

GAMMELMAN LABOR PRESS

Weekly News Letter

VOL. IV. \$2.00 Per Year. National and Rational OTTAWA, MARCH 25th, 1922 Live News and Views Single Copy 5 Cents. No. 12.

Labor's Contribution to Federal Debate

FEDERAL LABOR MINISTER CALLS MINERS' SECRETARY

In a telegram sent to J. B. McLachlan, secretary district 26, United Mine Workers of America, Glace Bay, N.S., Hon. James Mordock, minister of labor, expresses strong disapproval of "the underhanded and dishonest methods of undercutting" and asks for an assurance from Mr. McLachlan that he has not called upon the miners of Nova Scotia to cut their output in order to bring the British Empire Steel Corporation to terms. Mr. Mordock's telegram was prompted by a report which stated that Mr. McLachlan had called on the twelve thousand miners of Nova Scotia to join him in a policy of cutting the output as the most effective method of waging war against the corporation. The telegram follows:

"My attention has been called to a despatch appearing in an Ottawa paper dated from Sydney, and reading in part as follows: 'The war is on, class war.' In these words of a manifesto issued tonight, J. B. McLachlan, secretary of District 26, United Mine Workers, calls on the twelve thousand miners of Nova Scotia to join him in a policy of cutting the output as the most effective method of waging war against the British Empire Steel Corporation. I have thought it well to bring the above statement to your attention and should be obliged if you would let me have word immediately if any such document as is here outlined has been issued with your approval. I trust the public will not be misled by such a statement, and I hope that you will take this opportunity, in any event, of expressing the hope that yourself and other officers and members of your organization will cast your vote in the forthcoming election on the basis of a policy as is indicated in the statement above quoted. You will, I think, on reflection agree with me that any strength which organized labor possesses at the present time is the result of the unshakable and disinterested methods of undercutting, or, as it is sometimes called, sabotage, but of straight and honest dealings, each worker giving the best that is in him for the wages agreed upon. Any union or trade group which has received much publicity I shall gladly do my best to see that any reply received from you by way of disavowal or otherwise received equal prominence. I am, handing this message to the press.

The Herald publishes a telegram which J. B. McLachlan of the United Mine Workers of America, District 26 is said to have addressed to Hon. James Mordock, minister of labor, in reply to the latter's protest against the manifesto of the miners' secretary urging the miners to reduce production.

In part Mr. McLachlan said:

"Replying to your telegram of Saturday, I wish to state that in the manifesto issued by me, neither the word itself nor the intention once. However, I did in that document strongly advise the miners to cut down production to a point where all profits of the British Empire Steel Corporation would vanish. This tactic as a method of retaliation for a highly unjust encroachment of the employers upon the wages of the workmen and an invasion of their already too slender living, I have proclaimed openly, but there is no dishonesty about it; you to the contrary notwithstanding.

"I have preached this with the blessing of all my friends and the curses of my enemies. I have reached it in the individuals and thousands, and Mr. Minister, what are you going to do about it?"

"I shall do it again, knowing the miner has a perfect right to work with his coat on if he wants."

Mr. McLachlan said for the week ending December 16, before the week out, California Mine produced 16,881 tons of coal at a labor cost of \$2.02 per ton, and that for the week ending January 13, after the wage cut, the labor cost \$1.75, while for the week ending January 27 the mine produced 2,222 tons at a labor cost of \$2.55. He continues:

"Add the overhead charges on that interable 3,660 tons of coal and you may be able to guess why the miners are striking as they fight the nearest wage."

Mr. McLachlan added that the miners have no wage agreement and will not pay dividends on "acres of idle junk, known as the steel works."

The preamble to this was when the Record published what it termed a "secret" document and which it says James B. McLachlan, secretary of the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick division of the United Mine Workers of America, had made available to his manifesto on Friday, in which the miners were urged to restrict output because of a cut in wages imposed by the British Empire Steel Corporation upon 12,000 workers. The document claims that in many of the mines the men are already raising the cost of production by "striking on the job," and all miners are urged to follow suit. The document explains that the next step will be to place the situation of the workers before the Progressive party at Ottawa. The document says the effect of the action of the men in increasing the cost of securing coal is already to be seen in the increases in wages offered by the company since

MEDICINE HAT TRADES COUNCIL

The Medicine Hat Trades and Labor Council discussed the liquor act and there was some contentious debate. A motion was introduced by Delegate Currie that we "request the Alberta government to make provision to enable the clause in the Liquor Act to become operative which allows a person to have one quart of spirituous liquor and two gallons of malt liquor." The contention was made that the intent of the people was not being carried into effect in the administration of the law, and that while it was intended that citizens should have the privilege of maintaining a supply of liquor in their homes, things had been manipulated to such an extent that such a thing was next to an impossibility except through illegal practices.

