

CANADIAN LABOR PRESS

A National, Sane Labor Paper

True Confidence and Understanding Between Employer and Employee Absolutely Necessary to Industrial Peace.

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Canadian Workers and Industry Not Given a Square Deal

Liberal Government Has Lost Track of Canada's Requirements and Has Framed Its Policies to Retain Goodwill of Progressives But Has Not Considered Industry or the Workingman

False Policy of Economy Directed Against Labor, Government Civil Servants and Industry

The "Canadian Labor Press" does not believe in discussing politics except where it affects Canadian Labor, but as the Liberal Government at Ottawa has framed its policies to injure both the working class and industry, and as they are both interlocked, it is time steps were taken towards a consolidated resistance to the blundering management of the Liberal Government.

No Regard for Progress of Canada

The Government contends that in lowering tariffs and allowing excess foreign goods to be dumped into Canada, they are assisting agriculture and lowering the cost of living, but we cannot see it in that way. The reverse would more likely happen, for Canada needs protection of her industries as well as agriculture. Owing to high protective tariff in other countries, Canada cannot dispose of her surplus foodstuffs, and yet we lay our country open to absorb the over-production of other countries. And the surprising thing is that while we are supposed to be an agricultural country and the Government would ruin other industries for agriculture, nevertheless last year we imported four million dollars' worth of apples, plums, peaches, pears, etc. (while our own fruit rots on the trees). \$5,610,000 worth of butter, eggs and cheese, and we might just mention here that it is the huge dumping of U.S. eggs into Canada at this season of the year, that ruins the Canadian egg producer, the very person the Government is supposed to be helping. The United States has a great variety of climate and while Canada is still under snow and ice, the grass is growing green in parts of the States; hence an over-production of eggs and the flooding of the Canadian market, but the Government does not seem to take our geographical position or weather conditions into account when framing policies. We also imported last year vegetables, including potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, onions, etc. to the value of \$2,435,000 and pork to the value of \$4,

134,061, all of which should have been supplied by our Canadian growers, and when it comes to a question of our farmers selling their pork, they cannot realize enough to pay for the grain fed them, let alone the labor involved. These startling figures only cover part of the industry that the Government is supposed to be helping by reducing tariffs!

GOD HELP THE INDUSTRIES THAT ARE NOT BEING HELPED!

Canada—A Free-for-all Dump

At the present time, Canada is a free-for-all dump for any and every country that has more than they need for themselves; and this is what our Government thinks is helping the people of Canada and lowering the cost of living, but can they not see that it is raising the cost of living, for it is preventing us from making enough money to purchase what we need, as the dumping of necessities of life into Canada causes unemployment and unemployment means decreased purchasing power. We wouldn't mind being a dumping ground for other countries if we had some magic way of equalizing the adverse trade balance created.

Civil Servants Problem

The Government employees are also being made the target for the Government's policy of economy and the Postal Clerk's situation is in the limelight at the present time. The Government tells them they must economize, but that is as far as the economy goes. There is no wise provision made nor the tariff regulated so that the Postal Clerk may get along on less money. When you think of it however, you cannot wonder at them telling the Postal Clerks that salaries will not be reduced, for at the rate the Government is going there will not be sufficient revenue to meet the salaries of the Government officials, let alone such a common person as the Postal Clerk.

The Minister of Labor has also made some wonderful strides in the matter of economy. Mr. Acland, former deputy minister of Labor, who had been in the Labor department for some years, and who understood that the work of the Labor department was to assist and champion the cause of the workingman, did not satisfy the Honorable Mr. Murdock, so a new deputy was appointed whose power was limited to the phrase: "I will speak to Mr. Murdock about it." Needless to say, everything concerning the welfare of Labor is vetoed, as the Minister of Labor is only interested in politics and not in the welfare of the working class, whose department he heads.

Engineers' Hours at O.A.C. Too Long

Guelph, Ont.—The Trades and Labor Council here is interesting itself in behalf of the steam engineers employed at the Ontario Agricultural and Veterinary colleges and Macdonald Institute, complaint having been made that the hours worked are too long and the pay received too small. Labor leaders here are not satisfied that the Government is doing its full duty towards these workmen, some of whom are said to work a total of 91 hours weekly for the salary of \$19 per week.

Big Wage Offer For Plasterers

Chicago Firm Sends to Toronto for Men—\$4,000 Year Rate

Toronto.—A rate of wages approximating \$4,000 per annum is offered to plasterers of Toronto, who wish to work in the United States, according to an advertisement posted up on the bulletin board of the Labor Temple here.

A number of plasterers are needed for work in the United States and are offered \$13 a day of 8 hours, and promised 60 days' work. To secure them a firm in Chicago guarantees transportation to and from Toronto if any of those who accept the job are not anxious to remain in Chicago.

The jobs are to be filled at once. Building trades mechanics who are in the United States state that skilled workmen can find plenty of work, and that building will offer much employment there again this year. While the jobs advertised are for a period of 60 days, judging from letters received from the United States, there will be plenty of work for plasterers during the season. There will be opportunities for overtime pay.

