Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press

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OFFICIAL ORGAN ALLIED TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL OF OTTAWA.
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A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER.

LABOR DAY, 1919.

THIS year's celebration of Labor Day was in a great measure dissimilar from those previously held, as in most sections of the Dominion during the war period the usual annual parades had been abandoned.

It was thus fitting that the peace year should see a resumption of the old-time processions, with the floats and banners, in vigorous manner. Accounts throughout the Dominion state that organized labor again acknowledged the Natal day not as the infant but now matured and robust in its strength of right.

From the strength exhibited the lesson could be gleaned that the worker's standard of living may not be lowered and conditions must be improved. The spasm now passing of changed values must not be attached to the workers' shoulders to their detriment. Yet from this same strength exhibited against retrograde movement can be claimed the power that will reconstruct in this period of rebuilding.

Labor Day, this year, was more than an ordinary anniversary, it was an epoch. The increase in numbers in the ranks, the solidarity more in evidence, the day was the threshold of time to a larger, better and brighter period for the workers.

* * * *

LABOR CONFERENCE.

ORIGINALLY the date for the National Industrial Convention at Ottawa, was set for Sept. 11, later changed to Monday, Sept. 15, a postponement of four days. The workers having waited for years for "the day," a period of four days will be a matter of little moment.

Incidentally it is understood that some sixty labor representatives will be in attendance, selected by the executive of the Trades and Labor Congress. It must have been a pleasurable duty that this executive had to undertake. The sixty unions these representatives claim membership to will sure be elated, but the other two thousand odd unions throughout the Dominion will have the loud voiced ego to make the grouch of hand-picked, remembering the sour grape story. The workers can be happy in this fact that all sections of industry will be represented, even if not by a member of their own particular local union.

* * * *

GOING AND COMING.

MINE owners of Cobalt state that the Minister of Labor is responsible for the attitude taken by their employes in going on strike. At meetings of the miners of Nova Scotia, the same Minister of Labor has been slated in no uncertain tones with the claim that he was favorable to mine owners and employers. The Minister gets it both going and coming, take your choice, which is correct?

* * * *

SAM TAKES THE "SASS" OUT OF SASSENBACH.

HERR SASSENBACH and his bunch of men representing German Labor went up against Sam Gompers at a meeting of the International Trades Union Congress. Old man "Sass" and his followers put on a high and mighty front. They were quite "sassy" and seemed to repent not of Germany's part in the war. They relaxed considerably after Sam Gompers went after them in vigorous style. Sam told them that if they maintained this high and mighty unrepentant attitude that it would be impossible for workers of other countries to associate with them. And so they stepped down about 50 feet off the high ladder of Arrogance. Labor wants Democracy and Brotherly Feeling—and Hates Arrogance.

* * *

KELLY.

HE was a fine, healthy, rosy-cheeked labor man and he went into an office to get a business man's advertisement for the programme of a labor picnic. "Sure I'll help a real labor picnic," says the business man, "But how do I know that you aren't an O.B.U. or a Bolshevik?"

"Try me!" says Kelly.

"Do you know Paddy Draper, Billy Lodge, Dan McCann, Pat Green or Charley Lewis?" asked the business man.

"I sure do—and I'm proud of 'em," says Kelly.

"Give me a whole page in your programme," says the business man.

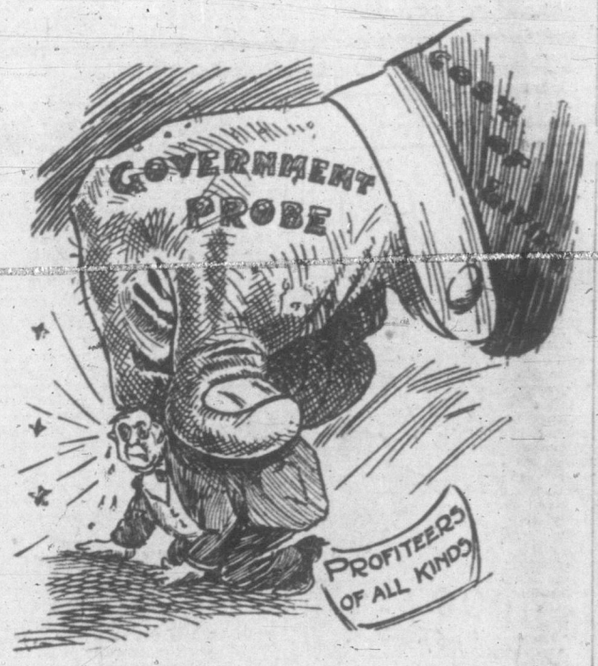
"Thanks," says Kelly, passing out with a real Trades Unionist smile.

