

Labor News From Coast to Coast

Our Overseas Column

Australian Festival of the Obsolete

Quite a large number of the New South Wales Labor organizations have decided to abolish their present custom of celebrating an eight-hour day and to make May first the date of their annual jubilation. They think that with modern machinery and systematized production the working day should soon be much shorter than 8 hours; hence an eight-hour day is now only "a great festival of the obsolete." We can imagine the feelings of mingled compassion and contempt with which the Australians look upon Europe, the home of "modern civilization" where there are countries which will scarcely tolerate any propaganda for the eight-hour day.

Danish Labor Builds Home for Itself

The Danish National Trade Union Centre and the Social Democratic Party have decided to build their own national offices. The foundation stone of this building, was laid by Stauning, the Prime Minister, Jensen, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen, and Madsen, the president of the National Federation of Trade Unions. Stauning who was formerly a tobacco worker, is still a member of the Executive of the Social Democratic Party and an active supporter of the Trade Union Movement. Jensen, once a journeyman painter, was president of the Danish Federation of Trade Unions until his election as Treasurer of the City of Copenhagen, and he is still a member of his trade union. He was one of those who took an active share in the founding of the Trade Union International.

Holiday Tours To Belgium

The Belgium National Centre for Workers' Education has established a Workers' Travel Office, which places its services at the disposal of workers' organizations of other countries for the organization of collective tours in Belgium. The address is: Arthur Jansiaux, Office des Voyages, C. E. O., Maison du Peuple, Brussels.

The Office begs to announce that the Convalescent Home of the Belgian Co-operative Union at Heyst-sur-Mer can take organized workers of other countries at very low prices up to the 15th of July. Enquiries on the subject may also be sent to the above address.

New Industry For Guelph

Guelph, Ont.—Through the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce another industry will locate in Guelph. A successful business concern which for the past two years has been known as the Stratford Luggage Company, and located in the City of Stratford, will take over the woodworking factory formerly occupied by the White Sewing Machine Company.

No Wage Raise for Belle Isle Workers

St. John's, Nfld.—The British Empire Steel Corporation announced that it will seek to increase its working force in the Belle Isle iron mines from 1,600 to 2,400 men. The company stated that sale contracts with Germany would enable it to employ this increased force all through next winter, although for the past five years operations have been curtailed during this season.

This expansion in operation will be possible, the corporation declared, only if the present wage scale is maintained. The workers have sought an increase of ten cents an hour, but the corporation, while it has expressed a willingness to slightly increase the pay of unskilled workers, declared that any general increase would result in loss in operations.

Asks Permit to Build 297 Miles

An application for authority to build 297 miles of new railroad, running from Provo, Utah, to Craig, Colo., was filed recently with the Interstate Commerce Commission by the Salt Lake and Denver Railroad Company. The corporation holds a permit from the State Commission of Utah allowing it to build 185 miles of the lines in that state. No estimate cost was given.

The new construction would shorten the distance between Salt Lake City and Denver and afford transportation facilities to the Uintah Basin area in Colorado and Utah.

Proposed Franchise Reform in Hungary

The electoral reform bill drawn up by the Hungarian Government and recently disclosed by the Hungarian Socialist paper "Nepszava," contains several striking points:—

It is to be noted, above all, that the scandal of the open ballot is to be maintained. Only in Budapest, its suburbs and a restricted number of provincial towns (10 in all) is the ballot to be secret. If, during the electoral campaign, a candidate or his followers have been guilty of "seditious language" the returned member may lose his seat. There is moreover the famous clause prohibiting any relations between members of Parliament and "alien" institutions which is directed against the affiliation of the Hungarian Party to the International.

If a member be suspended from the House, his immunity from criminal prosecution is equally suspended, a very dangerous means of coercion in the minds of Hungarian rulers. Any attempt of a suspended member to enter the House may be repelled by force and a sentence passed on him ranging up to one year's imprisonment.

The franchise is extended to any man of the age of 24 who has been a Hungarian subject for ten years, with two years residence in one place and who has followed four classes in an elementary school and to any woman of 30 years who has had six years schooling. A member may be elected at the age of 30, but the bill contains a special clause extending emigrants from eligibility.

From these selected examples it will be easily understood that Hungary Labor and its democratic allies are fighting this bill with all their might.

