

Ontario Workman.

THE EQUALIZATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL SCALE SHOULD BE THE TRUE AIM OF CIVILIZATION.

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Labor Notes.

The working men of South London have, through the Rev. G. M. Murphy, requested an interview with the Home Secretary, Mr. Bruce, in reference to the "vindictive punishment" of the gas-stokers.

At a special meeting of the London Trades' council on Saturday evening, the sum of £70 was voted in support of the agricultural laborers, divided as follows:—£25 to the Peterborough District union, £25 to the Bolton union, £10 to the Stalling union, and £10 to the Kent union. An order was made upon Mr. Allen, of the Engineers' society, the treasurer of the special fund, to transmit the above sum to their respective destinations.

The meetings of the delegates from the London Carpenters and Joiners, representing the various societies and branches, and the larger firms, was held on Monday night at the Brown Bear, Broad-street, Bloomsbury, Mr. Thomas Davis, of the general union, in the chair, at which the following resolution was adopted: "That in the opinion of this delegate meeting, representing the carpenters and joiners of London, the sentence of 12 months passed on the five gas stokers, at the Central Criminal court, by Mr. Justice Brett, for an alleged conspiracy, is a gross outrage upon justice, and intended to intimidate trades unionists, and working men generally, from endeavoring to improve their position, and makes the Masters and Servants act, and the Trades Union and Criminal Law Amendments acts, a dead letter, a delusion, and a snare. That this meeting empowers its committee to take such measures as they may deem necessary to prevent the mischief that may arise from such an unwarrantable and iniquitous perversion of justice."

It will be recollected that one of the clauses in the agreement signed between the Master Builders' association and the carpenters and joiners in October last expressed that 8½d. per hour should be the standard rate of wages for skilled men in London. A case came before the judge in the Southwark County court on Saturday, in which a joiner, named Jepps, sued a master builder of the name of Jocelyn for 1s. 7d., being the balance between 8d. and 8½d. per hour for 39 hours work. The defendant pleaded that he had several men working for him at ½d. per hour less than the standard rate of wages, and further declared he was not bound by the agreement with respect to the advance in wages, as he was no party to it.—The judge said that no master builder could plead ignorance of the agreement, and if he wished men to work for him for 8d. or 7d. per hour he must make a special agreement to that effect. As there was no agreement of that nature with the plaintiff, he should give judgment for the amount claimed with costs, in all 7s. 1d.

There was another long meeting of the Iron Trade Conciliation board of South Staffordshire at Wolverhampton on Monday. Mr. Geo. J. Barker, chairman of the Ironmasters' association, was the president; and each side was represented by 12 masters and men respectively. The operatives explained that after holding meetings in all the districts, and thereby ascertaining the views of the men, they desired that the masters would allow the wages of the next six months to be based upon the prices of bar iron in the past six months, and 1s. bonus. This they maintained was the spirit of their last agreement, and they urged that the published reports proved it. The masters offered to continue to pay 12s. 6d. a ton for three or six months, and at the end of two or five months to discuss any terms for a future settlement. The men then asked that the difference should be submitted to arbitration. The masters declined arbitration for the north of England. Men did not observe the arbitrator's award when wages was last raised here. The men asked the masters to advance upon 12s. 6d. if iron rose. The masters could not definitely reply; the question involved the inquiry, would the men accept a reduction if prices dropped? They could pledge the rest of the trade to the terms they had offered. These terms were the masters' ultimatum, and on them the work would be thrown open. The men expressed disappointment and will hold an aggregate meeting.

TRADE UNIONISTS AND GAS STOKERS.

A special meeting of the London Trades' council and of the delegates of the metropolitan trades connected with it was held on Friday

night at the Brown Bear, Broad street, Bloomsbury, for the purpose of considering the case of the convicted gas-stokers, and the propriety of appointing delegates to represent the council at the forth-coming Trades congress at Leeds. Mr. George Odger occupied the chair.

