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**A WEAK ALIBI**

The perfectly legitimate boast of Alderman Esdale that he runs a union printing office, might carry some weight with trade unionists if that gentleman was seeking election as manager of the Esdale Press. But the fact that in his private business Mr. Esdale finds it expedient (used advisably) to employ union men at union wages, does not by any means erase the record of his attitude toward Organized Labor during his term of office as an Alderman. And it is by his public record that Mr. Esdale must and will be judged.

The explanation of Candidate Esdale as to why he opposed the agreements with civic employees, is miserably inadequate and does not carry the impress of sincerity. The opinion of the city solicitor that such agreements would be illegal has been widely disputed by other legal men. The fact remains, at any rate, that such agreements are actually in existence. Notwithstanding the city solicitor's alleged opinion and the strenuous opposition of Aldermen Esdale, Bush, Martin and Grant.

Trade unionists have no doubt wondered how Mr. Esdale would endeavor to "get out from under" with respect to his attitude toward unions of civic employees. His claim that he opposed the agreements because the city solicitor had questioned their legality, will strike Labor men as being a rather poor alibi.

**POLITICS AND THE VETERANS.**

We would direct the reader's attention to a letter appearing in another column of this issue, in reply to our editorial of last week entitled "Labor and the Veterans." We would hasten to correct the incorrect interpretation of our article as expressed by our correspondent. The following is what "51st B'n" refers to in his communication:

"There is some talk of independent political organization on the part of the returned men. We fail to see, however, that in the new move along group lines, the Veterans can claim to form a separate group. As in the industrial field the workers who are veterans have interests identical with workers who are not veterans, so in the political field the same mutual interests are apparent. Just as it would seem to be folly for a farmer veteran to vote against a candidate who would serve his best interests as a farmer, so it would seem that the worker veteran should line up with other workers along political as well as industrial lines."

The point which we wished to emphasize in the above, and which we still desire to emphasize, is certainly not that the Veterans should refrain from entering politics. What we did try to point out was the fact that all the returned men are members of some clearly defined economic group. The great majority are wage-earners. Some are farmers. Some are business and professional men. In the case of the two first mentioned groups, they are already organized as separate political sections of the Canadian population. We are confident also that business and professional men will be compelled to form such a group, if in the inevitable new order they are to have representation in future parliaments. We have said in reference to the wage-earning veterans: "Now that they have returned to civil life their interests, industrially, economically, socially and politically, are identical with those of other workers who did not go overseas." The same is true of the farmer veteran or the business or professional man who is a veteran. In one or other of the three groups mentioned every returned man must fit, and interests that are peculiar to returned men only, are few in comparison to those that affect, and will affect, the veteran as a worker, farmer or business man. And even though the returned men may organize along separate political lines, we have no hesitation in predicting that, sooner or later, they will find it necessary to join themselves as individuals to one or other of the groups we have mentioned herein.

The workers' political organization is separate in every way from the industrial organizations of Labor. Membership in the Labor party is not in any sense confined to trade unionists. Any adult person who believes in political representation by the workers, may, by subscribing to its platform and principles, become a member of the Dominion Labor Party.

**A CRITICAL SITUATION.**

It would take a modern Jeremiah to dope out the Labor situation in the States, particularly with respect to the railroads, where the situation is indeed critical.

The railroad workers deferred their strike in the shops and offices more than three months ago, at the earnest appeal of President Wilson that they give him time to reduce the cost of living. They say now that living costs as much or more than on August 1st.

Another powerful factor working toward trouble is the belief among the railroad men that Congress and the President will soon turn the railroads back to the private owners, along with a huge dividend guaranty which must be paid by the ultimate consumer. They fear that as soon as this is accomplished, the railroad companies will tear up the nation-wide agreement as to wages and conditions in the shops, recently made with the shopmen by the railroad administration. This agreement has all the value and substance of a union shop agreement; it is just the sort of thing that many of the most powerful private managers will attack at the first opportunity. Even the most conservative railroad workers will strike if that agreement is violated by private companies, and some believe that large sections of the membership of the unions may walk out if they even see the danger of its violation approaching.

These details of the railroad situation are uppermost in the minds of the heads of the railroad organizations. One of them is reported to have said that "all the elements of a general strike" are rapidly drawing together, thanks to the injunction policy, the proposed anti-strike law and the probable denial of wage increases to the railroads. It would seem to be evident that the industrial war in the country to the south is only just beginning. The conference of union heads in Washington on December 13th will probably be the most momentous gathering of American Labor forces ever held. The rank and file are demanding action and big business says, "You must not advance." Which brings the old query to mind: "What happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable body?" If the reader can answer that he should be able to dope out the Labor situation in the United States.

**UNIONISM HAS NEVER FAILED.**

The opponents of trade unionism point with glee to the defeat of this or that strike as proof of the inability of Organized Labor to better the workers' conditions. It is doubtless true that unions have not always been successful in every contest which they have undertaken. That is, the results sought have not been in every case immediately achieved, but it is equally true that no conquering army has invaded the country of the conquered, without having here and there received a repulse.

We have no hesitation in asserting, without fear of contradiction that in no industry in the civilized world have the workers been even fairly organized for a period of, say, five years, unless it has been followed by a substantial improvement in the matter of wages, hours of labor and social surroundings of those engaged in that vocation. Where unions have had a temporary failure or setback, it has not been the fault of the trade unions or trade unionism. It can be definitely asserted that in practically every instance where a union has been defeated in its effort to immediately improve its mem-

bers' material condition, the negligence, indifference or short-sightedness of workers outside the union have been responsible for the temporary repulse of Organized Labor. In a word, it is the absence of true unionism that is invariably to blame for the seeming defeat of trade unionism.

