

Editorial Page of The Canadian Labor Press



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WARNED AGAINST INTRIGUE

Harley Johnson, organizer for the Culinary Alliance, has up the "friendly union" and expresses his opinions in the following manner:

The latest "thing" in the variegated assortment of "company unions" has appeared in the city of Seattle under the title of the "Seattle Culinary Association."

This organization is a cheap imitation of the notorious Four L's, the pet wage-reducing agency of the Northwest lumber barons. It is composed of strikebreakers, stool pigeons, expelled union members and industrial misfits from nowhere. It is sponsored by the Seattle Caterers' Association, supervised by no less a person than Paul J. Jensen, secretary of the Caterers' Association and one of the chief flunkies of the Associated Industries. It is officered by one Cook Paulson, notorious scab, whose record of treachery dates back to the St. Germain Cafe and Bakery trouble; his most recent exploits being to serve as a strikebreaker at Rippe's and other unfair eating houses in the recent trouble between those houses and the Seattle culinary unions.

The hired help in the office of this boss-ridden "mutual admiration society" very modestly admits that it has a membership of between 40 and 50, and expresses the opinion that it will grow by leaps and bounds. They assure their dupes that this organization is going to lead them out of a wilderness of industrial turmoil and into a land of milk and honey. These poor unfortunates are told that they need a man with a lantern, and that his name is Paul J. Jensen. He is the Moses that will lead them the light.

The formation of an organization of this type was to be expected. The enemies of the workers fight them in the open only when they have to, but their chosen way is to extend the "velvet glove," the so-called "hand of fellowship," through the medium of "company unions." This "velvet glove" soon turns into the mailed fist, and the unthinking victims of it are crushed at will by the employers.

With the strikebreaker this does not matter. Always devoid of principle and destitute of honor, they are more at home when they are shoved down into the mire than when they are privileged to walk in the light of day with upstanding citizens of any community that is so unfortunate as to be infested with their miserable presence. This said "Seattle Culinary Association" now has he brazen effrontery to announce to the public the holding of its "first ball and buffet exhibit" to be held in the Masonic Temple on Thursday evening, February 23.

This organization and its activities deserve nothing but the united contempt of all right-thinking citizens.

Trade unionists, their friends and supporters and all other decent and self-respecting citizens, take notice! Do not be misled; do not connect the "Seattle Culinary Association," with offices at room 211 Melhorn building, 814-Second Ave., with the real, honest-to-goodness culinary unions of this city. Your own best interests and the best interests of the city of Seattle can best be served by completely repudiating this group of organized scabs known as the "Seattle Culinary Association." It is an industrial Judas and can serve no good purpose.

OTTAWA TRADES COUNCIL ELECTIONS

While the greater part of the meeting was given over to the election of a new executive committee, there was a somewhat spirited discussion on unemployment. In his report of the activities of the advisory committee on unemployment, said the city was face to face with a more serious unemployment situation than had existed during December and January. About 1,300 persons were receiving relief from private charities and a like number was being assisted by the city. He described the city hall social service department as "a crime" and a disgrace to the city. The jamming and crushing for relief was pitiful, and more satisfactory quarters should be laid out. The city would have to increase its assistance to the workless, and, if aid was not forthcoming, people would starve.

Delegate C. A. Hay considered that as there was taxation to pay for upkeep of the legislature and for the expenditures incurred during the war, there should also be taxation to help the unemployed. He sponsored a resolution calling upon the Dominion Government to take the issue and develop a proper plan to relieve the situation. He declared that "passing the buck" seemed to be the favorite pastime of the authorities. On the unemployment question the Federal Government was almost solidly against the waiting on the Provincial Government, and the latter was waiting on the Municipal Government. He stated that while the municipal authorities were waiting for the millennium before relieving distress, his resolution was adopted.

