

Ontario Workman

THE EQUALIZATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL SCALE SHOULD BE THE TRUE AIM OF CIVILIZATION.

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Labour Notes.

The weavers of Berlin, to the number of 8,000, have struck work, and demand an increase of 33 per cent wages, which masters refuse.

The *Potteries Examiner*, commenting on the agricultural laborers' movement, says: "What is required is to develop in them a manly self-dependence, which will prove to them a rudder to steer with in their new life of freedom from all forms of degrading charity, patronage, and extreme poverty.

The coal miners of Western Pennsylvania held a mass meeting convention at Pittsburg, to ratify the screen law, which takes effect from this date. There were fifteen hundred miners in the procession, which formed and marched through the streets.

The masons of Honfleur and Montpellier have struck, and demand an increase of fivepence on their daily wages of three and fourpence. This reclamation is based on the fact that the masons of Havre receive 4s. 2d. a day. Three other strikes have occurred simultaneously at Montpellier—the blacksmiths, bakers, and plasterers.

The Nation Conference of the Agricultural Laborers' Union was held the other week at Leamington. The report stated there were now 26 districts, with 70,000 members. In the course of the discussions the conviction of the women at Chipping Norton was severely condemned. Resolutions were passed deprecating the hostile attitude of farmers and landlords, and expressing every confidence in the success of the union.

THE MANCHESTER TAILORS.—We are informed that the agitation which has existed in the tailoring trade of Manchester for the last seven weeks, in consequence of the journeymen having solicited their employers for an advance of 1/3d per-hour, has been amicably arranged. Both sides agreed to submit the matter in dispute to arbitration, and the employers chose Mr. R. B. B. Cobbett as their arbitrator; the workmen availed themselves of the services of Dr. Pankhurst. The arbitrators requested Mr. Leresche, who kindly consented, to act as umpire. After the question had been fully argued on both sides, the decision arrived at was that the request of the men, taking all things into consideration, was fair and reasonable, and must, therefore, be conceded from the 14th of April last. This makes a total rise of 20 per cent. upon the rate of wages paid in 1868-9.—*Bee Hive*.

THE LIVERPOOL JOINERS.—On Wednesday night an aggregate meeting of the operatives connected with all the branches of the building trade was held at Liverpool, about one thousand men being present. It was unanimously resolved to aid the joiners in their strike for four and sixpence additional wages, and it was announced that of the fifteen hundred men who originally went on strike only about 450 were still out, the others having found situations elsewhere or gone to work at Liverpool on the advanced rate. It was resolved to present memorials against the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the Masters and Servants' Act. The strike has now lasted five weeks, and attempts are being made by the masters to obtain men from London and elsewhere, while the men reproach their employers with having rejected overtures of arbitration.—*Ibid.*

There is considerable anxiety displayed by the French workmen engaged in the manufacture of matches. On all sides they are protesting against the recent law which converts this industry into a state monopoly. The workmen objected that they had acquired in many instances stable and advantageous positions under their old employers. A feeling of confidence and gratitude existed between the masters and men. But the new law changes all this. The old workmen will be strangers to the new masters appointed as overseers of the Government manufactories. "The capital of gratitude" which the workmen consider they have earned by years of devotion from

their old masters will be ignored by the State. They therefore loudly protest against this arbitrary interference, which they consider as unjust as it is injurious to their interests.

The Swiss workingmen are to hold an important trade congress at Olten. We have not yet received the programme of the subjects which will be discussed, but it is understood that the general object of the meeting will be to secure a closer union between the different trades of Switzerland. Many of the delegates will advocate a union of all the funds collected by the different national mutual benefit societies into one large fund, which will embrace all the interests represented. It is further suggested that a trade newspaper ought to be created to represent the federation it is proposed to establish. These matters, however, it will be found, are difficult to treat in Switzerland, for the preference for local autonomy is so strongly developed in this country, that any proposition tending to centralize its institutions will undoubtedly excite a strong opposition.

