

## GENERAL NOTES ON LABOR AND WAGES.

The following "General Notes" are taken from pages 30, 31, and 32 of Mr. Secretary Blue's Official Report on "Labor, Wages, and Cost of Living, and Minerals and Mining in the Province of Ontario," recently issued:

**ALMONTE.**—The shops and factories have been running steadily on full time during the past year, with the exception of the Almonte Knitting Company's mills, which was closed for about two months during the early part of last winter, the cause said to be for necessary repairs. Factory hands, with the above exception, have had steady employment during the past year. Although the woollen manufacturing business has been unprofitable during the year, yet the mills have been kept running at full time, giving steady employment to the operatives, and notwithstanding the unfavorable state of trade, wages were maintained at the same rate as for some years previous. Building operations were usually brisk during the year, which caused outside labor to be prosperous during the summer months. There are no reading rooms nor libraries maintained in connection with any trade, factories or workshops, but there is a Mechanics' Institute with a large library connected, which is available to all who desire to become members.

**BRANTFORD.**—In the closing months of 1884 reductions in wages and short time were general throughout the workshops of the city, and it was not until late in the spring of 1885 that the manufacturing establishments, particularly agricultural implement shops, resumed full time. The cause assigned for this dulness was the troubles in the North-west. About the middle of May, however, a gradual increase took place in the number of workers; all of the various establishments began running full time and they have been busy since with the exception of the cotton and wincey mills, which were running on irregular and short time during the summer months. It is difficult to arrive at any accurate estimate of wages earned by those who work by the piece and on irregular time. If workmen would endeavor to keep an account of their wages and cost of living it would tend in a great measure to habits of economy. Accidents are numerous in all factories where machinery is used, as every kind of work is done by machinery dangerous to employes, if not well understood. Many sustain injuries on account of their own carelessness, but sometimes an accident occurs which brings into prominence the question of supervision of all factories and workshops. A Factory Act, with inspection of all manufacturing establishments, would meet the wishes of a large and growing constituency, particularly those artisans who come here from the old country, where legislation of this kind is in force, and who feel that here the Government should exercise some sort of supervision where so many are engaged in the manufacturing industries of the country. Any action of the employers of labor that would tend to the comfort and convenience of those workmen who all the year round eat their noonday meal on the workbench or forge would be appreciated by a large number of workers in every large factory and workshop. The only library in connection with any of the establishments here is at the Grand Trunk works, where also is a reading room in which the leading newspapers may be seen on the tables. It is managed by the men, and is well sustained. There is also a life insurance and direct benefit fund in cases of sickness or accidents; it is managed by the company and gives good satisfaction. Among workmen there are direct benefit funds to relieve distress in case of sickness or otherwise. These are managed by the different unions and do a great amount of good. The very best of good feeling exists between the employers and their men here, as kindly acts of most of them amply prove.

**CORNWALL.** The wage earning population of Cornwall has as a general thing done very well the past year. The factories have been running very steady. Though there is not much

change in the rate of wages, it still has been a large increase to the worker's earnings, as little time has been lost compared to last year. The sash and door factories have been running full time. Carpenters, bricklayers and masons have done very well, as many houses were built this summer and some of them were substantial ones. About the holidays every one expects a dulness for out door workers, and as a general thing the winter season is dull here; but there are always a few employed during the winter finishing up work commenced in the last of the season. The different factories have gone to large expense providing precautionary measures in case of fire. They have force pumps in use which will, with the good supply of hose kept on hand, drown out a fire in a few minutes in any part of the buildings. At certain distances all around the mill hydrants are placed, and a squad are usually drilled to act as firemen.

**GANANOQUE.** The majority of men say the last year has been better for them than the two previous years. The time employed depends largely on the water supply, and last summer the Water Power Co. improved their property at the south of Charleston lake thereby draining the whole area of the lake and several smaller ones emptying into it. One important business change was made—the carriage works' property was bought by a party of capitalists from Cincinnati, who greatly enlarged their business, turning out eight hundred cutters and sleighs for the winter. The clothes wringer and corset steel works of Cowan & Atkinson were destroyed by fire in March, but they have been rebuilt on a different site and will shortly be in working order. The axle works closed for about a month on account of overstock, and the shovel, spade and fork works for about the same time on account of small demands for that class of goods.

**HAMILTON.**—During the fall months of 1884 the building trades were active, completing nearly all work then under construction, before winter fairly set in, thus throwing upon the market nearly all those engaged in these trades until spring. The spring opened with favorable prospects and assisted to a very great extent by the reduction of the hours of labor from sixty to fifty-five hours per week, agreed upon by these Trades Unions and the Builders' Associations, regulated the work so equitable that many who opposed the reduction of the hours of labor very soon acknowledged their approval, and friendly relations existed throughout the season, notwithstanding the predictions of many that there would be trouble over the reduction. Summer opened with no change except a slight weakening on the part of the carpenters and painters, who experienced a dull spell, but as the summer advanced all were steadily employed. The fall opened with nearly all employed and work continued brisk until a scarcity of brick occurred, owing to large shipments being made to Toronto, Woodstock and other places. This created a dulness which continued throughout the season, with no change. But altogether a fair season is acknowledged by all. Pay-days are fortnightly, and on Saturday, with one day's pay kept back, and workmen always paid in cash.

The tobacco industry is a very important one to the workers of the city, employing a large number of male and female labor in the manufacture of cigars and plug tobacco. The latter business was active throughout the season, with apparently friendly relations existing between employer and employe. In the cigar trade occurred the only important strike of the year, which resulted in about 200 workers being thrown out of employment for about six months. A difference arose between the cigar-makers' union and the manufacturers, which resulted in a combination of manufacturers being formed under \$500 bonds to resist the union, who were apparently locked out unless they acceded to the terms of the combination. Arbitration was resorted to by the workers, but without any good result. Non-union cigar makers were brought into the city, and at one time grave fears of trouble were prevalent throughout the city. A break was made in the ranks of the manu-