The report of the auditors showed that there was a balance of \$1,097.76, which included \$700 in Victory Bonds. The auditors found that Mr. Dan McCann, the retiring treasurer, had recklessly guarded the association's funds. Mr. Lodge's 25th report as chairman of the committee and corresponding secretary revealed that the membership of the association was mostly satisfactory.

Capt. J. A. P. Hayden, M.C., was re-elected president of the Allied Trades and Labor Council and thereupon by acclamation. Corresponding Secretary William Lodge being returned for his 26th consecutive term. The other officers are: Vice-President, A. A. Aubrey; Treasurer, Mr. Rod Plant; Recording Secretary, J. A. Johnson; argument at arms, J. Robertson; trustees, Controller Cameron, J. McCaffrey and M. Kavanagh; executive committee, Mrs. M. Johnson.

Indianapolis. — The Journeyman Barbers International union has issued charters to locals in Fort Arthur and Sulphur Springs, Texas.

SOUTH WALES COALFIELD TROUBLE

By VERNON H. HARTSHORN, M.P. (President of the South Wales Miners' Federation.)

I am quite certain that outside South Wales there exists nothing like a true conception of the tragedy which is being enacted in that coalfield. To understand it, you have first of all to know the social, commercial, and industrial characteristics of that population area. Practically the whole of South Wales is dependent upon the export of the steam coal to foreign countries, and the very basis of the prosperity of all classes is the wage of the colliery workers. That basis has been practically destroyed, and though the miners themselves are, of course, the greatest sufferers, the devastation extends also to the professional and trading classes, and in addition it affects the financial stability of the whole of the local government system. The miners who are out of employment—they are many thousands, and the number is increasing—are a burden on the rates. The wage income of those at work is now substantially below the living basis, and that has practically cut off any profitable income for other classes. Shopkeepers are unable to do a business which will enable them to meet their standing charges and current accounts and are being hurried into bankruptcy. Professional men, particularly doctors, are in much the same position. Householders everywhere are being crushed under the increasing burden of the poor rates. The local authorities are harassed by being unable to collect their dues from many ratepayers. Boards of Guardians are piling up debts and are reaching the end of their financial resources. Some of them are threatening to cease to function at all. The whole social and economic system of South Wales is being steadily pushed towards bankruptcy, and if the South Wales Miners' Federation remained passive it would only hasten the process of bringing the catastrophe inevitably and swiftly.

This tragedy, steadily developing before the eyes of every man who resides in South Wales, is not due to any action of the miners, but is the inevitable result of unrestricted "private enterprise" and insane competition among the coalowners. It is due entirely to the way in which the commercial side of the industry is now being conducted. The abandonment of Government control, and the forcing upon the miners of an agreement which gives them no protection in the form of a national pool or otherwise, placed the industry at the mercy of the most unscrupulous exploitation which aims at the securing of markets by a cheapness which is produced at the expense of the workers' wage fund and by a cut-throat competition between the capitalist and the Welsh coalfield. There are a few companies who are able to produce coal at a lower cost than their competitors. He circumvent the new agreement by giving them the opportunity of securing the foreign market for themselves by competition and cheapness, and they are at present running that policy of competition with the object of establishing a monopoly for themselves as quickly as possible. It is being done at the expense of the wages, and is also increasing unemployment by driving other companies to the wall.

The agreement which was forced on the Welsh coalfield after the national stoppage enables the coalowners to keep the miner's wage at only 30 per cent. above the pre-war level. The companies who are responsible for the ruthless competition which is going on are working their scheme on this basis. They estimate the wage cost at this low level, then add the costs other than wages, and after making provision for profits for themselves they quite selling prices which are lower than the majority of the collieries of the coalfield can produce at. By the competition of those favourably-placed companies, the majority of the coalowners of South Wales are placed in a position in which they must either sell their property on the scrap-heap and their workmen into the ranks of the unemployed, or quote prices at the same low level and work to ruin.

