

## OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

It's a comical place is this boarding house of ours, not because it differs in any respect from other houses of a similar class, but because the crowd that lives there is the most heterogeneous one that ever I came in contact with in my life. First there is old Brown, an Old Country Radical, who swears by Reynolds' newspaper and abhors monarchical government as much as the devil does holy water; then there's Bill Sinnet, a west-country-hid-bound-Tory hailing from Penzance, who despite his ten years' experience of Canada is more loyal to the Queen than the Prince of Wales; then there's Sharkey, a Northampton shoemaker, who boasts of having taken part in four elections to secure the return of Charles Bradlaugh, and who uses Watt's "Secular Thought" as a text book. Phil. Garlick, a Knight of Labor; Tom Gaskill, a Chicago Nationalist, and Geo. Stephens, a Trade-Unionist, make about as noisy a half dozen as ever gathered in a boarding house sitting room after tea for a quiet smoke. Everything sacred and profane, everything social, religious or political in any way bearing upon the economic convictions of our boarders are here discussed with an earnestness and freedom equalled only by the desire of the boarding misers to save her traps from destruction when the debate, as is often the case, grows rather warm.

The recent action of the Trades and Labor Council in taking the question of the readjustment of the water tax into the courts furnished the subject of debate at last night's sitting and showed that however unanimous the labor organizations may be it don't in the least affect the opinion of our boarders.

"This lawsuit," said Brown, "is going to cost a small fortune and the result is doubtful, whereas if the Central Trades and Labor Council had spent the same amount of money in a judicious way by holding public meetings and distributing labor literature, they could have roused the working classes to such a sense of their duty that in a couple of years at the most they would have had a majority in the City Council who would have removed not only this tax, but introduced all the other reforms in our municipal government for which we are agitating. The very fact that this tax is unjust and burdensome and collected in a most barbarous manner would, in that case, have proved a trump card in the hands of our reformers. People generally don't think upon questions of this kind until they feel their effects in their pocket. Now this is just where they feel this water tax, and once they realized that it would vary for them to act politically in or move it, they wouldn't be slow in

"That's all right," said Stephens, "but is organized labor for ever to put up with the insolent indifference with which our aldermen treat our demands? What organization would quietly submit to the treatment which we received from the City Council? Why, if our petition had emanated from a lot of schoolboys they could not have treated it with more indifference. No, sir, I'm for fighting them wherever and whenever there's a chance, in the courts and out of it, and particularly when they come back to us for re-election; teach them once and for all that when organized labor condescends to send a petition to that civic museum of antiquities that they'll have to do something more with it than to file it away in a pigeon hole."

"But what will the tenants gain even after you have won your case," said Sinnet. "Should the water tax be reduced by this proceeding of the Central Trades and Labor Council, as I have no doubt it will, the amount of the tax will be put on the landlord in some form or other, and the tenant will eventually have to pay it after all; it's as broad as it's long."

"It's not as broad as it's long by any means," replied Stephens, "and I'll tell you why. In the first place, as this tax will be readjusted the amount which is now illegally collected from the poor in excess of their equitable share will be saddled on to those tenants and proprietors who now pay less than they ought. If the contention of the Trades Council is correct that the city cannot legally charge more than the actual cost of the water this would still further decrease the amount to be paid by the tenant, but in any case he will have an opportunity of paying it by the month, instead of as now in a lump sum, and this in itself will be a great boon to many."

"But this fact remains," persisted Sinnet, "that if the gross revenue of the city is decreased by a reduction of the water tax the deficiency will have to be made good by increasing other taxes just in proportion as this tax has decreased, and, if put on the landlords, must and will eventually be paid by the tenants."

"There is no earthly reason why any more taxes should be put on the landlords," said Sharkey. "If the revenue of the city after the readjustment of the water tax is found insufficient for the requirements of the cor-

poration, popular opinion will force our authorities to tax the twenty million dollars of property belonging to religious institutions now exempt from taxation. These corporations are too wealthy to be allowed to claim the privilege of beggars any longer, and if the poor man with an income of four or five dollars a week is considered rich enough to pay his tax these corporations, with their princely fortunes should not be exempt; let them obey the teaching of their Lord and render unto Caesar that which belongs to him."

