

Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press

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A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER. AGAIN RESULTS

WAGES and hours, often heralded by opponents as the only function of the trade unionist, gets its reply as being contrary to facts in numerous ways, and none more telling when legislation is sought and enacted of a nature apparently foreign to the work of the trade unionist. Yet this is what is going on at all times, that aside from the principal function of looking after its own membership, time is found to forward legislation of a general nature.

Thus the unselfish organized workers' sense of citizenship is brought into play in leaving out of mind the particular craft or calling of those who may benefit. In the country's interest, is the only objective.

A case in point is the direct work of President Tom Moore, for which the recently-formed Federal Health Board is sponsor, President Moore having previously advocated the action now made effective through legislation, and the opportunity presenting itself with the result as follows:

An extra edition of the Canada Gazette announces that the act amending the Opium and Drug Act, which was passed at the summer session of the Commons, becomes effective from December 31, 1919.

The amendment provides that imports into Canada or exports from Canada, of cocoa leaves, cocaine, or any of their salts, or preparations, or opium alkaloids of their salts or preparations, shall be only by license from the minister who is presiding over the Federal Department of Health.

Anyone guilty of a contravention of this act is liable to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 and costs, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or to both fine and imprisonment.

HIGH COST OF LEATHER

THAT one of the chief causes of the prevailing high prices of leather was the unreasonable demands of labor was the statement made at the annual meeting of the tanners' section of the Toronto Board of Trade, by W. J. Heaven, retiring chairman.

In view of the facts of the case, and of information in our possession, we cannot allow this assertion to pass unchallenged.

Wages in Canada are from 75 to 100 per cent. lower than in the United States, yet leather goods are about on a par in cost. It is true that wages have been increased in Canada during recent years, but, as has often been stated, they have been exploited by the employer for his profit.

For instance, when the Royal Commission on Industrial Relations was sitting at Kitchener, Ont., a boot and shoe manufacturer was called before the commission for examination. He manufactured workmen's boots, which before the war sold for \$4 a pair, and at the time of the investigation cost \$8 a pair. When asked to what he attributed the high cost, he replied, "To the 100 per cent. increase in his men's wages." But upon being further examined the fact was revealed that the increase in wages to his employees added only 20 cents to the cost of the boots.

For the past few weeks William F. Alterman, member of the general executive board of the United Leather Workers' International Union, has been investigating tannery and leather workers' conditions in Canada, and he states that the wages in this country are from 75 to 100 per cent. lower than in the United States. He also states that the hours here are far longer, whereas in the States the men have a week of from 44 to 48 hours.

In view of this information, we are at a loss to know upon what Mr. Heaven bases his remarks.

PRESENTS WAGE SCALE.

MAYOR Wilfred Bolham, of Renfrew, has presented a new wage scale to his constituents of the Creamery Town, stating that the job is worth \$500.00 per year, and failure of the Renfrew taxpayers to accept his ultimatum they must look to some other person to be their mayor.

This mayor happens to be a member of a trade union organization, to wit: the Brotherhood of Carpenters. He thus has some experience in the presentation of wage agreements and is putting same to practical application in the civic workshop.

CHANGING VOCATIONS.

M. HARRY Halford, of Hamilton, vice-president of the Trade Congress, made an attempt to change his occupation from tonsorial chair to occupant of the mayor's chair at the recent municipal elections. Harry apparently is not a strong believer of a close shave, the result showing that the Hamilton citizens do not desire to lose his services as manipulator of the razor and lather. The idea, of course, was too preposterous of Hamilton's mayor calling out you're next!

Queues of Workless Ex-Soldiers.

The promise of a merry Christmas is very remote for many of the men who have come through the great war to find themselves faced with unemployment.

For two hours yesterday, says the Daily Herald (London, Eng.), of December 12, I watched an apparently endless stream of the most dejected-looking men I have ever seen my fair to be told stilly into the corridor leading to the Employment Bureau. Some of these men were at the headquarters of the Church Army in Bryanston street, London.

They sat on the worn benches in spiritless silence, broken men, wearing decorations for valor! Hollow-checked most of them were, some, it was clear, were as near the brink of desolation as they could get without falling out altogether, and their eyes had that hopeless expression that was most galling to see in ships and suffering failed to bring into them.

The scene was reminiscent of sick parades outside the army doctor's shop. But no "No. 9" could cure the ills of these men, afflicted with the soul-wearing sickness that comes of unmet needs, lack of nourishing food, and the corroding pain born of concern for those dear to them.