These figures show that if the whole of these sixty-four concerns were under common ownership the price of coal could be reduced by 5s. 6d. per ton without any loss on the undertaking, because the average profit was 2s. 4d. The average profit was reduced from 2s. 9d. to 2s. 4d. per ton the accurate would balance. There would be no profit and no loss. But under private enterprise the position is very different. While some could make good profits, others who had a cost per ton of over 2s. (they are nearly 55 per cent. of the total) could not sell at 2s. or 2s. 4d. except at a loss, and they would either have to incur that loss or close down. That is exactly what has taken place. In November of 1921 the pit-head price of coal was 19s. 6d. per ton, the total cost 19s. 3d., and the profit 3d. per ton. As compared with September, 1921, the price has fallen 10s. 3d. per ton, from 29s. 9d. to 19s. 6d., but the costs have fallen by only 5s. 1d. per ton, that is, from 24s. 4d. to 19s. 3d. The position is therefore the same as if prices had fallen by 5s. 2d. per ton while costs remained the same. We have therefore for sixty-four firms, 45 per cent. of whom can keep going and several of whom make splendid profits, while 55 per cent. will have to close down.

This means that if no arrangement is come to between the owners themselves, scores of thousands of miners will be faced with unemployment as their employers will be unable to pay even the minimum wage. Some companies have already closed, and the result that something like 30,000 miners are already unemployed in the coalfield. The majority of the owners have, however, continued to work so far. Most of them are working at a loss, using up their reserves, or carrying on with loans from the banks. Large numbers of men have been given fourteen days' notice and are now working on day-to-day contracts. They may any day find themselves "on the road." Unless a common understanding is arrived at between the coalowners themselves, the sort of thing can only result in the financial collapse of all classes in the coalfield with the exception of a few companies who are the cause of the devastation. A prominent coalowner stated in an interview that "with such the 'Wrecking Match' that set a single order of our foreign market would be lost if prices were 2s. per ton higher, and that unless action was taken in this direction half the collieries of the coalfield would be stopped in a few weeks, and most coalowners would share the fate which has befallen so many shipping companies."

During 1920 the average pit-head price of South Wales coal was approximately 55s. per ton. Much of our export coal was sold at double that price. This gave the Americans a chance. They captured much of our European market. But by August, 1921, our export prices had come down to 36s. 4d. At that price America could not compete. After August the Americans had, as a matter of fact, practically no foothold left in any country in Europe. We had driven them out. The following the mad scramble between the South Wales coalowners and coalowners in other parts of Great Britain to capture such foreign trade as was available. Our volume of exports has continually increased, but owing to the blind and misdirected competition the revenue from the trade has steadily declined. In November we sent 500,000 tons more coal out of the country than in August, and we received 280,000 for it. The miners are putting forth increased efforts and gaining nothing for it; in fact, their increased production brings in 1,300,000 less. It is sheer lunacy. Coal is being sent out of the country below the cost of production, even though wages cost is based on starvation. The miners are now producing more coal in seven hours than they produced in eight in pre-war days, having regard to the number of men employed and the days worked. In July the quantity of Welsh coal available for sale was 2,357,800 tons. In November it was 3,825,000—an increase of 1,300,000 tons. But after paying costs other than wages, the receipts available for wages and profits were practically the same, £2,194,374 in July and £2,197,529 in November. The increase of 1,300,000 tons in the output meant an increase of only £1,000 in the fund available for wages and profits. This is the sort of lunatic economics you get out of the selfish competition of private enterprise. The increased tonnage of 1,300,000 was given away to the foreigners by our competing coalowners at only 6d. per ton.

The Welsh miner has today a lower standard of living than for fifty years past. He is also being bullied, driven, and humiliated by the coalowners, who think that the national stoppage smashed the Federation. In the days of the old mining scale the South Wales Miners' Federation had to fight to prevent competing coalowners from forcing down selling prices to starvation level. They may have to fight again for the right to "FREE 'HOOTCH'"

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live, if the coalowners themselves cannot stop their own wild folly. If the miners do fight, they will be fighting not only their own battle but the battle of the whole economic system of South Wales against the capacity of those coalowners who are abusing their power of control over our greatest industrial asset.

