

Day Classes Open Sept. 15th at 9 a.m. Evening Classes open Oct. 5th at 7.45 p.m.

A. G. HORWOOD, Secretary.

THE TORONTO

Official Organ of the Toronto District Labor Council. Published Weekly in the Interests of the Working Masses.

TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 18, 1903

OUR PHONE NUMBER IS MAIN 1344 PRINTING of all Kinds... First-Class Style THE Toller Publishing Company Limited 771 Adelaide West. Price 50 Cents Per Year

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CRITICISMS OF TRADES UNIONS

By One Who is in Sympathy with their Efforts to Better Conditions.

For many years now the "Trust" problem has confronted and perplexed the thinking public in all progressive countries and no less perplexing is the accompanying problem of Trades Unionism. The capitalists, who own the tools of production, have been forming combines, and trusts, and syndicates, and unions, among themselves, whereby they seek to eliminate the wastes of competition, to economize production, and to control wages, prices and markets. To neutralize some of the evils which are sure to arise out of such a situation, the laborers, who use the tools of production but do not own them, have also formed combines, labor trusts, syndicates or unions, whereby they, in their turn, seek to eliminate the suffering and cruelty of labor competition, and to control wages or prices in the labor market.

The Socialist propose to have all capital owned by the community, and so wipe out the differences by a fusion of classes. For a public spirit is a sufficient stimulus to effort, and providing the movement is made world-wide, there seems to be nothing foolish or impracticable in this plan. Others propose the cultivation of a better feeling by acts of conciliation, by preaching the gospel of brotherhood, by a hundred and one like ways. Doubtless capitalists should accompany their employees to school again and re-learn the old nursery rhyme: "Little deeds of kindness, Little words of love," etc.

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restriction of such production. Unfortunately, however, such restriction seldom succeeds in inaugurating or maintaining a juster distribution of wealth. It is merely a useless and baneful lowering of efficiency. A couple of instances of such foolish limitation of productivity have been communicated to me by one who has lived for some years in one of the American cities and has had a good many dealings with labor unions. I quote: "The plumber of my city probably the best organized. They work 8 hours, double time before 8 a.m. and after 5 p.m. They must always have a helper. I had a small job under my sink in the kitchen. There was a narrow door to the cupboard, so that only one man could reach in; it was simply a small leak in the pipe to be soldered over. The plumber came in the afternoon with his helper, two miles from shop, 20 cents car fare, and went back at 5 p.m. Both returned at 8 a.m. next day and finished the job; 20 cents more car fare. The job lasted about two hours and cost for plumbing, 25 cents for helper—\$1.00-40 (car fare)—\$2.30. This was his bill. The helper sat on a kitchen chair viewing the plumber's rear end during the whole of the job. "I had a small patch of plaster fall off the corner of a ceiling—about a yard. I told a plasterer to take a pair of ready mixed mortar on rear end of car, and his tools, and go up and fix it; cautioned him particularly not to take a helper, as there was no need of one. Well, plasterer, helper, wagon and raw material was brought to house. The plasterer and helper mix the mortar and carry it up to bedroom. Then the helper stood, at 25 cents per hour, and watched plasterer put it on and smooth it down. My bill was \$3.07 for one yard of patch. I kicked vigorously, but was told to pay the bill or be sued; the union ordered work done in that way. I paid it, and have never employed and will never employ that man again."

Another highly objectionable aspect of the unionism is the persecution of the "scab." Labor papers and those having authority in unions cannot too severely condemn and discourage this sort of tyranny. It is a violation of one of the most sacred principles of liberty. It does nothing but engender bitterness; and no excuse for it can be based upon the fact that liberty under the capitalist regime is nominal rather than real. Let unionsists argue with and persuade, but do not force men to join their body. It may seem to increase their strength, for the time, but it cannot fail to weaken the moral support they get from the whole community, which is their real strength. The following facts have come to my notice, and will show what is the situation in one of the central States of the American Union: In rebuilding D. B.'s department store a non-union laborer was employed in the cellar to clean and prepare some old masonry work for the painter. Masons, carpenters and painters got wind of it, and all gathered up their tools and left the job. The poor man was discharged, and then they came back to work. "I—a large contractor—held out from joining the union till about a year ago. He had had men in his employ for 15 years, men whose union affiliations he never inquired about, and who had been given steady employment. When work became rather plentiful they took their tools and left him, because he would not join the union. Subsequently they returned, begged for their old jobs, and I told them that these men last winter refused to work up a lot of refuse for fire-wood when B— had no carpenter work in the cellar. They all around the store in a meeting for the purpose of making it was offered to them at carpenters' wages. B— was compelled to join the union or go out of business. "One who has had some considerable experience employing city tradesmen writes to me: "I sent a non-union plumber into a barber shop (a tenant of ours), to repair some pipes. They, being a union shop, ordered their plumber out of the place, and he came up to me to ask what he was to do. "The works, tenants of ours, are obliged to employ union printers only, and the owners of the business dare not touch the type or set up any matter with their own hands, nor after working hours nor at any other time. I am told that the union ordered a man to pick up a tool; he must have an attendant or waiter, to whom he says, "Hand me that hammer, that wrench, that oil-can," etc. "For two years I employed a non-union paper-hanger, S— by name, paying him between \$5.00 and \$1.00 a year. He afterwards joined the union, and I continued to employ him. Two young men who had been let out for want of work by their employer, came to me and begged a job, saying that their families had no groceries in the house and it was Saturday. I gave them a room to paper and the above S— came into the building, ordered them away, would see that they got no more work, and so forth; (to discuss the case). But, on account of this man S— having fought the union two years previously, they let the matter go without taking any action. This man was going to boycott me and all our tenants because we employed two men with hungry families. "Is it surprising that another man, writing from the same place, should say: "The unions are still showing their marvellous inability to do anything right, and surprising fitness to do all things exactly wrong, and at the exact time when they should be doing their best. A sweeping statement and probably exaggerated. But who else could one expect from a man smarting under this petty and galling tyranny? Let the labor union see to it that such things cannot be thrown to them as specimens of their usefulness. I do not suppose that such instances as I have referred to fairly represent the character of the average trades unions and the work of the union. But they show how far the unions do occasionally

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ership forces its way to the front. People who never gave a thought to it, before were made to feel its importance by the shortage of coal during last winter. Statesmen think more about it, and politicians talk more about it. Control of trusts and the abatement of labor difficulties will probably claim chief attention in the next general election in the United States. In Canada governmental control of railways is likely to be the first step in the right direction, provided the railways do not control the government. Subsidy-hunters find the Canadian public more inclined than in the past to advocate the people's paying themselves the subsidies and themselves undertaking the business. All this indicates which way the wind is beginning to blow. Public ownership may do much to relieve us from the tyranny of the capitalist and the tyranny of the labor union. Meanwhile, let the just claims of both classes be sweetened and tempered by toleration and good-will, and let the public demand of both that they assure not those privi-