Many of them were middle-aged—the sort of men who despite stiffening joints and rheumatic twinges offered themselves as bonas of burden, in order that younger men might confine themselves to the real thing unhampered. They suffered, these middle-aged men—and back in bedridden "dive" in an unfruitful country permits their sufferings to continue.

A shivering Gurka in khaki was among the crowd. He had brought back a suit of "civvies" and a substantial overcoat, because they didn't fit! Yet though he feels the cold acutely here he refuses to be sent home.

"Me don't want to go home," he said. "Me do better here."

But, so far, he has earned nothing. A lot of these men, Mr. T. Sanders, in charge of the bureau, told me, have been coming to him lately. So he has many negroes. He also told how ex-servicemen in all parts of the country are tramping to London, thinking that their chances will be better there than they find disillusionment too often.

"Thousands of ex-soldiers, men who have been in the thick of the fighting," said Mr. Sanders, "will be in great distress this Christmas, as well as their families. It is really pathetic the way they plead with me to try and get them work before Christmas. The United Service Fund will have great demands made on it, and we are doing our best to relieve them."

Across the Atlantic.

What Our Brothers in the Motherland Are Doing.

WATERS ISSUE ULTIMATUM Pressure brought to bear upon the Government secured settlement of the strikers' strike caused by refusal of four to join the union. Negotiations are now under way to procure an agreement in the salaries and the strikers' dispute. The waters have delivered an ultimatum to a certain hotel manager.

MOULDERS' STRIKE NEAR END Representatives of the Moulders' Unions and employers have conferred on a means of settling the iron workers' strike, which has been in progress since September 20, and have arrived at a provisional agreement, subject to the ratification of the strikers. If the plan is ratified work will be resumed on January 15. Terms agreed upon involve a compromise, the men accepting much less of an advance than they originally demanded.

SOUND JUDGMENT. "If I were a factory employe, a workman on the railroads or a wage-earner of any sort, I would undoubtedly join the union in any trade. If I disapproved of its policy, I would join in order to fight that policy; if the union leaders were dishonest I would join in order to put them out. I believe in the union and I believe that all men who are benefited by the union are morally bound to help to the extent of their power in the common interests advanced by the union." — Theodore Roosevelt.

POLITICS and PEOPLE THROUGH THE TELESCOPE OF LABOR

By Special Correspondent. Sir Robert Borden has finally left the Capital for a prolonged holiday. Before he left there was another Cabinet shuffle, which cannot be described as very impressive or likely to increase confidence in the present administration. General McBurney, one of the few well men in the Cabinet, has had enough and has resigned. His portfolio is not being filled at present. Hon. Arthur Sifton, who is on the sick list, has been shifted from Public Works to Secretary of State. The portfolio of Secretary of State is one of the lightest in the Government, but it has been made even lighter for the benefit of Mr. Sifton by having the mines branch transferred to Interior. About all Mr. Sifton will have left is the title of Secretary of State in his own mind.

Another semi-invalid, Hon. Martin Burrell, has been moved from Secretary of State to Customs. In the meantime any real reconstruction of the Cabinet, which might give the Government added strength, which it sorely needs, will be postponed indefinitely. It will be six months before Sir Robert is expected back on the job and it is a question then whether he will be able to carry on with anything like his old-time vigor.

With an absentee Premier and a Cabinet, about half of whom are sanitarium patients, it is difficult to predict what will happen this coming session. The whole Union Government may "blow up" with a loud explosion at any time, and Borden may return to find his creation has dissolved. Certainly Sir



THAT BARGAIN YOU PICKED UP AT FIVE DOLLARS PER QUART

INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE.

The General Conference of the International Labor Organization of the League of Nations, having been convened at Washington by the Government of the United States of America on the 29th day of October, 1919, and having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to the "question of preventing or providing against unemployment," which is the second item in the agenda for the Washington meeting of the Conference, and having determined that these proposals shall take the form of a recommendation, to be submitted to the members of the International Labor Organization for consideration with a view to effect being given to it by national legislation or otherwise, in accordance with the Labor Part of the Treaty of Versailles of 28 June, 1919, and of the Treaty of St. Germain of 10 September, 1919:

I. The General Conference recommends that each member of the International Labor Organization should establish an agency which charge fees or which carry on their business for profit. Where such agencies already exist, it is further recommended that they be permitted to operate only under Government license, and that all profitable measures be taken to abolish such agencies as soon as possible.