MONTREAL MAYOR CALLS RENT FROTTIERS Landlords who gouge their tenants and rack rents were under the whip of Mayor Martin's tongue at the Montreal City Hall. His Worship said the present rent increases among a large number of landlords "a scandal and a disgrace to the City of Montreal." He did not confine his remarks to a mere outburst against the class of landlords he attacked; he made a definite threat that though there might be no civic ordinance by which the grasping actions of these landlords could be curbed, there existed such things as annual valuations and assessments.

The Mayor told newspapermen that he had received many complaints to a great extent from families who had suffered that their rents had been raised far above previous figures and that on complaining they had been told by their profligate landlords "to pay up or get out." "It is a crying scandal," said His Worship with considerable heat. "Poor people were being racked, he said, by rents which in some authenticated cases had been increased 100 per cent. over prices obtaining before the war.

There is absolutely no reason for many of these increases," said the Mayor. "Taxes are the same, cost of food has fallen, coal is cheaper, and replacement values are far and away lower than they were last year." The Mayor is giving the subject close attention in an endeavour to see if anything can be done this year.

WANTS NO BARRIERS Lord Shaftesbury, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway, on his arrival at Liverpool said that Canada's greatest need was a considerable increase of her population. He urged the need for the removal of Irish emigration restrictions, which, he said, were hampering the entry of good settlers. He declared that the result of these restrictions had been most disastrous.

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Industrial Review From Many Sources

BRITISH COLUMBIA LEGISLATION AND ORIENTAL LABOR

The British Columbia statute of 1921 regarding oriental labor was declared by the supreme court to be ultra vires.

The questions actually before the court, it was pointed out, were the following: (1) Had the legislature of British Columbia authority to enact Chapter 122 of its statutes of 1921, entitled "An act to validate and confirm certain orders in council and provisions relating to the employment of persons on Crown property?"

Giving his judgment, Sir Louis Davies, chief justice, said that the orders in council in question and are intended to be validated thereby.

"This legislation is ultra vires," Sir Louis Davies said. "The act is ultra vires because it is an attempt to legislate in a field which is reserved to the federal government."

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OVERSEAS

(Continued from Page One)

Applegarth was the first working man to sit on a Royal Commission on the Contagious Diseases Act, 1870.

Still full of zeal for the cause of labor, he only regret nowadays is that he can no longer "do his bit."

IN CONFERENCE

A conference regarding an appeal in proceeding regarding a shipbuilding workers' union is in progress.

The whole case is being argued by the former to withdraw from the case. The industrial court was granted by the industrial court for the war period.

While the usual tonnage launched in the United Kingdom last year was 1,538,952 tons, it was over a million tons less than in 1920.

Mining workers are also meeting their employers in an attempt to discover means of relieving the present depression, wages in seven out of thirteen areas having been cut.

Officials of the miners' federation admit that the present price of coal does not warrant a decent wage, though the industrial and domestic consumers are paying extremely high prices.

Speaking at Reading, Fred Bramley, the prospective Labor cabinet minister in respect of recent speeches made by its representatives, who contended that the terms of the Coalition manifesto of 1918 had all been carried out, with the one exception of the reform of the House of Lords.

Had the pledges made by the Prime Minister and Mr. Bonar Law as to the provision of cottages, with gardens, and small holdings, with grants for ex-service men, been fulfilled, asked Bramley, the applications for small holdings were 500,000 to 1,000,000.

With regard to the Government pledges concerning agriculture, these, the speaker asked, as a general question, what had the present position been in better, the standard of life, the standard of life, the standard of life.

For every £1 which annually was paid to those who physically suffered to win the war, such as ex-soldiers and their dependents, we paid £1 to those who left the army to meet the costs of the war. Could it be said physical and financial sacrifices were being dealt with equitably?