Labor Situation

Ontario Bureau Reports Less Unemployment

Hamilton.—Unemployment figures at the local bureau of the government employment service are gradually becoming smaller, there being a decrease during the past week of about 100, which has been the average weekly decrease for the past three weeks. The number on the unemployment register recently was around 1,800.

There was an increase in placements last week, the majority of positions being on the farm or for lumbering. The bureau has secured fifteen of the twenty-five river drivers asked for by a Muskoka lumber company and the party will leave here shortly in charge of a representative of the company.

There has been an increase in the demand for experienced farm hands, married and single, during the past week.

Living Cost Considered by Wage Board

Conciliation Body Hears Evidence of William Jennings for Street Railway Employees—Disguss Profits

Fort William, Ont.—Evidence with respect to the cost of living as determined by the Labor-Gazette of Canada took up a considerable portion of the session of the Arbitration Board, meeting under the Industrial Disputes act to determine the points at variance between the cities of Ft. William and Ft. Arthur and the employees of the street railway system of the twin cities. The evidence submitted by William Jennings on behalf of the employees showed the cost of living for a family of five in February, 1924, to have been \$32.64 per week. This figure Mr. Jennings contended was considerably lower than that suggested by the management of the street railway as being the basis on which an agreement should be reached.

Case for Men

The sessions of the board to date have been taken up entirely by the presentation of the case for the men. It is hoped to complete this side of the case as soon as possible and then proceed with the hearing of the case from the standpoint of the cities concerned. The board will then be in a position to weigh the evidence submitted and make a decision in the matter. The question of wages, it is understood, is the chief point at issue between the employers and the men. Mr. Jennings is the sole witness before the board so far.

Resuming his case where he left off, Mr. Jennings took up the question of profits made by the Port Arthur and Fort William street railway, and stated that the net savings made on the two systems during 1922, as compared with 1921 could be credited directly to the employees. Figures which he submitted showed a total saving during six months of that year to be roughly in excess of \$27,000. Any saving that had been affected could be credited directly to the employees. In no other item, he stated, was a saving shown in either system. He also took up the question of grading of employees, urging that the maximum rate be reached after six months.

Necessities of Life

In dealing with the item necessities of life, he stated that he wished to take this matter up from the standpoint of the actual necessities of life. Most of the men were of mature age and carrying the expense of families. They should receive a fair return for the labor they were putting in the industry.

Quoting from the Labor Gazette of

February, 1924, he showed the cost per week for a family of five for such items as food, light, fuel and rent to be \$21.23. This constituted 65 per cent. of the total cost of living. The other 35 per cent. provided for clothing, etc. The total cost was shown to be \$32.54 per week. Working 313 legal days at 9 hours per day at 55 cents per hour netted the men \$1,549.00 per year. Most municipalities were adopting the eight-hour day. At this rate it still left the men \$147.93 below the actual cost of living as tabulated by the Labor Gazette. At the rate of 57 cents per hour, as suggested, the employees would still be \$101.59 below the actual necessities of life.

Dealing with other industries from the Atlantic to the Pacific Mr. Jennings stated that Port Arthur and Fort William had to be considered geographically as being western cities. He referred to conditions in the brick-laying, carpentering, electrical and metal and printing industries to show that wages locally were higher than most cities of the east and as high or higher than many centres farther west.

Sunday Work

Turning to the street railway, he stated that in 1921 wages paid locally were as high as any city in the east excepting Toronto, and they were as high in some cases as cities farther west.

Rates for work on Sunday, he argued, should be considered as overtime, and time and a half should be paid for labor on that day.

Wants Pay Sheets

Prior to the conclusion of the session, a request was made by Mr. Jennings, representing the street railway men, for pay sheets covering the year 1923 to be submitted to the arbitration board for consideration. This action was taken following the reading by Mr. Jennings of a newspaper report of a statement made by Alderman Rankin to the effect that there were men in the employ of the railway who were working for 55 cents per hour and were earning at the rate of between \$142 and \$155 per month. Mr. Jennings said that he would like to see the pay sheets to verify the statement made.

An adjournment of the board was ordered until the next afternoon at two o'clock, to allow the officials of the railroad to secure the information requested.

One of the questions dealt with at the afternoon session was the recognition of the employees not belonging to the union. Mr. Jennings was anxious that the union should be recognized so that in future matters could be dealt with through the organization. (Continued on page 4)

American Unions Bring Prosperity

By Frank Hodges

(The following article appeared in the pen of Mr. Frank Hodges, of Great Britain, following his recent visit many of the coal districts of to the headquarters of the United

Of the four and a half million trade unionists in the United States, no body of workmen is as formidable as those in the trade union known as the United Mine Workers of America. Comprised of 500,000 members, spread over twenty-one separate districts, including the anthracite districts of Pennsylvania, it plays an important role in the economic life of the nation. Its activities are not confined to the United States, but are spread to Canada.

