



Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press



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IMMIGRATION AND IMPERIAL CONFERENCE

SOME interesting immigration figures are contained in a recent report issued by the Department of Immigration and Colonization. These figures reveal the fact that thousands and thousands of workers from all parts of the world are looking to Canada as the ideal country in which to secure a livelihood, and look upon this country as the "Promised Land." Out of 147,562 immigrants 61,963 settled in Ontario and 19,843 in the Province of Quebec. When Vice-President H. J. Halford, of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada, made the announcement, upon his return from Europe, that sixty per cent. of the immigrants from Britain intended settling in Ontario, the Department of Immigration issued an official statement in an endeavor to discredit this statement. The indications are, however, that Ontario will be the province to which the great mass of the immigrants will seek admission. The whole history of Canada has been one of immigration, and listening to our statesmen, both in Canada and the United Kingdom, we must expect that during the present year there will be a greater influx of immigrants to Canada than at any time in our history. The Canadian Labor Press has stated on many occasions that the Labor movement of this country demands that immigrants be informed of the conditions as they exist in Canada, and the misrepresentation of booking agents, employers' agents, etc., cease forthwith. The Canadian Premier will attend the Imperial Conference in June of this year and the question of immigration, so important to Canada, is one that the Imperial Conference will no doubt be called upon to discuss. We well remember the recent declarations of Mr. David Lloyd George, Premier of Great Britain, to the effect that the unemployment problem in the United Kingdom can be solved only by Empire emigration. The Canadian Premier has been acquainted with the views of the workers of this country by the Executive Council of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada and it is hoped that he will endeavor to put that policy into full force and effect.

OPEN UP TRADE WITH RUSSIA.

THE Canadian section of the Metal Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, through one of its officials, Mr. Harry Kerwin, has announced that when trade relations are established with Russia a market will be found for many products produced by the workers affiliated to that department. Recently the British Government entered into a trade agreement with the Russian Soviet Government and is now awaiting the decision of the Russian administration. Hon. N. W. Rowell, the ex-president of the Privy Council, speaking in the House of Commons the other day expressed the hope that the trade agreement would be ratified by the Russian Soviet Government. He also stated that the League of Nations believed that the opening up of trade with Russia would assist, in no small way, the clearing up of the Russian situation. The announcement of the Canadian section of the Metal Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor is one that all sections of Canada can endorse. In doing so they are in no way committing themselves to Bolshevism but rather are they assisting in its destruction. Let us hope then, that trade relations will be established with the least possible delay.

AGAIN QUIT "PLAYING POLITICS."

MONTREAL'S civic politicians continue to "play politics" with the unemployment question. They endeavor to affix all responsibility on the Dominion Government. We stated some weeks ago that the Montreal civic politicians should consider the question in a straight forward and business-like manner. They have continued to shirk their share of the responsibility. In the meantime, so far as they are concerned, the unemployed may starve. The labor movement of this country has advocated for years the establishment of a system of unemployment insurance; there is no such legislation in Canada at the present time. The Dominion Government, months ago, announced its policy on the present unfortunate situation and the Montreal civic authorities have endeavored to "pass the buck" ever since. The Minister of Labor in a letter to the Montreal authorities this week states that the "Federal Government has no machinery for ascertaining the existence of the individual cases of need, and this is a responsibility which must and did rest upon the municipality."

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP A SUCCESS.

OPONENTS of public ownership of public utilities are given much food for thought in the annual statement of the Ottawa Hydro-Electric Commission.

POLITICS AND PEOPLE THROUGH THE TELESCOPE OF LABOR

By J. A. P. Haydon.
Interpreted only by the enactment of some minor amendments to the Dominion Election Act, the Dominion Government has been endeavoring for some time to revise the Ontario voters' list for use in the prohibition referendum, the debate on the Speech from the Throne continued throughout the second week of Parliament.

The Government was relieved of some attacks in the early part of the week and the members of the Liberal bench occupied the major portion of their time in attacks on the self-styled John the Baptist of Quebec, Mr. J. Gauthier, St. Hyacinthe, who has forsaken the National Liberal Party, announcing that he will support the Government. While much has been said about the actions of the member from St. Hyacinthe, various members of the Opposition ask the Government for a statement as to its policy in regard to the Imperial Conference which is to be held at London, Eng., in June of this year.

Hon. C. J. Doherty, Minister of Justice, was the only member of the ministry to take part in the debate on the Speech from the Throne during the week. He defended the policy of the Government and reiterated his previous declarations, made in various parts of the country, that Canada has gained its nationhood, and it was the policy of the Government to maintain that position. He also stated, in response to a question put to him by Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, that a "Canadian representative at Washington will be named just as soon as Canada decides who will be named."

Unlike the first week of Parliament, international affairs were very much in the background. The Liberals make it quite clear that they will tolerate no central authority in London, "that would dictate the policy of Canada." The Government make it equally as clear that at the forthcoming Imperial Conference, "despite anything that has appeared in the newspapers to the contrary, nothing will be done there that will bind Canada."

The new information was brought forth by the second week's debate but one thing is certain: The Government have instilled more enthusiasm into its following than there was a fair at dancing of members at all times during the week. It was surprising to many that Mr. C. A. Fournier, leader of the National Progressive, should have assailed unemployment insurance and old age pensions. Despite this, however, his address on the Speech from the Throne was one of the most constructive of the large number delivered. While he supported the "confidence" amendment of the leader of the National Liberal party, he did so for quite a different reason than that advanced by Hon. W. Mackenzie King and his followers. Mr. C. A. Fournier's address, however, drew applause from both sides of the House. He attacked both parties, and it is, perhaps, interesting to note that the question of unemployment insurance was the subject of his frank statement of policy. Mr. C. A. Fournier did not follow the Government line, but stated that the Minister "left the country in no doubt as to where he stands on this question of protection." Mr. C. A. Fournier's statement in regard to unemployment insurance and old age pensions came, as we have previously said, as a complete surprise. He said: "I have every sympathy with any movement that is designed or intended to alleviate distress in our country, or for that matter in any other country, but I assure you, I offer this suggestion to the leader of the Government, that this Canadian Government should be willing to work, so that they can make their way well and decently."

