

Labor News From Coast to Coast

"OUR OVERSEAS COLUMN"

News From Various Countries

BELGIUM
Industry Thrived in 1923.—Published reports of the Ministry of Industry and Labor show that during the year 1923, Belgian industries were, for the most part, operating up to the limit of their capacity; that the demand for agricultural labor was far in excess of the supply and that the number of offers of employment from individuals and firms exceeded request of labor applicants for placement.

BRAZIL
Homes for Pernambuco's Poor.—On May 21st, 1924, the Legislative Congress of the State approved the project conferring upon the Governor the authority to expend, during the current fiscal period, an amount of 100,000 contos of reis for the establishment of a foundation whose purpose will be the building, in the city of Recife, of small houses for the poor.
Improved Labor Conditions for Recife.—On September 16th, 1924, Municipal Law No. 1342, which provides for a complete reorganization of conditions governing the employment of women and children in Recife, Pernambuco, will become effective.

DENMARK
Conference on Immigration Act.—Based upon the theory that "reduced quotas have quite a paralyzing effect on the North Atlantic emigration traffic," a conference of representatives, numbering about twenty persons, of the various American, British, German, French, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish steamship lines, engaged in emigration traffic to the United States, was held in Copenhagen during the first ten days of June, 1924, for the purpose of discussing the situation created by the new American Immigration Act.

MOROCCO
Farm Labor Migration.—There is a considerable migration back and forth across the Moroccan-Algerian frontier each year, and it is estimated that at harvest time fully 30,000 Moroccans cross into Algeria to do agricultural work, and that, when the harvests have been gathered, they return to their homes with their savings.

NEW ZEALAND
Coal-Mining Agreements.—It is understood that three-year agreements as to wages are being negotiated by the various coal-mining companies, which will insure steady operation of the mines for that period. A uniform wage scale is to be established for the entire dominion.

Will Recommend Old Age Pensions

Old age pensions of \$20 a month, to begin at the age of 70, are to be recommended to the House of Commons by the special committee on old age pensions. The report was approved by the committee recently and is to be presented soon.

It is estimated by the committee that the number of persons requiring to be pensioned under the plan would be 98,800 or approximately 40 per cent. of the total population of the Dominion at the age of 70. This estimate is based on Australian experience. The total cost of the scheme to the Dominion is placed at \$11,860,920 per annum. This one half of the pension estimated to be paid, the province being asked under the plan to provide the other half and to pay the cost of administering the act. Residence of 20 years on the part of a British subject is fixed as a condition of pensionability, while aliens must be naturalized and must reside here for 25 years in order to qualify.

8-Hour Day Urged on Govt. Works

Ottawa.—Reference of the eight-hour-day convention to the Supreme Court of Canada for opinions on jurisdiction will be recommended to the House of Commons by the Committee on Industrial and International Relations. The convention was adopted at the Washington conference of the International Labor Organization of the League of Nations. Canada was a party to the convention, but doubt has risen whether the implementing of the Convention comes within Federal or Provincial jurisdiction. It is this doubt which, if the committee's recommendation is adopted, will be referred to the Supreme Court for opinion.

A Labor Employing Centre

Port Arthur has for a number of years been one of the foremost outlets for labor. The record of the local branch of the Provincial and Dominion Labor Bureau stands out prominently as compared with even some of the larger centers.

The predominance of this branch has much to do with the fact that occasionally there is a disproportionate amount of labor idle here. From this city hundreds of men are distributed to camps and extra railroad work in seasons, and to this city gravitate many men when work is shut down or when men are changing jobs.

Again it is not an uncommon thing for managers of labor branches to advise applicants for work that Port Arthur can always find work, with the result that at times the distribution of labor, unless intelligently conducted, will throw a surplus of workmen out of employment here.

When this occurs the fault is no way lies with Port Arthur, but rather with the Governments which maintain the labor bureau. This fact is so palpable that the attention of the Governments should be directed to it and steps taken to prevent a burden being placed upon this city for which it is no way responsible.

