

Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press



The Canadian Labor Press
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A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONISM

With the wish father to the thought writers and speakers claiming the decadence of Trade Unionism have perhaps full and sufficient answer to their imaginations in the "International Labor Review," the monthly magazine issued by the International Labor Office, contains some remarkable figures showing the huge development of trade unionism since 1913.

Table showing growth of trade unionism from 1913 to 1920 for various countries including Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, etc.

Estimated total 16,152,000 48,029,000
*Estimates based on partial information. †Figures not available.
It is interesting to note that of the total of 42,040,000 members in 1919, 34,061,000, or 80 per cent., belonged to European countries.

REFLECTION OF THE UNION LABEL

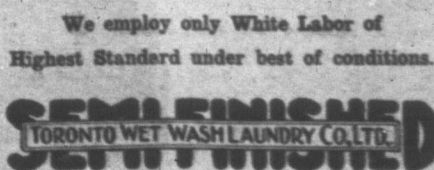
The Union Label, symbolizing as it does the conditions which the union itself is established to secure and maintain, is proof that these conditions obtain in the making of the article upon which it appears.

THE REAL CAUSE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Why unemployment? asks the Oklahoma Leader in a recent editorial, after recognizing that men and women are starving because they are out of work.
Staring in the midst of plenty. Staring because our complex society is arranged with such faultiness that there is no place for them.

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PRES. MOORE WINS POINT AT GENEVA

A Router cable from Geneva says that as was expected the question of a reform of the constitution governing the body of the international office provoked considerable discussion at yesterday's session of the International Labor Conference.

The Japanese amendment providing for at least four government delegates from overseas countries and at least two from each in both the employers' and workers' groups was defeated, but an amendment moved by Tom Moore of Canada providing at least one delegate each in the employers' and workers' groups was adopted by a vote of 56 to 15.

The International Conference reached a compromise in the fight of several days' duration on the use of white lead in the manufacture of paint. The compromise was obtained in a proposed convention, providing that the ingredients of paint to be used for exteriors, that white lead be prohibited entirely for the paints for interiors, that women and children under 16 years of age be not employed where white lead is used in the manufacture of paint.

A letter from Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, was read at the session, urging the question of unemployment. Such a question was strongly supported by J. Jouhaux, delegate from France.

SHOP CRAFT RULES FOR U. S. RAILROADS
The United States Railroad Labor Board announced that new working rules for the six shop crafts probably will be completed and issued in time to become effective December 1.

The Board, it was indicated, will next take up for consideration the rules and working conditions for the maintenance of way employees. There are a large number of disputed questions regarding these rules, already before the Board, and statisticians have prepared most of the cases for presentation.

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IS TRADES UNIONISM PLAYED OUT

By Joe Turner.
The question "Is trade unionism played out?" was one which was frequently debated early in this country. It is sometimes querulously put today.

There are even working people who declare that trade unionism is no good and has done no good. Even a few Communist friends of mine keep on saying so, especially those of the S. L. P. school.

I can overlook the sayings of the ignorant, but the statement of the studious men and women in the S. L. P. and Communist movement need denying and disproving.

Late in the '90s there were even men and women of the I. L. P. saying similar things, and somehow every few years the cry is restated—probably because trade unionism has not come enough, or because the statements of objects in trade union rules are not what they think they should be.

Trade unions are nearly always better than their rules; always broader in spirit than the dogmas put forth. But, while every trade union and every trade union official should welcome constructive criticism, it is not just or wise on the part of our extreme friends to condemn in bitter and violent language all others who do not accept their faith or to term every trade union official a labor faker or twister or something that sounds equally bad.

If they tried to convince they might convert, but violent diatribes against officials, clever but wicked cartoons against labor officials, condemning labor and its policy day by day, more vicious than they do man's real enemy, capitalism, is not the way to bring harmony into the world or show a trade union official where he is wrong and point out to him a better policy.

I wonder if many folks realize what trade unionism has really done for the workers. In my 40 years' activity in the movement I never knew any body of employers advance wages voluntarily or propose a shorter working week on any day. They have always opposed such propositions. I never knew any body of employers welcome trade unionism until the unions were strong enough to command.

Textile workers 30 to 40 years ago worked 56 1/2 hours per week. The men's wages in Yorkshire mills were about a guinea a week, the women's 9 to 12 shillings. They are far from good today, but excluding cost of living bonus (which more than doubles the wages), they have now

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True, the unemployed question has not changed; it is an evil arising from an evil system of commercialism. But who attacks this system more than trade unions? Who promotes measures to alleviate the distress from unemployment? Who helps to save the lives of the children? Who won the Pleading of School Children Act, and the Old Age Pensions Act? Who originated, promoted and pushed these matters into and through Parliament? The trades unions.

I could continue such examples indefinitely, but a little reading and thinking will prove that trade unionism is essential as long as the wage system lasts, and that organization of labor is imperative if we are to have a proper standard of civilization. To attack trade unionism is folly. We should rather uphold

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