* * *

8-HOUR DOCTORS.

BOSTON physicians have put an eight-hour rule into effect with higher charges for calls outside those hours—extra pay for overtime, as it were. That might be all right if Disease and Sickness would slow down to an eight hour day.

AS IT SHOULD BE.



THE PURPOSE AND INFLUENCE OF THE TRADES AND LABOR CONGRESS OF CANADA.

(By Tom Moore, President, in the Ottawa Labor Day Annual.)

The keen interest being shewn at the present time by all classes in the community towards labor, its organizations and affiliations, leads me to endeavor to briefly outline, some of the outstanding features of the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada.

Formed around the year 1886 it has never ceased to be an influence in aiding the workers to better their conditions both socially and industrially.

From its inception the Trades and Labor Congress has been the legislative mouthpiece of the organized workers of Canada. The necessity of legislation, to be of real value to the worker, being enacted by workers themselves was understood in the early days, as the following interesting resolution from the proceedings of the convention held in the City of Hamilton in the year 1887, clearly shews:—

"That in the opinion of this Congress the working classes of this Dominion will never be properly represented in Parliament or receive justice in the legislation of the country, until they are represented by men of their own class, and members of this Congress pledge themselves to use their utmost endeavors wherever practible to bring out candidates for the local and Dominion elections in the constituencies in which they reside."

Visions as to what the status of the Canadian worker would be today if this resolution had been energetically carried out during all the intervening years naturally arise. Though the objects set out in this solution were never entirely lost sight of it was only at intermittent periods that the subject was brought prominently forward until the convention held in Ottawa, Sept., 1917, when the executive were given instructions to take the necessary steps to call a conference in all provinces of the various progressive political parties in order that a thoroughly representative Canadian labor party may be formed. This has been actively carried out and today such a party exists in nearly every province of the Dominion, and which is undoubtedly destined to play a prominent part in the days immediately ahead.

Whilst recognizing the need for representation of the workers in our legislative chambers, the Congress itself has not been and is not today a political party. Its activities have been along the lines of federating the workers into a national body, meeting annually where labors programme was formulated and by publicity and educational methods, endeavoring to have these measures enacted into legislation.

Annually these many requests have been placed before the Provincial and Federal Governments, and the executive of the Congress has never failed to seize every opportunity to place labor, arguments both before the members of Parliament and the public generally.

It is impossible in the short space at my disposal to attempt to enumerate the many measures secured for the protection of the workers during the period of the Congress activities, and though it is possible to point to many failures the good secured fully justifies the activities carried on by the Congress in this way.

Without fear of successful contradiction, however, as the annual printed proceedings of the Congress conventions shew, practically all the labor legislation on the books of the Provincial or Dominion Government, had its inception in resolutions adopted by the Trades and Labor Congress at its annual conventions. Outstanding amongst this might be cited the various factory inspection acts, creation of the Dominion and Provincial Labor Departments, extension of our education system, protection given by fair wage clauses, elimination of competition of prison labor, mechanic lien laws, improvement in immigration laws, securing of the secrecy of the ballot, payment of wages by legal tender instead of inequivalent goods, and referring to more recent data the enactment of the compensation laws, which are proving such a benefit to all workers.

From year to year the platform is made to include such measures as the workers themselves decide upon, and the annual conventions have become to be rightly classed "Labors Parliament."

Many changes have taken place from time to time in the constitution of the Congress as to its representation. Today it is composed of the Canadian local unions or branches of the International Trade Unions, National Trade Unions and Canadian federal unions and Canadian federal unions chartered by the American Federation of Labor.

The Congress itself issues charters to such National bodies as various classes of civil servants, provincial and municipal employes not otherwise eligible for membership in established International Trades Unions.

The Dominion Government recognizes the Trades and Labor Congress as the official representative body of Canadian workers, as do the provincial and municipal authorities recognize the provincial federations and executives and the many Trades Councils chartered by the Congress to carry on its work in their respective jurisdictions.

The policy of the Congress has been one of co-operatiton with the Government and other public bodies, on matters pertaining to the improvement of Canadian National life, and its representatives have served on numerous committees and commissions with that object in view.

The history of the Congress, has been one of continual growth. The records of the first annual convention shew an attendance of 42 delegates representing an affiliation of 81 Trades Councils and local unions, whilst today four Federations of Labor, over 60 Trades and Labor Councils, and approximately 1,700 local unions are affiliated representing a membership of close to 150,000 and at the convention held a year ago in Quebec City credentials were received from 438 delegates.

