as they are, it will do much to mar what otherwise would be a very prosperous year. We must, however, make the best of the circumstances, and be glad that we are in so good a position, and so well prepared for any emergency which may take place, having a consciousness that, though evil days may come, we have not in any way brought them about.

Since the issue of our last Monthly, the Trades Congress has held its Session, and we can only say it was the best that has yet been held, and no doubt much good to the cause of labor has been done. Our friends in Leeds deserve our best thanks for the efforts they made to make the members of the Congress comfortable. These Labor Parliaments must eventually do an amount of good, if rightly and properly carried out, as they are the means of bringing to the front all the important questions of the day in connection with labor; and there can be no doubt their influence, in addition to that of the London Committees, has had a powerful effect in bringing the Government to the conclusion that it was a wise step to mitigate the term of imprisonment of the unfortunate gas stokers from twelve months to four. But that mitigation must not satisfy us as members of trade societies; for the very fact of leaving the term of imprisonment at four months, tells us plainly that the law of conspiracy can be brought to bear upon us at any time when we may be compelled to strike a shop, however we may be oppressed. The laws must be made so plain and intelligible, that we shall be able at all times to know whether we are within their meaning or not. To this end we must work peacefully and lawfully, but at the same time firmly; and the day is not far distant when our law makers will need our voices.

DANIEL GIBBE,
In Iron Founders' Report for Feb.

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