

# Labor News From Coast to Coast

## THE RAILWAY DEFICIT IN CANADA— THE DOLE IN ENGLAND—THEIR SOLUTION

(Continued from page one)

we discuss such evasions of the real problem as selling the National Railways, or amalgamating them with the Canadian Pacific Lines; or we otherwise hide our heads in the sand, knowing full well what the only successful solution is, or can be.

### The Fundamental Difficulty

The financial difficulty is only one aspect of the problem, though it is the most fundamental. Other difficulties will be chiefly of adjustment and will become much easier if sound financial arrangements, on an adequate scale, are made. Probably half the above sum would be the maximum amount of credit needed at any one time, since substantial repayment of sums advanced to our new citizens would begin within say five years, soon after which time the financial problem would solve itself.

If we assume that roughly one half of these people enter our basic industries, chiefly farming, and that the remainder perform the various economic and other social services incidental to, and arising from our basic industries, the enormous stimulus to our national economic life may be faintly foreseen. It would mean an increase of rather more than fifty per cent, in our population and in our national assets and activities. It would mean the rapid conversion of a further substantial part of our potential, into actual wealth. It would mean the conversion of our railway deficits into surpluses. It would mean that our heavy burden of taxes could gradually be reduced. And, best of all, it would mean splendid co-operation between Canada and the mother country and might be a powerful factor in helping to settle the destiny of our country. But no single one of these benefits can be obtained by itself. The problem is a unit, solvable as a whole, but not in parts.

The present efforts along this line have been successful experiments. These efforts should be greatly strengthened and expanded. It was perhaps well to create the organizations slowly at the beginning. What is now necessary is a rapid expansion of the present financial provision, and of the existing organizations, to a scale proportionate to the great factors of the existing problem.

### An Unfounded Fear

Occasionally, one sees an expression of fear that, if such a movement of people were rapidly made, Canada would suffer from an increase of her own unemployment. This conclusion seems to result from failure to think the suggested solution of the problem through. The homes, schools, roads, towns, villages and all other necessities and conveniences of civilization for our new citizens, would have to be rapidly made by themselves and in part paid for by their efforts in their own fields of endeavor. Such a well-organized campaign of settlement, far from reducing opportunities of employment for those already in Canada, would greatly increase them. But it is true that thorough organization would be needed, in order to secure mobility and quick response to local needs.

This is Canada's great opportunity. We can, if we will, repeat in some degree, the splendid achievement of our great and prosperous neighbor during the 19th century. But the conditions have changed and we must adapt the means to meet these changed conditions. What now appears to a mountain of difficulty here and in England may be in future come to be looked upon as another of those mysterious, beneficent workings of history, which suggest, to those so-minded, direction of great historical movements by an over-ruling Providence.

Canada is soon to have an election. The candidates can find no question of greater importance than this to discuss before their constituents. It is, or should be, the great national issue at the coming election. The railway problem cannot be intelligently discussed apart from it. Let our statesmen come forward with a constructive policy and shape the electors' minds on it. The country will respond to real leadership.

This letter is written with no desire to criticize any person, department or party. There is probably nothing in it that has not occurred to everyone who has given any thought to the matters discussed. But our public men can take action in so far as they are reasonably assured they have sufficient support. A discussion of this vital issue in our daily press would seem to be most timely.

C. V. CORLESS.

Coniston, Ont., Sept 5, 1925.

(“Mail and Empire,” Toronto.)

## Child Farms Labor an Issue in U.S.

Detroit, Mich.—Application of child labor laws to agriculture was recommended in the report of the Committee on Child Labor laws to be given to the thirty-fifth annual meeting of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, held at Hotel Statler, August 25 to 31.

The organization seeks a child labor law which will be uniform throughout the United States.

One section of the proposed law, regarding long hours and heavy tasks performed by children on farms is as follows:

“The failure of child labor laws to cover this employment has been based not only upon the recognized difficulties of enforcement, but also largely upon the assumption that farm work is healthful and advantageous for young children—an assumption which in the light of known agricultural child labor conditions, can no longer be supported.

There is no intrinsic reason why the law should prevent a child from working 12 hours a day in a canning shed, for instance, and fall to protect the child who works 12 hours a day, while school is in session, cultivating or harvesting sugar beets or onions.”