It seemed clear that before long business men and the Government would be driven to acceptance of that form of financial relief long ago proposed by Labor. It would have been easier and better for trade and business had the proposals for a capital levy which Labor had outlined been accepted.

That levy would have left untouched possessors of small amounts of capital, but the great property owners and large capitalists could have provided a sum which would have given the financial relief which the nation needed.

People were aggrieved and dissatisfied at the conditions under which they were living at the present moment, he continued. They must judge the present Government from the outcome of its actions, and from the fruits of the policy it had pursued.

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RURAL DISTRICTS ALSO FEEL PINCH

The stress of unemployment is being felt not only in cities and towns but also in certain rural sections of Canada is evidenced in an urgent appeal for help which has just been received by Rev. Father J. A. Myrand, parish priest of St. Anne's Church, from Father Daniel Routhier, parish priest of Lac Goyan, a settlement in the Gatiniau Valley, Province of Quebec.

The settlers and farmers of Lac Goyan, whose farms are generally small, depend for their livelihood very largely on the work they secured during the fall and winter months in the logging camps on the Gatiniau. Logging operations have been virtually at a standstill this winter.

The resolution submitted by Wm. Robson, leader of the Farmer party of Manitoba, for the reduction in the salaries of Cabinet Ministers and officials in the Civil Service was defeated on a verbal vote in the Legislature.

That Manitoba should charter a steamer and send it loaded with wheat to famine-stricken Russia was the suggestion made by John Queen, a member of the Legislature.

Mr. Queen spoke for over an hour and quoted many wishes in support of his claim that conditions in Russia are appalling. The debate was adjourned.

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DOMINION POSTAL WORKERS FORM FEDERATION

After a conference in Winnipeg extending over three days, the various organizations of the workers of the Canadian postal service have been amalgamated into a body which will be known as the Canadian Federation of Postal Employees, it is announced.

The following are the officers: Chairman, W. G. McPherson, Mail way Mail Clerks, Winnipeg, Man.; vice-president, R. S. Bartlett, Postal Clerks, Toronto; secretary, J. E. Archer, Letter Carriers, Hamilton, Ont.

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STATE TROOPS RUN AMUCK

Newport, Ky.—Newport citizens are outraged at the conduct of the state troops who paraded through the business section of the city and ordered people off the street and attacking those who did not promptly obey.

The troops are here because of an attempt of the Newport rolling mill and the Andrews steel company to enforce anti-union conditions on the members of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers.

The latest demonstration of the soldiers follows a similar episode in the strike zone, after homes of the strikers had been shot up by machine guns and tanks that only a little while ago were used to make the world safe for democracy.

The strikers declare that this type of force was staged to drive them back to work, but not one man of the 200 who joined the strike last July has deserted.

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ANTIS ARE WEEPING

Bakersfield, Cal.—Business men are weeping over losses charged to the recent oil workers' strike, which they declare was "unwarranted."

The strike was caused by oil workers refusing the government's request to renew an agreement with the workers which had preserved industrial peace for four years.

The oil workers wanted to operate on the strictly anti-union basis—with no form of collective bargaining. They labelled this the "American plan," and as usual the business men supported the oil owners, most of who were absentee owners.

With patronage down to zero because of their refusing power, these business men are now trying to find some one or some thing which will serve as an alibi for their short-sightedness.

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ONARIO MINIMUM WAGE BOARD HOLDS SESSIONS

Representations made by some local retail employers that the minimum wage of eight dollars per week for inexperienced female store help should be still further reduced, are being opposed on behalf of the retail clerks of Ottawa.

The standard rate of a twelve dollar minimum for experienced retail clerks was not assiduously contested, but there were representatives present on behalf of some of the employers who thought that the minimum of eight dollars per week for inexperienced girls serving in stores was in need of revision.

At the conclusion of the regular evening session the members of the Retail Clerks' Association held a private conference with members of the board and their case will be further presented at a later session.

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