The Chairman said the first question for consideration—that of the gas-stokers—was one of momentous consequence to trades unionists. He was not there to justify or vindicate the strike or the mode in which it had been conducted, but he was there to raise his voice against persecution of the vilest description, and to protest against the straining of a penal law in an oppressive and vindictive spirit, as had been done by the police magistrates and an Old Bailey judge. The sentences passed upon the gas-stokers by those men were atrocious, and utterly opposed to the spirit in which the Master and Servants' act had been passed by the Legislature, and accepted under protest by the trades unionists. If the ruling of Mr. Justice Brett in passing sentence upon the convicted stokers on Thursday was law, then every man in that room, every official of a trade society, every member of a society who took an active part in its operations, was liable to the same punishment, and the legislation of the past two years with respect to trade unions was a delusion and a snare. A deadly blow had been aimed at trade unions through the gas-stokers, and the whole of the trades throughout the United Kingdom must rise up as one man and protest against such an iniquitous sentence and such a strained interpretation of the law. It would also be the duty of the trades to provide for the families of the men while in prison (cheers).

A long and animated discussion took place, the general opinion being that the unionism of the whole kingdom must be appealed to, and all its power and influence at once brought to bear upon the question.

Mr. W. Matkin (General Union of Carpenters) moved the following resolution:—"That this meeting of the London Trades Council and delegates of trade societies desires to express its emphatic indignation at the undue severity and gross injustice of the sentences passed upon the gas-stokers at the Old Bailey, and in some of the police courts; and we hereby instruct our secretary to at once convene a meeting of delegates from the whole of the trade societies in London preliminary to an aggregate demonstration of the London trades; and that in the meantime all the evidence possible to be obtained in those cases where employers or their managers have outstepped the bounds of legality in their dealings with their workmen, with a view to the immediate prosecution in a court of law of such employer or manager." The resolution was carried with loud cheers.

Mr. George Shipton (secretary of the Council and delegate of the Amalgamated Painters and Decorators) was then unanimously elected to represent the Council at the Leeds Trade congress on the 13th of next month.

The proceedings terminated at a late hour with a vote of thanks to the chairman.

On Saturday afternoon another meeting was held at Boltcourt, Fleet street, Mr. George Potter in the chair. Among those present were Mr. Thomas Hughes, M.P., Mr. William Cobbett (Manchester), Mr. Latham, Mr. Allen, Mr. George Howell, Mr. Motteshead, Mr. Guile, and Mr. Applegarth. A letter of interest was read from Mr. Harrison, speaking of the sentence as "vindictive," and the gentlemen present expressed their opinion that the law had been stretched against these men. The meeting resolved to go to the Home Secretary, and to collect subscriptions to appeal against the decision.

SCOTCH COAL AND IRON TRADES—PROPOSED BOARD OF ARBITRATION.

The following circular has been addressed to the iron and coal employers of Scotland:—

GENTLEMEN,—We, the undersigned representatives of the working miners in the leading mining districts, beg to inform you that our constituents feel very anxious that all questions that may arise in the future in respect to wages and the customs of our occupation should be settled by courts of conciliation and arbitration—such courts to be equally chosen by the employers and the employed, with an independent umpire, to whom all cases could be referred. In making this request we may meet with

