

Ottawa Votes For Labor

By William Harris.

For three months the civil servants in Ottawa have been in a ferment. Over thirteen hundred had grown impatient under economic abuse and the failure of obsolete methods to eliminate it, and affiliated with Labor; thousands more had been watching them with mixed emotions, hoping yet fearing, while a few score were noisily antagonistic. It was plain that if such a state continued the last would be worse than the first. Everyone could see it. So it was decided to settle the question by a trial by ballot. The idea seemed to originate among the officers of the Civil Service Association of Ottawa, but Federal Union No. 66 welcomed it with enthusiasm and confidence, and thus the two rival bodies pulled together like brothers.

On Friday, October 29, the day of the referendum, the Associated Federal Employees of Ottawa (Union No. 66), voiced some doubts regarding the electoral system being employed by the old association and were assured by T. R. L. McInnes, its president, that every precaution would be taken to see that the referendum was impartially carried out. However, through the columns of the *Civil Service News* and the daily press the Civil Service Association of Ottawa carried on a hot campaign against affiliation with labor, necessitating explanations and denials from the officers of Union No. 66 up to the eleventh hour.

The vote was taken on the following ballot:—

“ARE YOU IN FAVOR OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ASSOCIATION OF OTTAWA AFFILIATING WITH LABOR, UNDER A CHARTER DERIVED FROM THE TRADES AND LABOR CONGRESS OF CANADA?”

and resulted as follows:—
 For affiliation 3525
 Against affiliation 2517

Majority for affiliation 1008
 By departments the vote was:—
 Department. Yes No
 Agriculture 110 58

Auditor General's	86	65
Civil Service Commission. . .	68	66
Conservation Commission. . .	9	22
Customs	208	82
Finance	145	66
Fisheries	40	7
Distribution office	1	19
House of Commons staff. . .	19	67
Health	32	28
Indian Affairs	11	46
Interior	450	397
Immigration and Colonization	57	43
Insurance	20	4
Justice	23	20
Labor	82	30
Library of Parliament	4	8
Marine	42	77
Mines	48	15
Militia	260	426
Naval Service	144	36
Patents	32	44
Privy Council	14	0
Governor General's Secy's office	1	7
Printing Bureau clerks	79	20
Public Works	205	104
Post Office	532	279
Railways and Canals	74	8
Railway Commission	50	6
R. C. M. Police	12	2
Secretary of State	32	75
Senate	11	9
Soldiers' Settlement Board . .	15	1
Trade and Commerce	27	39
Bureau of Statistics	117	89
Geological Survey	75	38
Board of Pension Commis'ers	317	141

Thus federal employees in Ottawa declared themselves. The result was no doubt a surprise to the stand-patter and the ultra-conservative, the Peacers-At-Any-Price and those of “Great Possessions”, but to the great mass of the service who read and inwardly digest it appeared eminently right and natural. It but mirrored the trend of events the world over.

And now the great question is, What next? Will the civil service in Ottawa be known in future as Union No. 66? This is what Mr. Tom Moore says about it:—

“There has been no mandate from the Civil Service Association and the congress executive will deal with the question as it arises. The service by a general vote de-

cidied to affiliate with labor. It was not confined to the association. The easiest way is for the civil servants in the majority to join up with Federal Union 66. But no definite decision can be given until matters develop further.

“It is rather pleasing to know”, added Mr. Moore, “that the civil service as a whole displays more confidence in the Trades and Labor Congress than the Civil Service Association. If they had not, they would not have voted as they did, as the statements of the association officials were equal to saying that affiliation with organized labor would retard their own progress. Of course that was nonsense, and I am glad to see the common sense of the service was triumphant and recorded a majority which I take as a vote of confidence in labor.”

Mr. F. W. Patterson, the new president of the Associated Federal Employees of Ottawa said:—

“I'm more than pleased at the clear and unmistakable way in which the civil service at Ottawa has declared itself in favor of affiliating with labor. The result will be, I feel sure, that many if not all of the present injustices felt by the service will be removed.

“More cordial relations will be established between the civil servant and his employer. It means that the service has decided to stand shoulder to shoulder with the other organized workers of this country, and we trust that the expression of opinion given will be followed by the necessary action in the near future. This will mean great efficiency, and greater contentment in the service at large.

“As far as the Associated Federal Employees of Ottawa are concerned, our motto will continue to be as it has been in the past, and that which became so popular during the late war, “Carry on.”

But the results for good will be beyond all computing if Ottawa's example will arouse the whole country to similar action. There are fully 50,000 government employees from coast to coast who cannot fail to be stimulated and encouraged by the wisdom of Ottawa. The day of the civil servant dawns!