The council then offered to confer with the provincial officials of the liquor act and most of the officials agreed to a new and better wage scale. However, when submitted to the rank and file of the men, it was turned down, his bitterest opponent being Mr. McLachlan. The company then introduced the wage scale of the consolidation board.

"The war is on—class war."

In these words of a manifesto issued by J. B. McLachlan, secretary of District 26, United Mine Workers, calls on the 12,000 miners of Nova Scotia to join him in a policy of cutting the output as the most effective method of waging war against the British Empire Steel Corporation.

In an open letter issued at the same time, Mr. McLachlan charges Hon. G. H. Murray, Premier of Nova Scotia, with responsibility for the deaths of three children who recently started to death at Dominion No. 5, near Glace Bay.

McLachlan is the leader of the more radical element of the United Mine Workers, and proved his leadership last Tuesday by opposing and defeating the Montreal agreement which was signed recently by a vote of seven to one.

Other news from Sydney and Springhill, N.S., states that a strike of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick miners will follow the 7 to 1 defeat of a wage schedule arranged between the British Empire Steel Corporation, which controls the mines, and the executive of the men's union, submitted to the rank and file of the workers in a referendum yesterday. The schedule was agreed upon at a meeting of the United Mine Workers, District 26, which has been summoned to Halifax for conference with Hon. E. H. Armstrong, minister of mines.

J. J. McDougall, assistant general manager of the British Empire Steel Corporation, said that from the rate of the rate paid in the Nova Scotia mine fields would be those set forth in the Gillen conciliation board award, which are already in effect.

This award calls for a lower wage than agreed upon in the schedule voted on recently.

Over 12,000 miners are affected. New and important developments in the Nova Scotia coal industry are expected as a result of the departure from Sydney tonight of president Robert Baxter, of the United Mine Workers, District 26, who has been summoned to Halifax for conference with Hon. E. H. Armstrong, minister of mines.

The future policy of the United Mine Workers of District 26, will probably be formulated at a meeting of the executive board which has been called for Wednesday at Glace Bay. Among the chief topics of discussion by the board will be the manifesto of J. B. McLachlan to the miners calling for a strike on the "job" attitude.

This manifesto is claimed to have been an independent move by the secretary without the sanction of the other members of the board.

LABOR MEMBERS MAKE NOTABLE SPEECHES ON THE ADDRESS

IRVINE AND WOODSWORTH'S CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NOTEWORTHY

What were acknowledged generally as speeches of an outstanding nature were the contributions to the debate at the Federal sessions on the address by the two Labor members, Irvine of Calgary and Woodsworth of Winnipeg.

William Irvine, who continued the debate, at the outset, expressed sympathy with the prime minister in the death of his brother, Dr. MacDougall King.

To Mr. Irvine there were two paramount issues before the country. The necessity of readjusting the government and institutions in accord with the changes going on in industry, and the problem of finding clothing and shelter for a people who according to the Dominion statistician, produced twice as much clothing and shelter as they consume.

As there had been a revolt against the party system in some of the constituencies (Progressive cheers), it was time that there should be a change in this regard in parliament. The country was face to face with a new social order.

The immediate question was whether the government proposed to meet the changes now going on in society half-way. To some, it might smack of irreverence to the British constitutional system to talk of making changes in it. Really, he spoke in a spirit of profound respect for the British system. Its greatness was due to the fact that it possessed elasticity of life, the power of adaptation.

Every institution, it was said, had sprung from a great human need, but sometimes institutions outlived their usefulness and became hindrances. What was needed was a recognition that human needs must have precedence. Systems of government had been made by men for men, and there was no good reason why they should not be made better. There was a tendency in institutions, when they had outlived their usefulness, to mould men to themselves rather than to be moulded by men. That was what the government seemed to want to do at present. The prime minister had said that he had invited Progressives into his cabinet, but it was on condition that they should become Liberals. That was the system seeking to modify the members of the house, rather than giving to the members of the house the right to modify the system. (Progressive cheers).

Liberals formed the government because they were the largest group and received their opportunity because the system of voting made it difficult for the people accurately to express their opinion. The government represented the financial interests of this country, with due regard to the great masses of the people. The official opposition also represented, when it did represent, the big interests. At present the Conservatives were the "political unemployed." The third group represented the organized farmers, and the fourth group organized labor. The latter group would have had a larger representation had there been any improved voting system. The member for Winnipeg Center (James S. Woodsworth) was the leader of the Labor group, and I said Mr. Irvine, "am the group." (Laughter).

Each group represented certain economic interests, and each possessed the right to contribute to the work of parliament, but the rules of parliament were in need of change before these contributions could be made.