The strike of the ironfounders of Nantes, who for two months have been bearing the brunt of the struggle in favor of the "ten hours movement," does not yet give any promise of appeasement. The employers, in another recent manifesto, urge that they have signed contracts counting on their workmen continuing to work eleven hours a day; and that if they reduce their hours, they will not be able to fulfil these contracts except at a sacrifice. It is argued, that in this the employers are mistaken; that the workmen only possess a limited amount of strength, however long they may be compelled to work, and that they would therefore produce quite as much in ten as in eleven hours. But in all cases, and to avoid any loss to the employers, the workmen offered to resume work on the old terms till the 1st of July, so that the contracts already signed may be executed in the way the masters had counted upon. After this date the workmen would only work ten hours. This conciliatory offer has, much to our surprise, been emphatically refused.

La Commission du Travail, or the "Labour Committee," is the name given to the association composed of delegates elected by different trade corporations to attend to all that concerns the expedition of working men representatives to Vienna; but this formidable organization promises to accomplish something more than this. Its business-like qualities, the ardour displayed by its members in attending to the interests of the working classes, the facility with which it has collected large sums of money—all these facts premise that unless there is any interference on the part of the police, this association, or rather this federation of trades, will prolong its existence, even after the Vienna Exhibition is closed. Such a prospect renders it therefore all the more interesting to watch its present action. The committee actually meets once a week, when it appoints special sub-committees to continue the work during the week. At the last meeting the four following sub-committees were appointed:—1st, the committee for the choice of dwelling and board. 2nd, a committee to represent this association at all the separate meetings of the different trade corporations. 3rd, a committee for the purpose of drawing up a general mandate to be imposed on all the delegates about to visit the Exhibition. 4th, a committee to class and divide in categories the different industries represented. The division of the different industries into categories will be a matter of considerable difficulty. It will be necessary to decide how many delegates each can afford to send in proportion to the importance of the trade, the benefits it may hope to derive from such an expedition, and the regularity and number of members who pay their subscriptions. As for the mandate to be imposed on the delegates it will be of the broadest character, and they will be impressed with the necessity of inquiring into the moral and social as well as the material condition of the foreign workmen with whom they may come into contact.—*Paris Paper*.

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tributions, but if a trades unionist attempted anything of the kind he was liable to be sent to prison for three months. There was no justice, he said, for trades unionists in the law courts; and he complained that in two cases, which he alleged were as clear as could be, persons who were charged with robbing trades unions were sent out of court with what they called clean hands.

Mr. Webb, boiler maker; Mr. Goddard, bookbinder; Mr. Gilliver, secretary of the Birmingham Trades council; and Mr. Banbury, of Woodstock, who represented the National Agricultural Laborers' Union, also addressed the meeting; after which the manifesto was put and carried unanimously.

PLATFORM No. 2.

Mr. Wadkinson, boiler maker, was chairman. He said they had met as a demonstration against those unjust laws which pressed so severely upon the working classes, and to all right-thinking men it would be a matter for regret that men should be obliged to meet in these masses for such a purpose. He held it to be the duty of every working man never to rest satisfied until the unjust laws of which they had to complain were repealed. That they would be repealed shortly was certain, because the time was coming when the working men would hold a larger and even more important meeting than the present—not for revolutionary purposes—and would by such agitation influence elections, and get men in Parliament who would be careful of their interests. He trusted every voter present would refuse his support at the next election to the candidate who was in favor of the continuance of these obnoxious laws. The injustice of the acts he referred to had been well illustrated the other day at Chipping Norton, where a number of women were imprisoned by two clerical magistrates for trying to induce some men to refrain from working. It had also been well illustrated in the case of the gas stokers whom Mr. Justice Brett sent to prison, stretching the law to its utmost extremity. He concluded by reading the manifesto.