## Danish Seamen On Strike

Copenhagen.—Seamen employed by the Danish ship-owners' union went on strike in protest against the employers' refusal to increase wages. The unskilled workers' union declared a transport blockade of all the owners affected, and the strikers also have been promised support by the Swedish & Norwegian stokers' union. The Danish ship owners declare the present economic outlook makes it impossible to grant the wage increase.

## Montreal Is Chosen

Ottawa, Ont.—After a noisy campaign involving three ballots for the selection of the next convention city, Montreal was chosen for the 1926 gathering of the Trades and Labor Congress by a majority of one vote at the recent convention held here.

The following provincial executives were elected: Ontario, H. S. Mitchell, Hamilton; A. E. McLeod, Espanola; R. Plant, Ottawa; Mary McNab, Toronto.

## Soviet Plans Germ War?

London, Eng.—The Soviet Red army plans to fight by inoculating its enemies with disease germs, according to information conveyed to the war office here. Evidence that the Soviet is actively engaged in storing up stocks of tubes containing germs of encephalitis lethargica, commonly known as sleeping sickness, has been communicated to the British authorities.

## Want Public Ownership of the Mines

Ottawa, Ont.—The nationalization of Canadian mines, better beer for Ontario and condemnation of the exploitation of Chinese child labor in the treaty ports of China were among the sentiments expressed in resolutions passed by the Trades and Labor Congress recently.

Debate waxed hot on a resolution of international flavor put forward by the communist group in the convention favoring the calling of an all-inclusive conference representative of the trade unions of the world for the purpose of establishing a basis for one great trade union international.

## Our Overseas Column

### Labor Day Marks Quiet Year

London, Ont.—The Labor Day celebration held in London this year marked the passing of another season which has been absolutely free from any labor troubles. There has been no strike of any kind in the city this year, and the year 1925 was also free from labor troubles of this sort. In fact, not since the strike of the ainters, and this was so long ago that labor men could not tell what year it occurred, has there been any differences between labor and employers in this city. It is true, there have been new agreements signed up, and in some of the negotiations there were signs of trouble, but they did not develop.

London has been particularly noted for its freedom from labor troubles. While wages paid here are not so high as they are in other centres, living conditions are considered better. For instance, some labor men recently noted that the employees of the Windsor Street Railway received an increase two cents an hour, making the wages now 55 cents an hour, while London Street Railway employees are paid 48 cents an hour. But the labor men pointed out that rents, etc., are higher in Windsor than here.

### Legal Aid for the Poor in Australia

Adelaide.—The South Australian attorney-general has introduced a bill into the assembly granting free legal assistance to the poor and authorizing the appointment of a public solicitor to transact all business in necessitous cases.

This represents a distinct departure in connection with such legislation throughout Australia, as, if the measure is passed, South Australia will be the only state with a practically separate public solicitor's department.

The attorney-general said it was lamentable that the question of granting facilities enabling the poor to obtain justice equally with the rich was still unsolved, and the government was trying to remove the anomaly to some extent.

### Whitehall Girls Wages

London, Eng.—More than 2,000 girl typists and shorthand typists employed in gov't departments in Whitehall, have applied to the treasury, through the civil service clerical association for increase in salaries.

An official of the association said to a reporter recently: “Many of the shorthand typists are employed as private secretaries and minute clerks to high officials, and we are asking that girls carrying out these duties should receive at least as high a remuneration as they would get in the city.”

“For the highest grade we are asking a salary of £5 10s. as against the present £3 10s. and for the second grade £4, as against the present £2 10s.”

### Indian Athlete Is a Good Bricklayer

Kansas City, Mo.—Laying 35,000 brick a day, or approximately 3 1/2 carloads, James Brown, an Indian, and former Carlisle football player, has gained a reputation among construction workers on a highway near here as being the world's champion bricklayer.

So fast does he work that five men are kept busy keeping him supplied with brick and two others are used to keep the face of the road even ahead of him.



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### Decline Attributed to Trade Dullness

Decline in membership of unions affiliated with the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress from 121,842 in 1923 to 117,060 in 1924, and 105,912 in 1925, no doubt reflects the movement of workers from Canada during the King Government's term in office.

### Denies Two Issues Linked

Atlantic City, N. J.—The wage demands of union miners in the anthracite coal fields are the objective of a fight that is entirely separate from any situation in the bituminous pits. John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, reiterated recently.

Lewis scoffed at rumors that he would demand settlement of the soft coal wage dispute as price of an agreement with the anthracite miners.

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