Success of German Trade Union Bank

The "Bank of Manual and Non-Manual Workers and Civil Servants Ltd." which belongs to the "free" trade unions, and was founded on May 31st, 1924, has just submitted its first report on activities. The balance-sheet of December 31st shows a gross profit of 329,061 marks and a net profit of 139,558 marks. Out of this net profit, 75,000 marks will be allocated to the statutory reserve fund, and 25,000 marks to a special reserve fund. A 10 per cent dividend has been paid.

Join Labor Federation

At a meeting of Toronto Central branch of the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners, held in Sons of England Hall, Berti street, a motion was unanimously passed that the organization affiliate with the Canadian Federation of Labor and assist in the effort to establish a Central Labor Council. Several carpenters joined the union at the meeting.

To Leave Party

Unemployed workmen who are members of the Unemployment Association of Canada decided at a meeting held in the Labor Temple to sever their connection with the Canadian Labor Party.

N.Y. Assembly Kills 48-Hour Bill

Albany, N. Y.—One of the most spectacular fights ever staged by the New York State Legislature came during the closing hours of the 148th assembly here, and resulted in final defeat of the 48-hour week for women wage workers. The measure was strongly supported by Governor "Al" Smith and got through the senate by a vote of 39 to 12.

When the bill reached the lower house it was referred to the committee on labor and industry, which had been packed with an anti-labor majority of members. This committee refused to report the bill out, and the motion was made to discharge the committee from consideration of the bill and bring it to the floor of the house. This was defeated by a vote of 75 to 68.

An increase in salaries for which New York City teachers have been campaigning the past five years, was one measure which the legislature did pass; much to the elation of the 50 teachers' organizations which have been pressing the bill.

The increase is about 20 per cent, and will affect every city school teacher from the kindergarten instructors up to the superintendent of schools.

International News

BOLIVIA

Special Rights for Employees—Under a law recently approved, employees of business and industrial concerns are to receive a yearly bonus equal to one month's salary, if the employer has made a profit in his business.

CUBA

Immigration and Colonization—A bill has been introduced into the lower house of Congress which proposes to grant a concession to the Compania Europea Cubana Americana, S. A. to seek immigrants in Europe, transport them to Cuba, and establish them upon suitable arable land.

Czechoslovakia

Increase Farm Wages—On January 15, 1925, the Advisory Board for the Affairs of Agricultural Workers in Bohemia unanimously approved regulations for the year 1925, by which the wages of farm laborers should be increased by fifteen per cent over the wages received previously, this increase to take effect as of November 1, 1924.

Unemployment Subsidies—Although unemployment is slowly decreasing the Government has found it necessary to grant subsidies totaling 11,200,000 crowns for the repair of roads, the work to be carried on by those persons who are unemployed.

FRANCE

Public Employment Agencies—Official reports show the increasing utility of the departmental and municipal employment bureau of France since 1917, the number of placements having increased from 159,791 in that year to 1,512,703 in 1924.

GERMANY

Skilled Labor Shortage—The skilled labor situation in the Stuttgart district is such at present that there is not a sufficient supply to enable all technical industries to work at full capacity.

Argentina

Unequal Labor Distribution—Scarcity of labor in the interior and an excess of wage-earners in the centres of Argentina bring about a problem of distribution which the Government is trying to solve.

Australia

Progress of Workers' Union—Membership in the combined branches of the Australian Workers' Union, as reported at its Annual Convention, held in February, 1925, has increased to 129,000.

Austria

Emigration—During 1924, only 2,500 Austrians emigrated to overseas countries, as compared with 15,000 in 1923.

Belgium

Labor Shortage—While certain elements of the Belgian laboring class are migrating to France, industries of Belgium are frequently finding it necessary to import Polish, Italian, Portuguese and other foreign labor, and the demands of agriculture for labor are being inadequately met.

Old Age Pensions Are Economical

Experience under the old age pension law enacted in Montana in 1923 shows that the cost is remarkably low. Official reports covering the first nine months' operation of the act give \$65.50 as the average amount paid to persons pensioned. This is about \$87 a year, even less than the expectations of the legislature which fixed a maximum pension of \$300 a year for each eligible person.—American Labor Legislation Review.

N.Y. Legislators Fail to Keep Pledges

Platform pledges do not count for much with the Republican majority in the New York State legislature.

After much backing and filling, the gentleman who are in control of the Empire State legislature have decided to sidetrack the federal child-labor amendment. They will refuse to ratify it or to arrange for a popular referendum as suggested by Gov. Al Smith. They have also decided to drop the proposed 8-hour law for women in industry.

Both proposals occupied conspicuous places in the New York Republican state platform in 1924 and were emphasized by Col. Theodore Roosevelt during his campaign for governor.

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