Considerable organization work, co-operatively with the affiliated International Unions and the American Federation of Labor is carried on and much of the increased membership of the trades unions in the Dominion can be attributed to the assistance rendered by the Congress and its chartered central bodies.

Another growing activity of the Congress is the aid constantly being rendered in adjusting industrial difficulties, especially where any of the Government departments are effected. In conclusion therefore it can be truly claimed that the Trades and Labor Congress is a necessary and growing influence in the trades union activities of Canada, and it is with pride that trades unionists can look back to the record of its 33 years of existence, and with confidence determine to establish it still more firmly as a force to be counted in our national life. Because of its unique position linking up as it does, Canadian workers with the workers of the great republic to the south (the United States) through their membership in the International Trades unions and with the workers of Great Britain and the British Empire through their political affiliations, the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada undoubtedly is destined to play an important part in the future history of English speaking peoples in the development of industrial democracy.

INTERNATIONAL STEEL PLATE TRANSFERRERS MEET HERE.

The seventh biennial convention of the International Steel Plate Transferers' Association of America has concluded its sessions at the New Russell Hotel, Ottawa. It was opened by Mr. Fred Daubney, of Ottawa, the international president.

The various committees presented their reports, which showed the association to be in a very flourishing condition, there being no members out of employment during the past two years. All the members who had joined the American or Canadian armies or the Royal Air Force had been immediately reinstated in their old positions on their return to civil life. Spencer Broadbent was the only member who had made the supreme sacrifice.

The international officers elected for the ensuing two years are: Mr. John Prender, of Washington, president; first vice-president, Mr. Joseph L. Heffern, Washington; second vice-president, Mr. Alex J. Currie, Ottawa; international treasurer, Mr. Robert Nicholl, New York; international secretary, Mr. J. A. MacCaskie, New York.

The members while in Ottawa were taken by motor cars to the J. R. Booth plant anad shown over the whole establishment. The City of Hull, the Experimental Farm and the Government Driveway were also visited.

At the banquet served at the New Russell the hall was tastefully decorated with flags and flowers supplied by Mr. R. A. Rogers, Limited. Valentine's orchestra furnished the music. Vocal selections were given by Miller and Rutherford, from the Dominion, and Thos. Hamilton, which were encored. Some very interesting and instructive speeches were given by the international officers and others.

On Sunday the members motored to Farm Point, where a pleasant dinner was served, after which an amusing baseball game was played between the two teams. A trophy designed and engraved by the members of the Ottawa local was carried away to Washington. The next convention will be held there in 1921. Supper was served at Holt's Hotel, Aylmer, and speeches grave and gay were delivered by the brethren from Washington and New York.

On Monday the members attended the ceremony on the Hill, and then dined at the Chateau Laurier. On Tuesday the delegation were conducted through the plant of the American Bank Note Company.

The members before leaving expressed their appreciation of the City of Ottawa and the surrounding country, describing Ottawa as the City Beautiful, with a charm entirely of its own.

LABOR DAY, 1919.

(By P. M. Draper, Secretary of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress, in the Ottawa Labor Day Annual.)

In closing my last year's greeting with a statement that may well serve as a text for this year's welcome to the members of organized labor in the cities of Ottawa, Hull and vicinity, I said: "The most I can do is to congratulate organized labor in Canada for the truly patriotic efforts it has made and the effectiveness of its co-operation in the cause of the allied nations; to express the hope that before another Labor Day comes to us we will have a final and satisfactory victory to record; to insist upon the bending of every energy, at no matter what individual sacrifice, to this all-important and common end; and to appeal to all, who have the interests of labor at heart, to keep up courage, to have confidence in their leaders, to co-operate with each other, to increase the efficiency of their organization, and—in the midst of war and its tumult—to lay broad and solid the foundations upon which the Edifice of Prosperity may be erected in the days of peace to come."

That fervent hope has been fulfilled; the war is an event in history; victory came as we all hoped for and struggled for; peace has been signed; and, now we have to face the anticipated conditions of reconstruction, readjustment, and renewed endeavour along the line of organization. This most trying period of transition has not been without its new and serious problems. The unrest that has rolled like a tidal wave over the world was to be expected after the abnormal upheaval caused by four years of unprecedented struggle and destruction. But no matter how natural that unrest, it is none the less a menace proportionately as dangerous as the war. In no circle and in no element of the social structure has this danger produced greater effect than in the world of organized labor. While labor is the most directly interested in the allayink of that general discontentment, in many spheres it is supposed that labor is the principal, and even the only, cause of its existence. It behoves the recognized leaders in th cause of labor to take every precaution to dispel all such false impressions in the public mind and, to restore that state of quiet, security and contentment so necessary to the prosperity and happiness of this Dominion.

