COMPULSORY ARBITRATION.

Taking the remarks on Compulsory Arbitration in the last issue of the 'Record' as a text the "Eastern Chronicle" has the following on the subject. We approve, generally, in the sentiments of our contemporary, but cannot, for the life of us, see why he never mentioned the Nova Scotia Arbitration Act and persists in holding up the New Zealand measure. Our Nova Scotia Act was before the New Zealand measure, and was a better act to boot. The difference is that the New Zealand Act was tried and improved upon, while our Act got only one trial—and worked in that case splendidly—and was mutilated by politicians who wished to curry favor with certain unthinking workingmen:—

We, too, are sorry that the Canadian workingmen will not give compulsory arbitration a trial. If they look upon New Zealand as a workingman's paradise—it really is in comparison with any province or state in North America—compulsory arbitration has made it so.

The Hon. R. J Seddon will be admitted as qualified to speak for New Zealand. A few years ago Mr. Seddon, replying to a letter from Professor Frank Parsons of Boston, wrote:—

"You allude to reports regarding New Zealand workingmen, being dissatisfied with the Arbitration Act. You must not forget that there are certain people (few, but much in evidence) who would be only too glad to see the Act break down and be again able to "put the screws on" their work people as in old days. These gladly seize on any mutterings of discontent on the part of a worker, and publish widely every word of grumbling they can induce dissatisfied people to utter. Remember that before the Arbitration Court, as before any other Court, the loser does not relish losing. When workers are refused an advance in wages, etc., they grumble. We cannot help that; we can only see that, as far as lies in our power, justice is done to both sides. I assert that the immense majority of the industrial classes in New Zealand respect and esteem the Arbitration Act. It has raised wages, shortened hours, granted holidays, overtime, etc., and in many ways given precious privileges to artisans, while the ever growing volume of trade and business shows that masters as well as men thrive under the labor laws of this colony."

Professor Frank Parsons is one of the great authors of the United States and is the author of several valuable books. He was also, for twelve years or more lecturer in the Boston University school, and he was Director of the Department of History in the Bureau of Economic Research, Washington, D. C., so it will be conceded that his qualifications are remarkable.

In the 58th chapter in Parson's story of New Zealand the first paragraph reads:—

"New Zealand is the land of industrial peace; the first country to abolish strikes and lockouts, and establish judicial decision of labor difficulties in place of the primitive method of settlement by battle. The same prolific year, (1894) that did so much for the nationalization of land and credit through its resumption and banking laws, accomplished also the judicialization of labor disputes. And of all New Zealand's far famed achievements this is the most interesting and important—a law that enables either party to an industrial difficulty to bring the matter into court and have it decided by an award with the binding force of a judgment of the Supreme Court—a law that has put an end to the battles of capital and labor andgiven the Colony unbroken industrial peace for the whole eight years since the Act went into effect."

Further along Mr. Parsons states:

"The system rests upon two broad facts. (1) That decision by reason is better than decision by force; and (2) That there are three parties in interest in every industrial trouble, labor, capital, and the public; and as the public always wants arbitration, if either of the other parties desires it also there is a majority of 2 to 1 in favor of a settlement."

Year by year ever since, the Act has been improved to meet contingencies as they arose. A few years ago Inspectors of Awards were appointed to see that employers or employees were complying with the award. This has given great satisfaction as it has taken away from the parties to the suit the disagreeable duty of having to complain that the award is not being carried out. The blue books of the past three years on this head are before us as we write.

We may note in passing that New South Wales has gone a step further than New Zealand. The law is practically the same in its main features in both countries, but in the latter the court is given power to intervene in a labor dispute even when neither party has applied. There is reason in that.

In Canada it looks as if the labor bosses were afraid of their jobs. If Arbitration Courts were established the men would look to the courts for fair play instead of the Federations or labour Unions. The Unions would exist as they do now with the proviso that the law of necessity recognized them; but a lodge, or the lodges in a given community could appeal to the court as well as the Grand Lodge. In New Zealand the house where the Arbitration Court is held is always open, there is no need of paid labor leaders to keep them open. It should in our opinion be so in Canada.

But as long as the men are against Arbitration Courts there will be no Courts; and the men may rest assured that the arrangements suit the employers admirably.

When a strike occurs in Nova Scotia it is painful to watch the government. It would do anything in the world to bring about a settlement; but there is nothing it can do. The yellow press that is professedly supporting the opposition stands up on its hind legs and howls at the government because it does not settle the strike, while the debased press know that there is nothing the government can do. All of this is not complimentary to our intelligence. There should surely be a way out. After the experience of the past few years, in the presence of the fact that neither the labor leaders nor the employers want compulsory arbitration, the government should do as the opposition in New Zealand did in 1892, viz.—Appeal direct to the workman to give such a law a trial. After all their past fights, in which they gained but little, the men said, "All right; we will support your candidates on condition that if you beat the government you will pass a compulsory arbitration act." Both parties kept their word and ever since the agreement has held. The government of this province need not be told what it has suffered from strikes during the past few years. A certain responsibility rests on the government regarding the future Very well, let it go to the workingmen and ask them to give compulsory arbitration a trial,—at the same time let it make a similar appeal to the public, for they are as much interested as any one. If the government went at this earnestly we would be disagreeably disappointed if the people of the province would not support them.

Anyway that is our solution. Good heavens, have not the workingmen of Nova Scotia been generally reasonable when facts are laid before them? We know of no way as likely to give Nova Scotia industrial peace as that which gave it to New Zealand and we know no way to get compulsory arbitration but by a direct appeal to the people by the government.

TWO OF A KIND.

It is certainly surprising, and somewhat amusing, to find the Glace Bay Gazette and the Toronto Star—Mr.