Like many other international (that is, United States and Canada) trade unions on the American continent, it determines the wages and conditions of its Canadian members in a marked degree. America undoubtedly paves the way for the conditions of employment in the Dominion of Canada.

As mentioned in previous articles, there is a joint movement of capitalists and Communists in Canada to free the Canadian trade union movement from the domination of the American movement. It will, indeed, be a sorry day for the Canadian workers if ever this is allowed to happen. They are face to face with a very difficult situation, and only sound leadership can prevent the Canadian trade union movement from breaking up in the face of these two conflicting influences. American capital is dominant in Canada in nearly all industries. Left to themselves, the Canadian workers would soon feel the pressure upon their standards of living resulting from the operation of American finance. Their ties with their fellow workers in the trade movement of the States, however, make it possible for them to enjoy many, if not all the economic advantages of the American workman.

Mr. John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, informs me that the coal miners of Canada are more in the nature of a liability than an asset to the union from a financial point of view. It has been my lot to witness the value of this form of organization in another connection, namely, among the printing trades in Canada. In Toronto, for example, there has been a printers' strike lasting for two years.

Reynold's News, a London newspaper, secretary of the Miners' Federation visit to the United States, Mr. Hodges America and incidentally paid a visit to the headquarters of the United Mine Workers of America.)

The struggle has been for an establishment of a forty-four hour week. For the most part this has been secured in the printing houses of the United States, and certain houses in Canada, but there are still printing establishments in Toronto which have not yet made the concession. The strikers are in receipt of over \$25 per week strike pay from the International Union, apart from the special allowances they receive by way of rent and coal. This strike may last for another two years, but the men are bound to win in the end because of the fact that the whole of the finance

At that time there were at least three and a half millions unemployed in the country. Many unions and union leaders were ready to end, in fact, did accept reductions in wages. The miners were asked to accept such reductions, but they definitely declined. They declared that they were going to maintain the peak wages secured during the war for another two

Stopped Downward Wages

I have further observed that the high wages which are now being paid practically throughout the whole of America are due to the efforts of the United Mine Workers of America, when they conducted their long strike of 1922, which was of five months' duration. It has been openly stated that but for the magnificent fight put up on that occasion by the miners, America would have followed in the wake of many European countries which have experienced the downward tendency of wages. In 1922, when the American trade depression was most marked, a certain psychology developed as in England, namely, that the only way to get improvement and economic prosperity lay in cuts of wages.

After this session of the Legislature is over the Ontario Government will pass an order-in-council which will make provision for the insertion of the Fair Wage Clause in all Provincial contracts. This was the cheering statement made by Hon. Dr. Leeming Carr, M.L.A., who addressed a largely attended special session of the Trades and Labor Council at the Labor Temple. Applause followed when the Minister stated, that after the order-in-council had been signed by the Governor-General in Council, it is the intention of the Government to rigidly enforce the measure.

Asked why the Government didn't introduce a Fair Wage Bill while the House was in session, Dr. Carr replied that the Government is overburdened with work, and that Premier Ferguson is considerably overworked.

"Premier Ferguson has given me permission to make this important announcement to you gentlemen, and the Fair Wage Clause will be included in all work undertaken by the Government this year," said Dr. Carr, who added that a Fair Wage Bill will be introduced by the Government at the next session of the Legislature.

Dr. Carr told the delegates that he considered that old age pension legislation was required in Ontario, and that it is his intention, at the first favorable opportunity, to consult Premier Ferguson and his Cabinet colleagues respecting such a scheme.

Hamilton.—Union bricklayers in Hamilton will insist on an increase of from \$1.00 to \$1.25 per hour when new agreements are signed. The present agreement of \$1.00 per hour expired Monday. Several contractors, when spoken to, said they were opposed to the increase. It was intimated that a compromise of \$1.10 or \$1.15 per hour might be effected.

The result has been that miners' wages were maintained at their peak war figures. Then other trades began to demand increases. Increases, in fact, were granted, as in the iron and steel trades, even without demands. The total wage bill of the United States went up by hundreds of millions of dollars. The purchasing power was thus put in the hands of the workers. They began to buy the things they had lost and the things they had wanted. Factories began to move; agriculture received a new fillip; consumption increased on an un-

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and we are assured of plenty of work for the increased population that Canada needs.

of the union in the United States is placed at the disposal of these few men in Toronto until they win.

U.S. Make the Pace

Similarly with the mine workers, the United States makes the pace, Canada follows. Owing to the interval between the securing of economic advantages in the United States and their application to Canada a large influx of Canadian workers is found coming into the States, and this constitutes one of the gravest political and economic problems for Canada. Seventy thousand Canadian workers are recorded as having left for America last year. It is admitted over here that many have come into the States at points where their entrance is not registered. British immigrants to Canada do not swell the Canadian population; they merely fill the gaps caused by the emigration of Canadian workers to the United States.

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