

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

"Whatever may be said against the Mercier Government," said Brown, "there is one thing which will have to be conceded in its favor and that is that wherever there has been a disposition on the part of contractors on subsidized work to defraud labor by non-payment of wages, Mercier has always paid labor out of the subsidies granted by the Government for these public works. He did this on the Hereford Railway, and he is doing it now on the Valleyfield bridge. The Dominion Government had been asked to see justice done to the Italians working in Cookshire; the Federal subsidy had not as yet been paid, and Laurier and others asked Sir John to pay these laborers before handing over balance of the subsidy to the directors of the road. These capitalists, however, were staunch supporters of the Conservative Government, and Sir John knew that if he touched their pockets he would lose their vote and influence at the next election, and so the Cookshire laborers were sacrificed for party politics; Hall, the Conservative member for Sherbrooke, even went so far as to state on the floor of the House that the company did not owe a cent to these laborers. Mercier at once came to the rescue by appointing a commission and paying claims amounting to over \$40,000, which sum was stopped out of the Provincial subsidy of the company; he did what Sir John dare not do, and he deserves praise for doing it."

"I am not so sure about that," said Phil; "as a matter of fact he could not do less than what he has done. His government has been asked time and again to pass an act which would give labor a first lien to the extent of its wages on what it produces, but this modern champion of labor has never had the moral courage to do it because he and his party are just as much afraid of the money power as that other crowd of shysters at Ottawa."

"Not only that," said Guskil, "but if such an act were passed, he could never again gain cheap notoriety as a champion of the poor, because they would be secure in what little they do earn."

"There's a sucker born every minute," said Phil, "and Mercier catches them as fast as they show up. I do really believe that he has succeeded in pulling the wool over Brown's eyes, too. The very fact of his feeling justified in interfering at Hereford and Valleyfield shows that the law does not protect the laborer; his interference is proof that his government realizes this, and his unwillingness in the face of all this to pass a lien act proves him a mere clap-trap politician."

"All the capital a workingman has," said Sharkey, "is his labor, either of brain or muscle, or both, as the case may be. Upon this he and his family depend for a living—he has positively nothing else. Rob him of this and he starves or becomes a burden upon the community; he is wronged and every member of the community which supports him is wronged. It is therefore necessary that the law should secure him from loss by giving him a first lien upon what he produces. I demand a first lien because he absolutely risks the very existence of himself and family, and cannot afford to take any chances. In these days of wild-cat schemes and paper credit to be ranked ninth on the list of claimants to an estate, as provided by our old French law, is fatal to him. Besides our whole legal machinery is so cumbersome and expensive, and withal so slow, that a poor man cannot avail himself of its benefits, even supposing there were any for him. But the law does not protect the laborer, and this is why the Government feels called upon to interfere in his behalf. If the law protects the laborer then Mer-

ciar's action, both at Hereford and Valleyfield, is a meddling and unpardonable interference between master and man. Mercier is either an overbearing, meddling busybody, or else a sham reformer, unprincipled enough to knowingly tolerate a grievous wrong, for no other reason than that it affords him an opportunity now and again to pose as the friend of the people; he can take whichever horn he likes, but he'll have to take one or the other."

"The thing is as plain as the nose on your face," said Sinnett. "If the law sufficiently protects the laborer, the government has no right to interfere, and if it does not, it is the bounden duty of the government to alter it so that it will. Meanwhile it would be well not to grow enthusiastic over these clever dodges of an astute politician; he was not placed in power to grant personal favors, but to enact laws that will secure justice to all."

BILL BLADES.

DISCRIMINATION IN IMMIGRATION.

The question, therefore, arises, and there is no more important question before the American people: What shall be done to protect our labor against this undue competition and to guard our citizenship against an infusion which seems to threaten deterioration? We have the power, of course, to prohibit all immigration, or to limit the number of persons to be admitted to the country annually or—which would have the same effect—to impose upon immigrants a heavy capitation tax. Such rough and stringent measures are certainly neither necessary nor desirable if we can overcome the difficulties and dangers of the situation by more moderate legislation. These methods, moreover, are discriminate; and what is to be desired, if possible, is restriction,

which shall at the same time discriminate. We demand now that immigrants shall not be paupers or diseased or criminals, but these and all other existing requirements are vague, and the methods provided for their enforcement are still more indefinite and are perfectly ineffective. Any law, to be of use, must require, in the first place, that immigrants shall bring from their native country, from the United States consul or other diplomatic representative, an effective certificate that they are not obnoxious to any of the existing laws of the United States. We ought, in addition, to make our test still more definite by requiring a medical certificate in order to exclude unsound and diseased persons.—Hon. Henry Cabot Lodge in North American Review for January.

REDUCE THE HOURS.

Even now a panic can be averted and society may be saved by a general reduction of the hours of labor.

But may we safely look forward to such a fortunate result? Nine-tenths of the employers are so ignorantly stupid that they don't know that a general reduction in the hours of labor would save them, and the fourths of the wage workers can only see a reduction of wages in a reduction of hours.

A general reduction of the hours of labor throughout the United States would result in stopping all further discharges and in employing every man who is to-day without work. The employment of every idle man would revive trade and industry everywhere and lead to high wages and prosperity.

Reduce the hours and stop bankruptcy!
Reduce the hours and stop trampism!
Reduce the hours and create employment!

Reduce the hours and prevent revolution!—Patterson Labor Standard.

The late Marchioness of Ely has bequeathed to Princess Beatrice a diamond bracelet with "Fontain-bleau" on the back, a gift which she received from the Empress Eugenie.



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" Canadian Frieze Overcoats, Pure Wool Superfine	5.25, " 10.50
" " " All Wool Guaranteed	3.90, " 8.00

Our Children's Plush Overcoats, in Divers Colors, from \$2.00 to \$5.00 are marvels and would be good value as charged elsewhere for \$9.00 and \$10.00. Men's, Youths' and Boys' Suits at correspondingly low prices. Eaton Suit \$4.90, nothing in the West to beat it. A Large Assortment of Pure Woollen Underclothing marked 2½ per cent above Mills' quotations. 1,000 dozen Seamless All-wool Aberdeen Socks at 15 Cents, commonly sold at 30 Cents, for this Great Sale only. Call Early and Quickly, to get a Good Choice, as this Great Sale—if the crowds still continue to come—will soon be over at the

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