But despite the dead weight that Organized Labor has to bear with in its struggle upward, trade unionism has been of material benefit to all workers. It is true that the first thought of unionists is naturally for their self-improvement, and their prime purpose may not be to improve the condition of non-unionists. Yet none will dispute that as trade unions increase wages, reduce hours of Labor and secure more advantageous conditions of employment, non-unionists' conditions are relatively improved in every case.

Trade unionism is not an experiment. There is not an incident in the entire history of the labor movement where the workers have been organized in unions, and have fought for an increase of wages, a reduction in the hours of labor, or other improved conditions of employment, in which, though they have been defeated in the beginning, that they have not been ultimately successful, provided they have remained organized in their trade unions. This is a rule which there has not been a single deviation.

**A BRILLIANT IDEA.**

The suggestion of a Cardiff coal operator to the effect that only British subjects should be permitted to hold membership in the Miners' Unions is certainly a brilliant idea. It could very easily be worked to advantage too—if only British subjects worked in the mines.

A phase of the organization of workers which the Cardiff gentleman seems to be unable to grasp, is the fact that the unions are organized for the benefit of the workers, and such being the case it is not always necessary or desirable, from the workers' standpoint, that they should conform to the views held by the employer as to how they should be conducted or of whom they should be composed. It would undoubtedly be a fine thing for Mr. Montgomery and his colleagues if they could disintegrate a union by having all other than British subjects kept out, but it would be a mighty bad thing for the British subjects, and the aliens as well.

We have a great deal of sympathy for men of Mr. Montgomery's class. It is no doubt discouraging and disappointing to see men who were brought to America for the express purpose of beating down the American wage standard, taking their place alongside native Canadians and Americans in the fight to preserve a high standard of living. The idea of large employers of alien laborers has been to keep them in the slave-like attitude of the new immigrant. The idea of Organized Labor has been to make them appreciate the Canadian standard of life. To protect themselves from unfair competition, it was necessary, and is still necessary, for native Canadian Labor to educate the alien to the necessity of a higher standard, and to show him how such a standard might be maintained through organization. For it must not be forgotten that if Mr. Montgomery could get a sufficient number of aliens to run his mine at low wages for long hours, Canadian and British workers would work the same long hours for the same low wages, or not work at all. And in some Alberta mine fields such was actually the situation not many years ago.

**EDITOR'S NOTES.**

The trade union movement is ever on the side of progress.

Vote for the Labor candidates, and the Labor candidates only.

More things for the dollar would please us just as well as more dollars.

Everything in the nature of progress has been attained through agitation.

Is your union affiliated with the Alberta Federation of Labor? If not, why not?

The organized workers are fighting the battles of the unorganized, and therefore the inarticulate.

If our memory does not fail us, Mr. Ramsey told the people how to vote in connection with the firemen's plebiscite.

With a population less than half that of the United States, Great Britain has a trade union membership 50 per cent greater.

It is true that there are more dollars in some pay envelopes these days, but they don't seem to tighten the belt like the lesser number did in other days.

Generally those who talk about peace and harmony and concord between Capital and Labor desire to bring about such a happy condition on their own terms.

The January 3rd issue of the Free Press will be an Alberta Federation Convention number. We will have special articles from the Federation officers and other prominent Alberta Labor men. It is our intention to have copies of the paper distributed to every delegate at the convention in Calgary, in an endeavor to have the Free Press extend its scope to serve Labor throughout the province.

Alex Ross, after some months' study of the British Labor movement brings back the message that the British trade-unionists are jealous of their organizations which have taken a century to reach their present state of usefulness. Those who would have trade unionists believe that the Amalgamation and Federation movement in Britain is in any way similar to the O.B.U., are, to say the least, not adhering strictly to the facts of the case.

**HUGH ROBINSON, GENERAL ORGANIZER INTERNATIONAL JOURNEMEN TAILORS DIES**

Hugh Robinson died recently in Hamilton, Ont., after a protracted illness. Before he became incapacitated, deceased was general organizer for the Journeymen Tailors' International Union.

Auto mechanics at Kansas City, Mo., have organized a union.

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**PUBLIC MEETINGS**

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Monday, December 1—North Edmonton. Orange Hall. Highlands School.  
 Tuesday, December 2—Oliver School. Calder School.  
 Wednesday, December 3—King Edward School. St. Luke's Hall, Bonnie Doon.

Thursday, December 4—Norwood School. McKay Avenue School.

Friday, December 5—Empire Theatre. Strathcona Public Library.

Saturday, December 6—Parkdale School. Victoria High School.

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*Statement That Above Firm is Unfair to Labor is Not Correct*

The statement is being circulated that the Esdale Press is unfair to labor. The person or persons circulating this statement are evidently not conversant with the facts, or are endeavoring to give the public an erroneous impression of Mr. Esdale's attitude toward labor with a view to alienating the sympathies of labor in his present mayoralty campaign. We think this statement is unfair to Mr. Esdale and a slander on the employees of this establishment.

We therefore wish to state that only union labor is employed in all departments of The Esdale Press, and has been ever since its inception in Edmonton.

E. Pfimmer, Superintendent.  
 Geo. J. Shinnick, Bindery Foreman.  
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