II. The General Conference recommends to the members of the International Labor Organization that the recruiting of bodies of workers in one country with a view to their employment in another country should be permitted only by mutual agreement between the countries concerned and after consultation with the workers in the industries concerned.

III. The General Conference recommends that each member of the International Labor Organization should establish an effective system of unemployment insurance, either through a Government system or through a system of Government subventions to associations whose rules provide for the payment of benefits to their unemployed members.

IV. The General Conference recommends that each member of the International Labor Organization coordinate the execution of all work undertaken under public authority, with a view to reserving such work as far as practicable for periods of

Here's To Woman.

Once Our Superior, Now Our Equal.—Cats.

UNSANITARY WORKING CONDITIONS AT CALGARY.

Unsanitary working conditions received the attention of the Calgary Trades and Labor Council at their last meeting. Complaints were laid before the council by Mrs. Jean McWilliam and Mrs. David Davidson, delegates from the Women's Labor League, that girls employed in the city were having to work under most unsanitary conditions.

Mrs. McWilliam in making her statement said the girls at the place referred to had to sleep in a filthy place in the basement, "right down in the under-world, where they had to go through the kitchen where the Chinamen smoked, and the girls got all the benefit of the greasy smells. They have been putting up with these conditions for two years. Nothing has been done by the factory inspector, though he had been appealed to from time to time. They went to work at 7 p.m. to 10, and then had to go to sleep in the basement. The floor was of concrete, and all they had was a camp bed."

A motion was passed "that the council go on record against permission being granted to females to work at night shifts when they come within the scope of the Factories Act." A committee composed of the president, Ald. Fred White, Alex. Ross, M.L.A.; Walter Smitten, and Delegates Sadler and Monaghan was appointed to meet in conjunction with the Women's Labor League to review the Factories Act and make some recommendations as to amendments.

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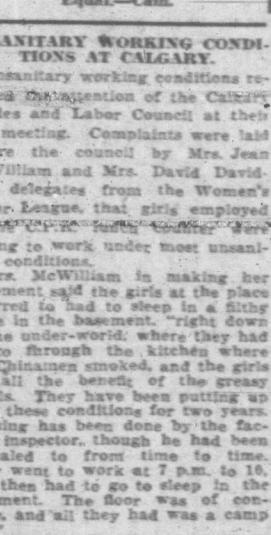
The Painter and Decorator strikes the keynote right when it says: "The workers have come to a full realization of the importance of education in its broadest, highest and truest sense. They want education for industry, but for life. What we want is to be finer men, not better laborers. We refuse to be limited by the laws and regulations for the protection of their own workers, as well as to the right of lawful organization as enjoyed by their own workers."

The union label unites all interests that lie in the improvement of industrial conditions through the abolition of the sweatshop, tenement house, insanitary factory, convict labor, Chinese labor, night labor, and child labor. Each of these evils has its antidote in the union label.

George Foster, who is acting Premier, will not find a primrose path ahead of him. The Opposition will not fail to take advantage of the Government weakness, while the growing cross-benches under the able leadership of Hon. T. A. Crerar, will show, undoubtedly, increased aggressiveness as a result of the Ontario victory and the success of the recent by-elections. It would not be surprising if there was a reshuffle in the cross-benches as the part of many Government followers. The unfortunate outcome of the situation may be the holding up of important legislation which is due. There was promised Labor legislation "this coming session" as an outcome of the National Industrial Conference in Ottawa and the later International Labor Conference at Washington.

Interest has been aroused in the announcement of the Board of Commerce that the operation of a protective tariff as a factor in the cost of living and also the internationalization of parking plans are to form subjects of investigation by the board. While the investigation of the tariff is not specifically a function of the board it has power to investigate anything that bears upon the price of commodities in general. The figures which have been compiled by the board show that in some articles of clothing the protection has been so high as to practically shut out effective competition. To this fact is attributed part at least of the very high cost of clothing, hence the decision of the board to investigate the subject as it bears on the cost of liv-

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The Canadian Labor Press

is the only weekly paper published in Ottawa in the interests of the man who earns his living—not only of the Trade Unionists, but of every worker.

The Canadian Labor Press is endorsed by the Ottawa Allied Trades and Labor Association and by the Independent Labor Party.

The Canadian Labor Press stands by the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress of which Mr. Tom Moore is president, and Mr. P. M. Draper is secretary-treasurer.

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