the laugh of vain derision or the sneer of scorn at the idea of the employers meeting the representatives of the workmen on the ground that it would lower their position so to act on the matter of work or wages. We are aware that the habit of the last seventy years, since our class gained their freedom, is against us. With you, you have ever made your demands for reductions without a reason given. There were only two courses open—submission or resistance. In many cases resistance has followed, and then came misery to the homes and households of the miners. This policy has produced that distrust which has led to the miners in so many instances seizing the moment when they thought you could not resist to enforce demands that may have been in themselves unjust. The position of both classes should be mutual trust—the position from the causes named is the complete reverse of this—hence the complaint so common that we "cannot depend on our men almost to fulfil a contract should we take one." To those who may think that it would be beneath them to consort with labor by the forming of arbitration boards we would say, that men as high in the social scale—higher, as elevated in regard to wealth, more so than you—do it; and they doing it adds a lustre to their name that you might do well to imitate. The great iron industries of the north of England settle all questions affecting work and wages in this way. The ironmasters of South Staffordshire now do the same. For a considerable period the lace trade in Nottingham has been so regulated by that means that men have peace and better wages, and employers a far larger return for their capital. Now, on all questions affecting work and wages, the powerful mine owners of the county of Northumberland meet the representatives of the workmen to discuss questions and to agree on them. In Durham all questions are referred to a regularly-constituted board between both parties. In North Staffordshire the employers meet their workmen on all questions to discuss them. In South Wales the men have for some time been working under an arbitration award. In South Yorkshire strikes have given place to conferences, which have led to the most beneficial results to all concerned. It may, on the other hand, be thought by the more ignorant among you that our asking boards of arbitration to be formed is a sign of weakness in the men. Such a conclusion is an idle dream. It is our wish for the good of our class, and the belief, as well, that it would benefit you we ask it. It is because we wish to see all things relating to us carried on peacefully for the common good. In the struggle of the past, from ignorance, we were confined to one locality. An order came from you for a reduction or the imposing of another burden. Meek submission was the one alternative, or a few week's strike, or a lock out, and then followed a yielding from starvation. Now, thanks to grown and growing intelligence, things are changed, and so changing, that the times are more with us than with you. The world is now our workshop. If one country cannot give the wages, we think we ought to have another—nay, we can try it at least, and do it. Your capital is in your mines; by that you are tied to the spot, and it may be to ruin. Again, the brand of the illegality of our organization is wiped away, never to be restored. These, every hour, increase in power, moving side by side with other combinations of a similar kind in other trades, with a full understanding to aid each other. It is not then from dread of our position we ask the change. In conclusion, let us say, that should you desire it we are willing to have either the whole of Scotland put under one board, each mining county under one, or each district under one—in every case we are willing to so organize them that they will give the most satisfaction to employers and employed. Should the sounds of contention by strikes, or the drawing of men from collieries or dis-

tricts, fall upon the public ear, they will know, at least, we were willing that they should be settled by reason, not by strife. Should the trading interests of our people or our nation suffer from the broils of labor and capital, on our side there was a desire to prevent them, and see that no struggle should take place.

Signed on behalf of the committee,
HENRY MALCOLM, Chairman,
Holywell District.
ALEX. M'DONALD, Secretary.

LESS LABOR AND MORE HAPPINESS.

We favor a system that shall contribute most to the happiness of the individual and the class. If the one hour saved from labor be devoted to intellectual improvement, it is well. If the laborer thus released applies his leisure hour to his own domestic business, to his garden or his shop, to his needed rest or the education of his children, to the pleasant interchange of ideas and good-will between neighbors, to almost anything except dissipation, idleness and debauchery—it will prove a blessing, taking him out of the enforced treadmill of grinding toil, and giving him a status in the world above that of the mere toiling serf.

One hour a day saved from slavish toil, if rightly employed and improved, can be the means of creating a new class of men—now in their capacities for enjoyment, and for toil itself. The devotion of one hour a day to self-education, to mental development, can do what has so often been done before; transform mere drudges into thinking, intelligent beings, with their capacities for healthful enjoyment increased in proportion to the cultivation of their intellects. But this will not be the result to the man who covets the one hour saved from toil in order that he may have so much more time to devote to the shuffling of cards or the shaking of dice at the corner grocery.

It is a common mistake made that release from the necessity of labor ensures happiness. Employment is the law of all really intelligent, certainly all really progressive, nations and individuals. Others may exist, but they do not live in the true sense of the word. We must work with the mind if not with the hands. The invisible wheels and springs of the brain must be kept moving. Thought will be evolved, and in its proper direction is the correct cue to happiness. Let the laborer get his release from the hitherto extra hour or two of enforced toil, and then devote it sensibly to better purposes than dissipation, or idleness, which leads to dissipation if not to vagabondage and crime.

THOMAS BRASSEY THE CONTRACTOR.