"Another thing," said Phil. Garlick, "why should occupiers of the soil alone be taxed for all improvements which tend to increase the value of the vacant lot of the land speculator, while he pays little or no taxes? It is manifestly unjust. In reference to this water tax, I deny positively that the city has any moral right to tax a tenant for the water he uses, it might with as much reason compel the tenant to put a roof on his landlord's house, for he could no more hope to let his house without the one as without the other. Since then it is in the landlord's interest to have water in his dwelling, for without it he could not find a tenant, it is he and not the tenant who should pay for it. Since Montreal has been provided with an efficient water service the insurance companies have reduced their rate from one to 1½ per cent. Supposing the insurance held in this city on property amounts to \$100,000,000, and in reality it would upon investigation be found to amount to more, the clear saving to property holders from this item alone would amount to over ONE MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY—yet they have the effrontery to charge the cost and maintenance of this service upon their tenants. No highwayman of old ever robbed a traveller more effectually with the aid of a blunderbuss than does the nineteenth century landlord his tenant by the aid of our monstrous system of taxation. Instead of demanding a readjustment of the tax the Central Trades and Labor Council should have insisted upon its being abolished altogether. I hold that that tax is all wrong and I'll never rest satisfied with a compromise of any kind."

BILL BLADES.

## THE STATE OF TRADE.

[As it is our ambition to make this Department as full and reliable as possible, we will feel obliged if Secretaries of Trades Unions, or others in a position to do so, will kindly send a postal card addressed to the Editor, with a concise report of the State of Trade in their several industrial branches.]

The following reports from some of our correspondents in different centres will be read with interest:—

## PLASTERERS.

BOSTON.—I am happy to say that within the memory of man plastering was never better. Not only is it remarkable as to the quantity of work there is to do, but the quality is of the best. Cornicing, that important branch of our business which for years has been falling into disuse, has taken an upward boom, builders having grown weary of wooden mouldings, and have again turned their attention to plaster ornamenting, and we are, in consequence, greatly the gainers. We had a good winter here, an extraordinary summer, and the boom promises to continue.

CHICAGO.—Work is very plentiful here at present and likely to continue so for some time. Our annual elections came off lately. The necessity for a walking delegate has lately become very urgent, so we elected one, and as we have adopted a new code of working rules which, if lived up to, will revolutionize the class of work which has been and is being done, it was necessary to have some good man to see that the work is done right. Wm. C. Glen was chosen, and he is the right man in the right place.

## PRINTERS.

CHICAGO.—Work is plentiful just now and likely to continue so for some time, but not within the memory of the oldest printer has so many "subs" been seen in this city. The direct beneficial effect upon trade consequent upon holding the World's Fair here is evidently driving printers hither.

NEW YORK.—There is now quite a colony of Montreal printers here and all are doing pretty fair. Several of those subbing have had the luck to catch on five and six nights a week recently. Work is very good, evidently, although there is a plethora of hands.

## MOULDERS.

TORONTO.—Moulders are advised to keep away from Toronto at present as there is more trouble there. The Massey Manufacturing Co. gave notice recently of a 12½ per cent. reduction or take on helpers. The men refused to entertain either proposal, and sought for an interview with the head of the firm, but were absolutely refused and, therefore, the prospects of a settlement are very slim. In the meantime the men hope that moulders contemplating coming to Toronto will think over the matter before doing so.

