

omic principle their ideas on labour questions, and those allied thereto, cannot but be unstable, visionary, theoretic. The so-called "rights" of labour and of capital are to be so classified. Labour has no "rights" other than those enjoyed by capital, their "rights" are reciprocal. They each possess something which the other needs, they are both in a state of mutual dependence.

The owner of capital, as a distinguished French economist points out, if put alone in a desert place, would be as certain to starve as a labourer in the same position. For both of them there must exist corresponding circumstances to render either capital or labour of any value. Those circumstances are, necessarily, such as make capital desirous of employing labour, and labour anxious to be employed. In a word, a market must exist for both these economical powers, the one as a buyer, the other as seller. All investments, out of which capital derives a revenue, have an industrial basis. Were all the wheels of industry to cease revolving capital would be fruitless, paralyzed, valueless. On the ground of severe economical principle there is no more reason for a Conference regarding Labour and Capital than between the buyers of wheat and the growers, or, between bankers as a class and their customers as a class. The desirability of such conferences, however, has arisen from the organization of labour, and the organization of capital having concentrated their respective interests in a small representative body, or bodies, trusts representing organized capital, trades unions representing organized labour. An effort was made some years ago to organize wheat growers interests on the same lines, by establishing a Bureau with authority to fix the current prices of wheat in the United States, but the scheme was abortive. The conferences of capital and labour representatives have simply taken the place of individual interviews between employer and employed for fixing the prices of labour. So long as those represented are content to waive their personal liberty in this respect, nothing can be said in objection to the arrangement on the ground of principle, and, if such a system obviates disorder in the labour market, much may be said as to its value from the expediency standpoint. The discussions that will arise out of the reference of capital and labour disputes to a committee will, probably, do much to inform employes as to the conditions of the market in which the goods they make are offered for sale. From such information they will be able to judge whether their demands or the employers' are the most reasonable. Strikes on the one hand and lock-outs on the other may thus be avoided by both the buyers and sellers of labour becoming thoroughly well informed as to the exact situation and prospects of the market. If, as the result of such conferences, some equitable and acceptable basis for fixing wages can be discovered—as there was in the iron trade in England many years ago, a great stride will have been taken in regulating wages

in accord with a definite principle, and so solving the Capital and Labour problems.

A SURFEIT OF LEGISLATION.

Some British politicians are in favour of the establishment of four separate local legislatures for the United Kingdom—one for England, one for Scotland, one for Ireland and one for Wales—with a federal parliament, so to speak, in London to look after colonial and foreign affairs. They usually point to Canada, with its progressiveness, its prosperity and its loyalty, as an example of the successful working of such a system. But there are Canadians who think that their country has attained the happy position which she occupies to-day, not on account of her numerous local legislatures, but rather in spite of them and of the conditions to which they give rise. As a prominent Montrealer said recently: "We are legislated almost to death." Advantage is naturally taken of the abundant opportunities provided for prolonged and desultory debates by those who are able to talk fluently, some of whom become, as Beaconsfield said of his great political opponent, "intoxicated with the exuberance of their own verbosity." Legislative projects of all kinds, grave, ludicrous, useless and sometimes, but rarely, useful, are discussed at length. The expense to the taxpayers of all these legislatures is enormous, and is by no means counterbalanced by any public good. Worst of all, the present system creates in the minds of many a sort of narrow provincialism, or sectionalism, which unfits them to take a broad and patriotic view of national issues. They are apt to subordinate questions of large importance to the country as a whole to interests which are entirely provincial. The danger to national solidarity is obvious. With a people of such a practical turn of mind, and endowed with such intellectual alertness, as ours, the work of devising and applying an efficacious remedy ought assuredly not to be difficult. The late Sir John A. Macdonald considered the law-making powers of the Provincial Legislatures had been grossly abused, and had become a scandal.

CORNWALL, ONT., has accepted Mr. Carnegie's offer of \$7,000 towards a public library. The town will give a site and devote \$700 yearly to the maintenance of the institution.

LORD AVEBURY, a distinguished English authority on finance, said, at a recent meeting of the Royal Statistical Society: "The problem of the day is whether municipalities are to *govern* or to *trade*—they cannot do both." The opinion of one so eminent outweighs that of "a whole theatre" of those who take superficial views of such matters.

A HIGH COLLAR seems a queer insurance risk, but one nearly killed its wearer recently. He fell from his bike at Sterling, Ill., and his collar cut open his throat to his windpipe. Moral.—If you wear high collars take out an accident policy—or low one, either. The rule works well both ways.