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MONTREAL CON-TRACTORS CLAIM OVER-PROTECTION

Vigorous action is being taken by the Montreal building trades with a view to having some alteration made in the scaffolding laws of the Province, which they claim are irksome and create unnecessary impediment in the way of rapid building operations.

The feature of the law to which the greatest exception is taken, is that which provides that when scaffolding is erected more than fifteen feet high, a permit must be obtained and paid for, and the work must be seen and approved by a provincial inspector before the scaffold may be used.

This restriction is unnecessary, it is maintained by the builders, in that their financial obligations under the Workmen's Compensation Act and other liabilities for accidents connected with their operations, are sufficient to guarantee that builders will take every possible precaution to see that scaffolding and every part of the structures they erect are perfectly safe, both for people working on them and for those around.

Further, the city has its own inspectors who examine buildings periodically during construction, and whose business it is to see that no dangerous unsatisfactory structure is erected, permanently or temporarily. Builders men therefore feel that they have already sufficient inducement to make their scaffolding safe without the annoyance and delay caused by additional interference from the provincial authorities, and they think this provision might well be done away with.

With this object in view, a letter has been addressed to the Minister of Public Works at Quebec, Hon. Mr. Gagnon, drawing his attention to the above points, and asking the Minister to suggest the quickest and most effective way of having action taken in this sense. This letter, which has been drawn up by D. K. Trotter, secretary of the Builders' Exchange as a whole, was forwarded to Mr. Gagnon yesterday. As soon as a reply is received, the Minister's suggestions will be given careful study, and further steps will be taken, if necessary, with a view to obtaining legislative action.

QUEBEC LEGISLATURE AND INTERNATIONAL UNIONISM

President Tom Moore of the Trades Congress stated in a Toronto interview that the session introduced in the Quebec legislature regarding incorporation of trade unions is not entirely new. The Employers' Association of Manitoba, has had an opportunity for the Manitoba legislature for some time, but owing to the recent happenings there, it has not been presented. We are well aware of the influence behind these resolutions, and have been carefully watching the moves that are being made. If any legislation is introduced against international unions, the international unions will be heard from.

Three sittings of the Quebec Legislature were necessary to allow of all the members who wished to express their opinion on the question of international unions, and their views regarding the desirability of the Canadian workers forming themselves into unions which were essentially Canadian, or not subject to the dictation of labor leaders across the boundary line.

At one session an effort was made by Irene Vautrin, Montreal, to get the question of international unions in order that the Labor people might hold conferences, but the motion was defeated by the 38 votes to 18. In that vote Hon. A. LaCombe, Labor member for Dorion, and Minister without portfolio, was the only member of the House to side with Mr. Vautrin, while Messrs. Naive, Renaud and Du Tremble also supported him.

After a vigorous speech by Hon. J. A. Taschereau, in support of the amendment proposed by Edmond Robert of Rouville informing the House of the organizations of workers to give themselves a constitution which will be essentially Canadian, the supporters of the internationalists, with few exceptions, withdrew, only four opposing the amendment. Messrs. A. Laurendeau and J. Gauthier, the two labor members, were the only members of the House to side with Mr. Vautrin, while Messrs. Naive, Renaud and Du Tremble also supported him.

The debate was continued by General Smart, who maintained that the workers should not be divided by but once they got the men under their control they took away the liberty of the individual. The debate had been in the public interest and had shown the temper of the people of the province, that they did not want the trades unions to go too far, and that a square deal was required. He did not wish to press his motion and accepted the amendment proposed by Mr. Robert, believing that for the present it went quite far enough, and hoping that it would lead to better conditions between employers and employees.

Premier Taschereau acknowledged the right of workmen to join unions and even a strike. They had had strikes before but they had been settled by arbitration, and they had not submitted a proposal which the men wanted the employers had changed their minds.

He admitted that there were hot heads in every class of society, but he reminded the House that if Quebec had good labor laws it was the International Unionism that had come from Indianapolis. The men themselves decided by 53 to 25 to go out, and he tried his best to effect a settlement. Mr. Laing had come at the request of the employers, and if the latter had respected the arrangements the strike would have been settled immediately. But after submitting a proposal which the men wanted the employers had changed their minds.

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WESTERN MINE SECTION VISITED

Gerald Brown, assistant deputy minister of labor, passed through Calgary on Sunday evening on his way to Fernie, B.C., where he will investigate the situation which has arisen between the coal miners and operators which it is feared may result in a walk-out of the miners when the present agreement expires on March 31. Mr. Brown will likely visit the principal fields in Alberta, including the Crows Nest Pass and Drumheller districts, before returning to Ottawa.