The *Telegraph*, alluding to Sir Arthur Helps' "Life and Labors of Thomas Brassey," gives us an insight into the way in which the great contractor drew about him those who almost worshipped him. If a great work was to be executed abroad, Mr. Brassey could, we are told, rely on faithful navvies, whose tribes of workmen, agents who served him with loving zeal and invincible courage, and men who would go to the uttermost part of the uninhabited earth for him. The secret of this was that Thomas Brassey was in every sense of the word, a gentleman. His family was old and good; his habits refined; his instincts delicate; his taste cultivated. He was genial in manner, and very generous, and he had—what no true gentleman can lack—great courage. It might be said that he was born to be loved, and therefore born to be a leader of men. Sub-contractors felt that if there was any dispute he would treat them equally and kindly; and not according to the strict letter of the law. All his agents knew that it was their best policy to be frank and honest with their kind and considerate chief. He was served by foreigners, as by Englishmen, with intense devotion. One instance, quoted by Sir Arthur Helps, is as good as a thousand. In 1866 it was of great importance that the works of the Lemberg-Lzernovits Railway should be pushed on; but suddenly war broke out, and there was a difficulty in conveying

the money from Vienna to Lemberg to pay the men. "The intervening country was occupied by the Austrian and Prussian armies, who were on each side of the line—that is, on that part between Cracow and Lemberg; for Mr. Ofenheim had succeeded without much difficulty in getting the money carried on the northern Carl-Ludwig Railway as far as Cracow. However, he was full of energy, and was determined to get on somehow or other. They said that there was no engine; that they had all been taken off; but he went and found an old engine in a shed. Next he wanted an engine-driver, and he found one, but the man said he would not go, for he had a wife and children. Mr. Ofenheim answered, 'If you come I will give you so many hundred florins, and if you get killed I will provide for your wife and family.' They jumped on to the old engine and got up the steam. They then started, and went at the rate of forty to fifty miles an hour, passing between the sentinels of the opposing armies; and Mr. Ofenheim states that they were so surprised that they had no time to shoot him. His only fear was that there might be a rail up somewhere. But he got to Lemberg, and that was the saving point on the line—they made the "pay." When the Emperor of Australia heard the story, he asked, 'Who is this Mr. Brassey, this English contractor, for whom men are to be found to work with such zeal and risk their lives?' On being answered he sent him the Cross of the Iron Crown.

The extent of Mr. Brassey's enterprise may be gathered from the fact that, at some periods he and his partners were actually employing 80,000 men! As to his wealth it was finally very great; yet it is rather surprising that the percentage of profit on his undertakings was comparatively small—that is, as nearly as possible three per cent. He laid out seventy-eight millions of other people's money, and upon that outlay retained about two millions and a half. "The rest of his fortune consisted of accumulations;" for he was a man of moderate personal expenses. But it is pointed out that this wealth was hardly "realized," so to speak, until Mr. Brassey's death. His capital was continuously involved in speculations attended with risk. For instance there was a period in 1866, when his liabilities were, even for a man of his resources, very gigantic. In connection with the Victoria Docks he was liable for \$1,500,000, and under the Danish contracts, for \$4,000,000. He held bonds of the Lemberg Company to the extent of \$6,000,000; but as the line was not opened, they were unsaleable, and he had meanwhile to pay on this very line ready cash to the extent of \$200,000 or \$250,000 a month in wages. Here is an instance of the courage we have referred to before as one of the salient characteristics of Mr. Brassey's mind. The Austrian Company had no spare means, had paid him mere promises, and could not raise a loan. Everybody advised him during the crises of 1866 to stop the Lemberg works, and not advance hard cash out of his own pocket, but he pushed them on, finished the line, thus set the company on its financial legs, and raised to a saleable value, the bonds he held. His capital and courage combined conquered in the long run. In fact we see that Mr. Brassey was much more than a contractor. He gave credit to such a vast extent, while he had to pay his men "on the spot," that he shared the risk of many companies, and, at some periods of his career, financial ruin was not only possible, but, to a timid man, might have seemed impending. With quite, genial courage, and manly faith in his agents, his undertakings, and himself, he "took the sunshine and the storm" as "parts of the contract," and died worth millions of money, honestly earned, and leaving useful monuments of his enterprise in many lands. He was a great English pioneer—a maker of European paths that will live as long as the Roman roads, which were the glory of the older race.

WHITE HART, corner of Yonge and Elm streets, is conducted on the good old English principal by Bell Belmont, late of London, England, who has gained the reputation, by strict adherence to business, of keeping the best conducted saloon in this city. The bar is pronounced by the press to be the "pride of bars," and is under the entire management of Mrs. Emma Belmont, whose whole study is to make the numerous patrons to this well-known resort comfortable. Visitors to this city will not regret walking any distance to see this—the handsomest bar in the Dominion