Not only has the public ownership of this utility been beneficial to the citizens of Ottawa, but it has been a financial success as well. In a few years the City of Ottawa will own the plant outright without a cent of indebtedness. The Ottawa Hydro-Electric Commission entered the field in competition, and not only has it been successful in standing up against this opposition but it has been able to reduce the rates from time to time. The public ownership of this utility is growing in favor and the number of subscribers has increased from 1,314 in 1905 to 10,939 in 1920. Rates have decreased over sixty per cent. since the city took over this utility. What can be accomplished in this respect can, with efficient management, be done on all public utilities. Those in our midst who still favor the private ownership of public utilities should read the financial statement of the Ottawa Hydro-Electric Commission for 1920.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

FROM October 15, 1920, to January 6, 1921, two thousand workers went home each night with no employment. This condition has continued up to the present time. During the year, 1920, Canada imported goods to the value of \$1,305,593,895.00. Had these goods been manufactured in Canada by Canadian capital and Canadian labor sufficient work could and would have been found for all of these workers now unemployed and many others, too. Adequate wage standards would have been established and a fair investment secured on the capital invested. Why not buy more at home, supporting Canadian labor and Canadian capital and at the same time assist in reducing the national debt of Canada?

NOT YET TOO LATE.

ONTARIO'S Hydro-Electric Commission and the Ontario Government gave an excuse for the introduction of the 10-hour workday on the Chippewa Canal that the work could not be completed in the allotted time under eight-hour day conditions. This week we have the announcement that the work will be completed 16 months ahead of time. Had the eight-hour day prevailed the work could and would have been completed in the specified period and we suggest to the Ontario Hydro-Electric Commission and the Ontario Government that even at this late date they establish the eight-hour day on this public undertaking.

In the world, unemployment insurance and old age pensions, while they may seem to be a relief, give concern to the country, there is no great need for them at the present time.

The leader of the Agrarian Party made it plain that Canada should cultivate a taste for products of the United States. He cited the fact that Canada has made some mistakes in all other countries, but had none in the United States. While Mr. Crear had a passing interest in European affairs, he and his party were deeply interested in the affairs of the United States and suggested that we should trade more and more with the republic to the south. On the question of the tariff he reiterated his previous declarations that we should have a tariff for revenue only, or in reality free trade. He stated that Canadian industries could stand up against outside competition with the aid of the tariff. Mr. Crear's speech touched on many other important questions. He hoped the day would never come when we would have in Canada a Ministry of War and a Sea Lord of the Canadian Admiralty.

"We hear no good deal in these days about a naval holiday among the nations of the world," said the Agrarian leader, "but I think we in Canada should take a naval holiday too." Later on in his speech Mr. Crear, in referring to the forthcoming Imperial Conference, suggested a question put to him by Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, that a "Canadian representative at Washington will be named just as soon as Canada decides who will be named."

On the occasion of Mr. Crear's address more members were in the gallery than on any previous occasion during the session. The galleries were crowded, too. It is expected that the debate on the Speech from the Throne will continue until the end of next week. Whether the Government is playing the safe game or is determined, but there seems to be a large number of members on both sides of the House that are anxious to put their views on record.

Mr. Peter McGibbon, Muskoka, took up the case of Labor in his address and hoped that the Minister of Labor would be able to find some solution for the problem of unemployment. The member for Muskoka said: "Unemployment is a national disaster, and it is not today; nothing is so conducive to unrest on the part of the laboring man as when he finds that he has nothing laid by for his wife and family, and that poverty is more or less confronting him. In a country like Canada, where the nature of our climate, employment is more or less seasonal this is one of the greatest evils that have been laid before the Parliament during the past two years." Mr. McGibbon also favored old age pensions and in view of the fact that the number of men and women have reached that stage through no fault of their own, and it is the duty of every citizen to look after their citizens who have become impoverished through sickness, or death, or accident, and to see that they are not left in want of food and shelter. Mr. McGibbon's address was one of the best of the session.

Hon. Henri S. Beland offered a valuable suggestion when he stated that the Government delegates to the Assembly of the League of Nations furnish the people of Canada with a report of a summary of the work accomplished. He congratulated the Canadian delegates in protesting against the international disarmament conference, and in concluding his remarks on the League of Nations the members from Beauport said:

Let all who would take this warning lightly remember the fatal error, such as already been made in Soviet Russia. In September, 1918, after the murder of Uritsky, Chief of the Petrograd police, and the attempt to assassinate the Soviet Government declared all the anti-Bolsheviks to be hostages in the event of further assassinations, and at the same time a retreat for the acts of terrorism already committed, ordered a number of these "hostages" in several towns to be shot.

It is impossible to estimate the number of men and women killed at that time. The general public conceals the true extent of the hideous massacre after the publication of the first lists of victims. But from these lists it is known that in Petrograd 512 people were shot, 152 in Penza, 41 in Nijni-Novgorod, 38 in Smolensk, 23 in Moscow, six in Minsk, four in Minsk, seven in Nijni-Lovoff and seven in Schenars. The last echo of this madness was the proclamation of the Petrograd (in Northern Russia) Executive Revolutionary Committee that it shot 14 bourgeois hostages as a revenge for the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

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