It has been so often reiterated that organized labor allies itself to no political party, nor does it bind itself to the fortunes of any special government, that it has become almost a platitude. While holding itself beyond and above all the political strife and intrigue that necessarily exists, it has a paramount duty to keep in touch with all events, all changes, all plans and all manoeuvrings in that shifting arena. It is possibly as well that political parties in Canada have been rapidly breaking up, interlocking, blending and dissolving. Out of the political chaos some kind of order must eventually be drawn, out of the jumble of policies some fixed principles must be secured, and this is another phase of the transition period which challenges the calm study of the chosen representatives of labor. There are very serious problems to study and, "if possible, to solve." The moment is perhaps more fraught with important issues than any one during the past four years. The forces of labor are scattered; the forces of capital are concentrated; the bonds of mutual interest between the various unions scattered over the vast Dominion from ocean to ocean need to be drawn closer together and more perfect harmony created between all sections of the International Labor Movement.

When last we celebrated Labor Day we knew that eventually the war would end, and that preparations would have to be made to meet the changed conditions when peace would come; but no person knew how long the war might last. Consequently the immediate and imperative demands of the mighty struggle absorbed our minds to such a degree that peace considerations were very secondary. Today we are no longer in a state of uncertainty—the was is over and the peace treaty is signed. It being so, we are in a position to bend all our energies and devote all our minds to the post bellum problems. The horrid nightmare of the war is over; we have awakened from its influence, still oppressed by the strain, but in the full daylight of universal peace, and free to study the immediate future under the inspiring assurance that we have the shaping of our destiny in our own hands.

During the months that elapsed between the declaration of the armistice and the completion of the labors of the peace conference it was my good fortune to come in contact with men and to move amidst surroundings from all of which I learned many important matters and received many inspirations, that, had it not been for my visit to Europe, I would have never known. As my constat preoccupation was the greater good of organized labor in Canada, I naturally gleaned very much information, ideas and suggestions that may be utilied for the prosperity and ultimate success of the labor cause in this Dominion. The results of all these inestimable advantages are at the disposal of the International Trades Union Movement of Canada.

May this year's Labor Day celebration mark a turning point in the history of organized labor in this country, and from this September day I trust that a new era will date—full of prosperity for the Dominion, a larger, ever increasing strength and influence for the cause of labor, and of ultimate attainment of those ideals which beckon on every lover of his country and of his fellow man.

CONGRESS OF BELGIAN MINERS IS CALLED.

The National Committee of Belgian Miners has decided to call an extraordinary national congress of miners for September 28. The congress will be invited to ask the Government for a special organization for the control of the whole coal industry—production, prices and distribution. The committee urges nationalization of the mines as soon as possible.

The supply of common sense never exceeds the demand.

SERVICE BUTTON WORKERS.

FOSH SAYS BRITISH DID

Marshal Foch, in a letter of thanks to the British Parliament, says:—

"If I were able to bring the war to a speedy conclusion it was due to the sustained determination of the British Government to reinforce and keep up in 1918 sufficient effectives and give powerful assistance to the transport of American divisions."

* * *

MANY GOING INTO THE WOODS.

Large numbers of returned soldiers are going into the logging camps in Northern British Columbia along the line of the G.T.P., according to officials of that line. Every train that leaves Edmonton for the west carries from 25 to 50 men who are placed with the camps by the Do inion employment bureaus and the Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment Department's information offices.

The men who have been going out to the camps for the past two or three weeks are all returned soldiers and are a fine class of men. Most of them are young men and many of them are going into the woods for the first time.—Edmonton Journal.

* * *

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

(By Lieut. C. R. Lennan, D.C.M.)

Tell her the old, old story, lad.
In the good old-fashioned way;
Say that you dream of her by night
And think of her by day.
Tell her you're simply longing, lad,
To see her face again;
Tell her the sight of her would be
Like sunshine after rain.

Tell her you'd give your life, lad,
To gaze into her eyes;
Tell her a score or so, lad,
Of the good old-fashioned lies.
Tell her your leave is coming,
Any old tale you please;
But for heaven's sake don't tell her,
Of the girls you mash in Prees.

* * *

REGINA BOYS WANT LIVING COST REDUCED.

Great War Veterans of Regina, last night passed a resolution calling on the Federal Government to adopt drastic measures to reduce living costs by seizing food in cold storage, canneries and elsewhere; coal at the mine heads, and clothing and other necessaries of life in factories at a fair price for the benefit of the consumers.

The Veterans resolved to call a public meeting here to discuss the cost of living.

REPATRIATION OF GERMAN PRISONERS.