Mr. McDonald, tailor, who, in moving the adoption of the manifesto, said he was glad to find the vast gathering so orderly. Working men, however, were always the first to keep the law, even if it was a bad one, and they had to suffer in consequence of it. It was not a long time since trades unions came into existence, but they were beginning to make themselves felt now, and he had no doubt the present demonstration and others like it, which sprang from the union of workmen, would have a substantial effect in putting a stop to class legislation. Looking at the existing state of things, he considered they had every reason to hope for the future. Those who at present governed this country made laws for themselves, but not for the laborer, but he would in time find the protection he wanted in the bonds of union, through the free spirit of an Englishman—he would ere long emancipate himself from the state of slavery in which he was living. Let them have faith in their fellow workmen and trade organizations, and the time would not be far distant when class legislation would no longer be known, and these obnoxious laws would be repealed.

Mr. Shanley seconded the adoption of the manifesto. In doing so he complained of an attempt being made to govern this country by class legislation, and characterized some of the proceedings in the House of Commons as being cruelly despotic. Every government in the world, save our own, endeavored to satisfy the people. Here the working classes were treated, not as men, but as serfs.

Mr. A. Outhbertson supported the adoption of the manifesto. He did so because the criminal law which had come into existence during the last few years was unjust to the working classes. If the men they sent to Parliament, however, did not give them the description of legislation desired, they would send workmen to represent them. He held it to be iniquitous that a

master should be able, by a form of ticket known as a suspension ticket, to induce a fellow-employer to reject the services of certain men when there was a grievance against them, and that the workman, for trying to get another man to refuse work, should be sent to "quod" for three months. With regard to the Chipping Norton case, he did not blame the clergy for what had taken place. It was the law he protested against. In conclusion, he urged his hearers to sign a petition to the House of Commons in favor of the bill Mr. Mundella had given notice of.

Mr. Partridge thought the working man ought to have his just and fair share in the political power of his country. It must come to that some day. They knew they were oppressed—the law-makers would not give them their dues—therefore they must band themselves together, and show the world they were determined to put up with injustice no longer. He considered the working man had been more than once insulted by the present Liberal Ministry, and he trusted would not long remain in office.

Mr. Kennard, mason, protesting against the injustice which the Legislature in passing the laws referred to inflicted upon the "hardy sons of toil." He expressed a hope that the day would arrive when working men, instead of petitioning and begging and praying in the manner of humble servants for the redress of their just grievances, would, as trade unionists, rise in their millions as one man and demand such redress as a right and not as a privilege.

The motion for the adoption of the manifesto was carried with acclamation.

PLATFORM No. 3.

The chairman of No. 3 platform was Mr. Richardson, bookbinder, who addressed those around him with the energy of a man who felt that there was a grievance to be remedied, and that it could only be done by union and co-operation on the part of working men. He began by congratulating the meeting upon the grand demonstration of the day, and called upon them to follow it up by making a proper use of their influence at the approaching general election. They should endeavor to send men of their own class to represent them in the House of Commons; but above all things they should take care not to vote for any candidate who did not promise to vote for the repeal of the iniquitous laws that stood against them in the statute-book. He had seen the three gas stokers on Saturday who had been sent to prison by Mr. Justice Brett. (Cries of "shame on him!") If those men committed a blunder, was that a just reason why Judge Brett should try to crush them? But he failed in the attempt. (Hisses.) Speaking to those around him—non-unionists as well as unionists—he hoped that, after the demonstration of that day, working men would no longer keep aloof from the unions, although their employers might tell them it was their interest to do so. Working men should remember that they had not only their employers to cope with, but also men of their own class; he meant those men in large establishments who were known by the name of "earwigs," and whose chief object it was to gain favor with their employers. He would not give a three-penny bit for such men. (Laughter.) They should bring their influence to bear upon the Government. There would soon be a general election, and, if necessary, they should vote for a Tory or anybody who promised to repeal the laws of which they complained. (Cheers.) The chairman concluded by reading the Trades' manifesto, the passing of which constituted the principal business of the section. The reading of the document was frequently interrupted by cheers.