Unemployment

St. John, N. B.—A delegation of working men has waited upon the Mayor to urge that public works be undertaken to provide employment, and so relieve the anxiety of many families who find it very difficult to make ends meet. There is very little work in the harbor this summer, or in the sawmills, which in former years gave employment to so many people. Local industries are fairly active, but there are many laboring men who find little or no work to do. Those who have families are unable to provide for them as they should, and as they would do if work were plentiful. This condition of affairs is not peculiar to St. John. Indeed there are other cities in which the conditions are less favorable. Nor is the condition confined to Canada. American cities are filled with men seeking employment and unable at the present time to find it. So far as St. John is concerned, there is every reason to believe that the condition is but temporary, and that later in the year there will be an improvement, with more work in progress and a better outlook. Meantime, however, there is need of work for many laboring men and mechanics, and a well considered construction programme would relieve the situation. It had been hoped that building operations on a fairly large scale would have been in progress by this time, but they have been delayed. The City Council would do well to consider whether it would not be in the interests of the city, not only of laboring men but of the merchants, to undertake work upon the streets such as had been planned earlier in the year; and perhaps some other improvements which would reduce the unemployment and tide men over until the general industrial and commercial situation is more favorable. Should unemployment continue through the summer the problem of paying rent, living expenses and taxes would be serious for those effected, and would mean a heavier burden of distress to be relieved next winter. It is well to pursue the policy of retrenchment and to scrutinize very carefully all expenditures, but exceptional conditions must be taken into account, and the City Council would do well to look carefully into the matter before turning a deaf ear to the appeal of the working men's delegation.

Better Service Conditions

Ottawa.—The Superannuation Act's progress is creditable to the House of Commons. It is evident that members of parliament appreciate the necessity of providing adequate retirement allowances before the reorganization of the service can be proceeded with much further.

The Ottawa members, Messrs. McGivern and Chevrier, have reason to feel gratified that the Act has passed its third reading without any detrimental amendment. Mr. Chevrier particularly has put in many months of hard work in helping to get the Superannuation Act into satisfactory shape to meet the requirements of the House.

Provision for widows and dependents under the new Act should meet with public approval. Something should be done, too, for some widows who are at present without adequate means of support, although their husbands worked for many years faithfully in the civil service. Mr. Chevrier spoke of a possible instance where, after contributing 2 or 3 per cent. for thirty or thirty-five years the contributor died, after retiring and receiving from the fund two or three or six or eight months pension. In that case the whole of the remainder of the civil servant's contribution is gone, which does not seem quite a humanitarian disposition of the matter.

Injunction Against I.W.W. Is Dissolved

Cranbrook.—Some surprise was occasioned when it became known that the action of the I. W. W. in this city to have the injunction held against them by the lumbermen of the district dissolved had been arranged satisfactorily out of court. Peterson and Sampson were the two leaders named through the injunction was really aimed at the I. W. W. organization. According to the settlement now arrived at it will cease to be in effect. W. R. Ross, K.C., Vancouver lawyer, acted for the I. W. W., and H. W. Herchmer, Cranbrook, for the lumbermen. The disposition of the costs was not learned.

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The junior member for Ottawa argued that there is a moral claim on the government in respect to the contributions made. The parliamentary committee felt that this matter did not come within the purview of the present measure. They did submit it, however, to the serious consideration of the government. Without detracting from the credit due to the government for having accomplished so much, it is to be hoped that means can be found to take care of the comparatively few claims of widows at the present time of former civil servants.

White Fishermen Replacing Japs

Transfer From Fraser to Skeena—Salmon Fishing Brings Good Results

Prince Rupert.—This year a number of white fishermen from the Fraser River have transferred to the Skeena, and during the first week have done well. It is planned by the whole of the canneries here to increase the number next year, and have them gradually take the places of the Japanese, who are being restricted by Dominion regulations.

The first week of salmon fishing on the Skeena has brought good results, an average of thirty sockeye to the boat has been taken at most of the canneries. While the Japanese were on strike some good hauls were made by white fishermen, but now the catches are more evenly divided. The last of the Indians has arrived from Massett, and saw them all out with their boats. So far the new regulations allowing gas boats on the Skeena River has made no material change in conditions. The men are out as usual with the canneries boats, propelled by oars and sail, and all is proceeding much as usual. Spring salmon fishing has fallen off slightly during the week.