The Supreme Council on Friday passed a resolution regarding the repatriation of German prisoners of war. The resolution states that in order to diminish as rapidly as possible the sufferings caused by the war, the allied and associated powers have determined to anticipate the date of ratification of the peace treaty with Germany as far as the repatriation of German prisoners is concerned.

The process of repatriation will begin immediately under the auspices of the inter-allied commission, to which German representatives will be added as soon as the treaty comes into force. The allied and associated powers point out that a continuance of this benevolent policy, from which German soldiers will so greatly benefit, must depend on the fulfillment by the German Government and people of their obligations.

* * *

VANCOUVER VETERANS MEET LABOR.

The Great War Veterans' Association at its regular meeting Thursday night went on record as lending its support to the new labor organization, the International Trades and Labor Council, providing it was shown that the old members whom they objected to, had been expelled. It was resolved that a standing committee should be appointed to confer with the new labor body for the mutual good, this committee to consist of Comrades Mackenzie, Lees, Beatty, McKinstry and Paige.

* * *

ARMY AND NAVY VETERANS MEET AT HAMILTON.

The annual meeting of the Dominion association of the Army and Navy Veterans was held at Hamilton on Monday. Resolutions were passed calling for the same gratuity to reservists who served as volunteers in the war as C.E.F. men, either in the shape of a pension or a bonus. Something more than a long service medal for men who put in 21 or more years in the militia, and that a bonus of $100 be given to survivors of the Fenian Raid, and the dependents of those who fell.

The president advocated the establishment in Ontario of an old soldiers home.

In order to prevent the turning over to medical schools of the bodies of soldiers who have served in any war the association will petition the Government to make this impossible.

CLOSE THE DOOR OF THE SWITCH-BOX.

An open door may mean death to a fellow worker.

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5¢ per package
MINTEES
DELIGHTFUL REFRESHING
After Eating - After Smoking

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

KING TO BE INVITED TO CONGRESS.

The British Trades Union Congress, which will assemble at Glasgow, on September 8, promises to be the largest ever held. Already 848 delegates have been appointed to attend the congress, representing more than 2,225,000 workers.

A suggestion has been made that King George, who is at Balmoral, should be invited to attend the opening session, some of the labor leaders believing that a personal appeal from the sovereign to the workers to make a special effort in the national interest would have a great effect. The Parliamentary committee of the congress considered a request for representation at the International Labor Congress in Washington in October.

It is believed that the controversy between the alternatives of direct action and constitutional action will be fought out during the coming fortnight in discussions by the coal miners' conference and the triple alliance—the transport workers, miners and railway men—and finally b ythe Glasgow congress. It is generally expected that the decision will be against direct action.

* * *

BRITISH AFTER PROFITEERS.

In the British House of Commons, C. A. McCurdy (Northampton), chairman of the central committee established under the new profiteering act, foreshadowed drastic action against food profiteers. He said that enquiries would be conducted by small committees of experts, representatives of labor and employers into the cost of such commodities as boots, clothes, underwear and household utensils. These committees are not appointed to fix prices, but to ascertain the facts for public information. "We are," says Mr. McCurdy, "creating machinery similar to that established in the United States, and it is the intention of the government to make it permanent."

The central committee, of which Mr. McCurdy is chairman, will investigate assertions made by traders against profiteering on the part of the wholesalers, and it has the power to institute prosecutions. The function of the committee will not be that of courts, imposing penalties, but they will investigate grievances and, after making a declaration of what a fair profit would have been in the cases before them for consideration, they will be empowered to order a refund of the excess to the purchaser.

THE NATIONALIZATION QUESTION.

It is considered practically certain that the nationalization issues will be brought to a head at the Trade Union Congress which opens in Glasgow (illegible), of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress said recently that he was unaware as to what line of policy the Miners' Federation would adopt. No definite resolution on mine nationalization had been tabled for discussion at the congress and the period for sending in resolutions from the unions had expired. In view, however, of the Premier's announcement of the policy of the Government it was probable that a proposal would be made to raise the question by special emergency resolutions although there was a nationalization resolution in general terms on the agenda already.

The Government's decision, Mr. Bramley said, did not merely mean turning down the miners' demands and ignoring the recommendations of the majority report of the Coal Commission, but was in direct opposition to the policy of the Trade Union Congress, which for years past had supported nationalization of the vital industries and natural resources where there was a monopoly. The importance of the present situation lay in the fact that for the first time the Government had definitely declared against nationalization.

It was useless to continue passing pious resolutions, Mr. Bramley contended, adding, "I am convinced there will either be a general strike or general election, probably the latter."

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