Mr. Sinclair, carpenter, moved, and Mr. Coul, bricklayer, seconded the adoption of the manifesto; and, in doing so, both appealed energetically to working men not to desist from agitation until they were placed on an equality before the law with their employers.

Mr. Kenny, labourer, spoke in support

of the manifesto, and denounced the law which empowered the two parson magistrates of Chipping Norton to send the sixteen poor women to prison. The question for which they were met was one that concerned every working man, whether he belonged to a trades union or not. He did not want to see his fellow-man going into the workhouse after a life of labour, while the employer, after spending a few years in a lucrative business, retired, and made a provisions for every member of his family. The Park Act was a striking illustration of the law of conspiracy. According to that Act, if a man washed himself with soap in the Serpentine, he rendered himself liable to a penalty of 40s. But if the same man were to ask one or two other men to wash with him in the Serpentine, that would be inducing to conspiracy, and for such an offence the man might be sent to prison for two years.

Mr. Holloway, agricultural labourer, also spoke in support of the manifesto, and expressed the gratification with which he had witnessed the grand demonstration of that day. Referring to the origin and progress of the Agricultural Labourers' Union, he said that some people attributed the success of that organisation to agitators; but it was impossible to carry on any great agitation unless there was some well-grounded grievance. To say, therefore, that the upheaving which they had recently witnessed of a large section of society was the work of agitators was to talk sheer nonsense. It was not necessary for him to describe the condition of the agricultural labourer. It was the sad experience which he had of that condition which led him to cast his lot with that oppressed class. Mr. Holloway then gave a description of the Chipping Norton case, and declared it was totally untrue that the women who had been sent to prison by the parson magistrates had been armed with sticks. The law that gave power to clerical magistrates to inflict such a sentence should not be allowed to remain in the statute book, and he trusted the great demonstration of that day would induce the Government to repeal it. The working classes possessed a tremendous power, and they should make use of it to get rid of the abominable laws which oppressed them.

Mr. Cart, French polisher, and Mr. Prior, of Sheffield, having also addressed the meeting, the manifesto was carried unanimously.

PLATFORM No. 4.

Mr. Caiger, cigar maker (chairman); Mr. M'Ar, shoemaker; Mr. Edwards, cabinet maker; Mr. Oliver, tanner; Mr. Williams, plasterer's executive, Birmingham.

PLATFORM No. 5.

Mr. C. Thomson presided, and the speakers were Messrs. Langridge, Ports, Mooney, and Knight, boilermakers, Liverpool.

PLATFORM No. 6.

Mr. Galbraith, compositor (chairman); Mr. Willis, ship joiner; Mr. Spenser, mason; Mr. Shipton, Mr. John Potter, chairman of Maidstone Trade Council.

At each of these platforms, the manifesto was adopted. In the evening after the demonstration, the provincial trades' delegates who had attended the demonstration, to the number of 60, were entertained by the London Trades Council at a "knife and fork tea" at the Bell, Old Bailey, previous to their departure by train for their homes. About 100 persons sat down to tea, the chair being occupied by Mr. Henry King, bookbinder, treasurer of the Council; and the vice-chair by Mr. Prior, secretary of the Sheffield Trades Council.

After tea, the chairman opened the business proceedings by briefly referring to the successful character of the demonstration, in which all present had taken part.

The vice-chairman said that if the demonstration just held, failed in obtaining the repeal or an amendment of the obnoxious laws they protested against, one of a still more imposing character must be held at the beginning of the next session of Parliament, which should be attended not only by delegates from the provincial trades, but by the trades themselves, for whose transit special trains should be provided. He advocated a federation of trades throughout the United Kingdom.

Mr. Clarke, secretary of the Liverpool Trades Council, said the trades of that town intended at the next general election to run one or two labour candidates, and vote for them irrespective of politics. This must be the policy of the trades and working men in all the large seats of industry. They must throw on one side both Liberals and Conservatives when they were consonant on the labour question.

Several other delegates having addressed the meeting, the proceedings terminated.—*Bee Hive*.