Toronto labor does not share the fear of a Toronto newspaper that the expenditure of \$28,500,000 on the Toronto viaduct will "Mexicanize" the country. Labor knows that these dollars are not Mexican, but Canadian.

Hamilton Women's Labor League

Does Not Feel Single Girls Getting Square Deal

Hamilton, Ont.—A regular meeting of the Hamilton Women's Labor League was held here recently. Many matters were discussed relative to the welfare of women and children. An earnest discussion took place regarding the excessive and apparently unnecessary number of married women who are filling hundreds of positions in Hamilton, while hundreds of single girls are running around out of a job. Caustic remarks were passed on men in jobs driving their wives in their own cars and dropping them off at their places of employment, and in some instances passing through a queue of out-of-work girls. One member shrewdly remarked that if this type of woman was stopped from working to this extent she would have no alternative but to throw herself on the city, as her wants always exceeded her capacity to supply them.

This remark was provocative of much feeling, and the twentieth century idea of economic insecurity for workingmen's wives came in for much ridicule. A convention call was read from the Federated Labor Leagues, to be held in London in September, where the delegates would confer with the Dominion of Canada Trades Congress on many matters interesting to the working class as such. One of the questions scheduled for September will be, What, in your locality, are the most pressing questions for women workers?

Anglicans Did Much to End Postal Strike

Premier King Conveys Thanks to Rev. W. J. Spence

Toronto, Ont.—It is stated by those in close touch with the situation that the importance of the part the Church of England played in the postal strike settlement has not yet been fully appreciated by the public at large.

Several of the clergymen of Toronto addressed the striking postmen in a most conciliatory manner, which paved the way for a receptive attitude towards the Government's proposals. The Social Service Workers of the Anglican Communion from all over Canada and the United States were in conference at the time, and dealt with the postal situation by appointing a committee, with Rev. W. J. Spence of St. Jude's Church, as chairman. The latter immediately got into touch with the Premier, who arranged a conference with Hon. Mr. Murdock. The Anglican representative had interviews with the postal employees' executive, and the postmaster as well in company with Mr. Cascaden.

Rev. Mr. Spence yesterday received a letter from Premier King. In thanking him for his efforts as mediator, the Premier said, "Your own part in bringing matters to the satisfactory conclusion finally reached was much appreciated by all of us who had to do with the situation."

Naturally, the Social Service Workers of the Church of England feel very gratified that their efforts were of some practical benefit in such a crisis.

Mexico Has Internal Troubles Again

Mexico City.—The attempt to seat the newly-elected congressmen is causing tumult and strife between the contending political parties. The labor-farmer faction maintains that the Flores followers, are trying to seat those illegally elected, while the Floresistas accuse the Calles followers (farmer-laborites) of the same attempt. Mounted police are patrolling the streets around the congress, while others are watching the examination of credentials. The labor-farmer block under the leadership of Luis N. Morones, president of the Mexican Federation of Labor, is threatening to form a legislature of its own; the other side threatens the same. In the meantime Calles is going to Europe to escape whatever results may arise from these dissensions.

Victoria Lumber Employees Strike

Victoria, B.C.—Three hundred and fifty employees of the Canadian Pugh Sound Lumber Company, one of Victoria's largest sawmills, went on strike when notified of a proposed reduction of 35 cents an hour to 32 cents for common labor and proportionate decreases for their classes. Both whites and Chinese figured in the walkout.

Australia's Navy

Melbourne, Australia.—The Australian federal government is about to announce a new defense policy, details of which have already been semi-officially announced to press correspondents.

Two new 10,000 tonners will be built at once and thereafter one 10,000 tonner every three years. Two modern submarine cruisers will also be built. There will be a seaplane base at Sydney, another in western Australia and a third on the northern coast of the continent; an aeroplane base at Melbourne, and an oil-fueling depot at Darwin, on the northern coast of the continent.

The various munition factories in Australia are to be speeded up so that they can turn out all the rifles, revolvers, machine guns, field guns, shells, explosives, and small arms needed for defense.

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