

A Strike to Retain a Mayor in his Job

A very peculiar experience has just come to our notice in which a labor mayor in the United States was first dismissed by his employers and then reinstated through the action of his co-workers going on strike. The facts are as follows: The citizens of Hill City, Minn., elected as mayor, Vice-President Sayler of the local Coopers Union, which evidently did not please the manager of the local works where Sayler was employed and the workmen mayor lost his job. But his mates indignant at the action of the manager, went on strike en masse with such good effect that the new mayor was restored to his job and pay envelope.

To say the least, the manager in question took a very foolish attitude towards his employee. The very fact that Mayor Sayler took such a practical interest in municipal affairs was sufficient evidence

of his usefulness as a citizen, and incidentally his usefulness as a worker, and this the manager, had he been possessed of common sense would have known. One of the labor leaders in Great Britain recently stated that "just as labor does much to make problems for the country it must think more of doing much to solve them." And we do not know of any better means of bringing this truth home to labor than public responsibility such as it would possess through its members taking up public office as is the case in Hill City. Both in the United States and Canada organized labor has developed within its ranks men of high mental calibre and character and if these same men could be gotten to take a larger interest in the welfare of their respective communities, both the communal life and organized labor would benefit.

Scarcity of Highway Engineers

Since the building of roads has become largely a question of scientific knowledge and experience on the part of the designers one would expect a demand for engineers specially qualified in the work. At least that was our impression until we came across a fully qualified and experienced road engineer engaged in testing, not roads, but the strength of railroad bridges. On inquiry we found that he was not wanted, as a road engineer, because of his gray hairs. In most professions and businesses grey hairs usually denote experience and consequently increased value, and why should it not be the case in the engineering profession.

Now Canada was never so hard up for really competent road engineers as she is today. By this we mean men who have had practical experience in the building of highways, roads and streets. The fact that a man has taken a course in general engineering does not make him into a qualified road engineer, though many believe they are, and what is worse, they too often make our local councils be-

lieve they are, because of their degrees, fitted to handle big public works that call for engineering competency, otherwise thousands of dollars will be wasted. It has been stated that the wastage in our public works, because of the lack of knowledge and experience on the part of the engineers, during the last decade is equal to twenty-five per cent of the total cost. Like the doctor the engineer can cover up much of his incompetency, for most of those he deals with are not professionals like himself, so that much is left to his honesty. Of course most of our municipal and road engineers are competent men who have a high sense of their responsibility. At the same time we do know of too many instances of heavy losses being incurred by the community because of the local engineer's inexperience, and it is in the interest of the profession itself that every opportunity be given to such men as the road engineer now "testing bridges" to secure permanent work in that branch they are specially experienced and qualified in.

Child Welfare in the Province of Quebec

The Hon. J. E. Perreault Minister of Colonization, Mines and Fisheries of the Province of Quebec recently laid down a plan of campaign to preserve the children of the colonization settlements that are located in the remote districts of Quebec. One of the first steps that the Minister will take is to improve the homes of the settlers by better sanitation. Plans will be supplied to each settler with instructions how to build so as to avoid the use of the living room for cooking purposes, and his agents will act as missionaries generally in the cause of child welfare. We congratulate the Minister on the way in which he is tackling the problem of saving our future citizens so far as his jurisdiction goes. The province of Quebec has much to be proud of in its birth rate, but unless steps are taken to preserve the children, the high birth rate counts for nought, and since it has been proven that hygiene and cleanliness are the best antidotes for infant mortality, it is hoped that the Minister's example will be followed by every municipal council

in the province in seeing that the health laws are strictly adhered to by every household.

A Check on Extravagance

By extending the polling from day to day a sufficient number of votes were cast to enable the local authorities of the town of St. Lambert, P.Q., to apply for ratification to borrow half a million dollars for improvements. The delay in voting, caused by the fact that over fifty per cent of the voters do not reside in the town, has irritated some of the citizens to the extent that they would like to see a change in the law that compels a twenty-five per cent poll before any action can be taken to borrow money for new municipal improvements. While the law does not always work advantageously (for suburbs in particular), it is a good law on the whole, because it is a check on extravagance; something that must be avoided if municipal Quebec is to raise its standard of credit in the financial markets of the world.