## CARPENTERS.

CHICAGO.—Our troubles here are about over. A portion of the press have assumed that in our recent struggle we were defeated. The only point we failed to carry was a recognition of the Union by the old bosses' association, who have thus far declined to appoint a committee to meet with our committee to fix wages and hours for the coming year, but they will come yet, and don't you forget it. Let us see the results of this so-called defeat. In January, 1890, and for the entire year of 1889, the wages of carpenters of Chicago ranged from 17½ to 27½ cents per hour, a very few were getting 30 cents an hour, the average was perhaps 25 cents or less. They were working some eight, some nine and a large number ten hours a day. The average perhaps 9½ hours a day. The membership of the union ranged from 2,000

to 3,500. In February when the agitation began the membership was 2,375 affiliating with the central body. Now the minimum wage in Chicago is 35 cents an hour, a very few scabs may be working for 30 cents; nearly all the members of the union get 37½ cents; a number get as high as 40 cents. The average wages may be a fraction less than 37 cents; all union men and scabs are working eight hours a day. The paying membership of the unions affiliated with the Carpenters' Council is not far from 7,500. Wages increased 40 per cent.; hours decreased 20 per cent.; membership of unions increased 200 per cent., and some short-sighted people call this a defeat. God send all workmen many such defeats.

## THE GLASSBLOWERS

bear a good reputation for sticking to an agreement. Mr. Badine, Superintendent of Cohassey Glass Co., U.S., says: "I want to say for the window glass blowers that they always stick to their contracts. During the big strike in the western district we were overrun with orders, which paid us handsomely. The men knew this, but they stuck to their contract price for the year and never asked for an advance."

## SHOEMAKERS.

LYNN, Mass.—No more significant answer can be found, says the Lynn Bee, than in the "burnt-out district" to the prognostications of opponents of labor agitation, that Lynn would be deprived of her means of growth by the efforts of workmen to control wages, which would eventuate the removal of the manufacturers to other places, where it was claimed small compensation for the employee would prevail. The substantial structures being erected in this section show that the confidence of the employers has not been shaken in the adaptability of Lynn as one of the best places for the manufacture of shoes. The country shop sears has got to be, to use a slang phrase, "a chestnut," and merely calls a derisive smile to the phiz of the workmen when it is mentioned as a menace. Manufacturers who have tried the country shop experiment have been only too glad to return. Lynn will continue to be the great shoe town, and the workmen hold the key to the situation.

## No More Misrepresentation!

ALL OUR GOODS SOLD ON THEIR MERITS.

Select Your Furniture from the Largest Stock in Canada.



FEE &amp; MARTIN,

Palace Furniture Store,

357 to 367 ST. JAMES STREET, MONTREAL.

What a Rattling We've Given OVERCOATS  
THE PAST FOUR WEEKS!

THE UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND and phenomenally successful sales effected seem to indicate that we are dead right in make, material and price,

Without a Possible Doubt!

We now exhibit a wider range of staple and novel ideas and a greater number than any five houses in the city. You like variety. This hint should GIVE US A DATE with you when Overcoat day arrives. WILL IT, THOUGH?

## Brief Remarks About Men's Overcoats.

Light and dark colors, medium weights for Fall wear, made single-breasted, fly fronts, lined with Italians, serges, silks, satins to match cloth, with and without silk facings, medium and extra lengths—PRICES FROM 5 to 25 DOLLARS.

Fashionable English Box Overcoats. They're here in eight or ten different shades, and represent the best efforts of our own tailors—PRICES FROM 10 to 30 DOLLARS.

Heavy Winter Overcoats. There's a hundred different colors, weights and prices here, and they run from 2 to 18 DOLLARS.

Boys' and Children's Overcoats. Next week we'll tell you all about 'em. Meantime be assured we've what you need, from the little two-year tot up to the vicinity of men's sizes—PRICES 2 to 15 DOLLARS.

Pea Jackets and Reefers, made in nap and plain cloths. Men's, \$3 to \$10; boys', \$2 to \$6; children's (brass buttons), 2 to 5 dollars

## With These Remarks Before You,

you should be able to decide in an intelligent way where your interests can be best served in the matter of

Overcoats, Reefers, Tops, &amp; Trunks.

ALL SIZES. ALL AGES.

Will You Remember This?

# J. M. Conroy

NORDHEIMER'S BUILDING,

209 and 211 St. James Street.