REACH AGREEMENT

A provisional settlement has been reached in the building trades dispute affecting 700,000 operatives. The representatives of the employers and employees agreed to accept a graduated reduction of wages and modification of the number of hours of work per week, commencing April 1.

The employers proposed to extend the present 44-hour week to a maximum of 50 hours per week in summer with a shorter week in the winter.

MINER'S BRAVERY

For the "bravest deed of the year," Thomas Brannon, a young miner, was yesterday awarded the Stange gold medal and \$5 by the Royal Humane Society.

Brannon is employed at the Nettleton Colliery, Nettleton, near Newcastle-on-Tyne, and on November 14, while working in the Hall Pit, Nicholas Fawcett, the deputy foreman, was overcome by fumes 40 yards from the entrance.

Pasmore had gone in to bring out some gear so that the miners might begin work in another part. Brannon was called and at once tried to rescue Pasmore, but was driven back by the fumes.

Although this part of the pit was strange, and quite unlighted, Brannon did not cease his efforts, and the third attempt, when he dragged his comrade out of the darkness. Pasmore afterwards recovered.

Admiral Sir E. B. Freeman, who presided at the annual meeting yesterday, is himself a holder of the Stange medal.

Several of the Grenoble plants are considering the question of operating on part time. The fall of the market has made German competition very formidable, especially in the United States market. Another difficulty is the large quantities of second rate goods which have been thrown on the market. Meantime, many Grenoble glove workers are giving up their trade for other more highly-paid work.

DEMANDS INQUIRY

The lockout in the engineering trades was debated in the house of commons as a result of the labor party's desire for the government to institute an inquiry by an impartial tribunal.

John Robert Clynes, labor member from Manchester, said labor wished to make opportunity use of the new Industrial Courts Act and to prove that the unions had done everything in their power to maintain peace and prevent injury to the engineering industry. He contended that the question of overtime was the cause of the lockout, which in turn was the result of an act of aggression on the part of the employers. He declared the question of management could not be considered apart from the rights of workmen regarding labor and pay, which the employers could not alienate.

Sir Allan Smith, Coalition Unionist member for South-Consolidation, speaking in behalf of the engineering union, contended that the overtime was the cause of the dispute. "The real question," he said, "is dual control and interference with the management and the employers are not going to tolerate that."

Sir Allan said the employers did not desire to smash the unions but wanted to see them become more powerful on the condition that they, by altering their methods, made their power a real one. He was opposed to government inquiry of the lockout.

Thomas MacNamara, speaking for the government, said an inquiry could not be instituted while other groups of unions affected by the lockout were balloting. He pleaded for both sides, whatever the result of the ballots might be, to try to get together and compose their differences. A motion to adjourn, introduced by the labor members, was rejected by a vote of 163 to 80.

WINDSOR PULP MILLS MAY CLOSE

The pulp mills of the Canada Paper Company at Windsor, P.Q., will no longer be in operation, if the letter of the injunction served on the company Saturday in accordance with the judgment of the supreme court is carried out. Some time ago the supreme court confirmed the judgment of a lower court in the action taken by A. J. Brown, K.C., of Montreal, to prevent the company from using sulphate and soda for the manufacture of paper at the plant here. Mr. Brown claimed that the older arising from the use of sulphate and soda prevented him from enjoying his country residence here.

The closing of the plant will throw about 75 men out of work.

TAKING BALLOT

The employers in the engineering industries state that two unions have agreed to sign a memorandum renouncing the right of employers to exercise managerial functions in the matter of regulating the overtime of workmen.

Forty-seven other allied unions are now balloting on the question. The rejection of the employers' plan by the engineering union recently was the cause of the lockout put into effect by the employers a week ago.

NOVEL STRIKE

Blackpool—Rev. Adam Hamilton, pastor of the Alexandra Road Congregational Church, went on strike for a fortnight. In a letter to parishioners he complained of empty pews at services. "There is something wrong either with me or the congregation," he said. "I shall wait a fortnight for the parish to decide which."

FEELING DECISION

A deputation consisting of the Lord Mayors and Mayors of northern cities and towns, including Sheffield, Glasgow, Newcastle and Barrow, waited on Lord Lee, First Lord of the Admiralty Office and drew attention to the serious situation which had arisen as a result of the suspension of work in the proposed new battleships following the Washington conference agreement.

LOWER COSTS

A further two per cent. drop in the cost of living for working class families between February 1 and March 1 was recorded in the government labor Gazette. The figure now stands at 86 per cent. above that ruling in July, 1914, and is the lowest since December, 1917.

One effect of the new index figure now shown is that railwaymen's wages will be reduced two shillings weekly.

COAL INDUSTRY

Trade reports for the week show the surprising recovery in British coal

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