

What The Laurier Government Has Done For LABOUR

From the commencement of its term of office in 1896 the Liberal Government has advocated and carried into effect a progressive labour policy. Its attitude towards labour has not been one of promise and pretence such as characterized the record of the former Conservative administration. The record of the present Liberal administration is one of actual performance. Here are some of the actual achievements of the Government during its twelve years of office, in the direct interests of the working class of Canada.

The establishment of a Department of Labour;

The publication of a monthly journal known as The Labour Gazette;

The abolition of the sweating system in connection with Government contracts;

The adoption of a fair wages policy with regard to all Government contracts;

The enactment of legislation to aid in the prevention and settlement of strikes and lockouts by:

- (1) The Conciliation Act, 1900.
- (2) The Railway Labour Disputes Act, 1903.
- (3) The Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, 1907.

The enactment of legislation and the adoption of measures to protect Canadian workingmen from competition of alien labour, and the unfair competition of such classes of labour as might tend to lower the standard of living of the industrial classes of this country, as for example:

(1) The Alien Labour Act of 1897, and amendments of 1898 and 1901.

(2) The appointment in 1903 of Royal Commissions to enquire into the alleged employment of aliens on the Pere Marquette Railway, and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

(3) The Act to prevent false representations to induce immigrants to come to Canada, 1903.

(4) The enactment in 1905 by the Parliament of Great Britain, of a measure in reference to false representations, similar to the last named, in the British Isles to induce emigration to Canada, passed at the request of the Canadian Government, the Deputy Minister of Labour having been sent to England to urge the wishes of the Canadian Government upon the British authorities.

(5) The appointment of a Royal Commission in 1900 to enquire into the effect of Chinese and Japanese immigration.

(6) The imposition, as the result of the recommendations of this Commission, of a \$500 head tax upon Chinese coming into Canada.

(7) The investigation, under Royal Commission, of the methods by which Oriental labourers have been induced to come to Canada.

(8) The effective restriction, amounting to complete prohibition so far as contract labour is concerned, of immigration from Japan, as the result of the investigations and the special mission of the Minister of Labour to Japan to confer with the Japanese authorities.

(9) The effective restriction, amounting to complete prohibition, so far as contract labour is concerned, of all immigration from India, as a result of the investigation and the special mission of the Deputy Minister of Labour to England to confer with the British authorities on the subject of immigration from the Orient and immigration from India in particular.

(10) Regulations of the Immigration Branch of the Department of the Interior, requiring immigrants to come to Canada by direct passage on a through ticket, to have in their possession a specified sum of money, and other like requirements.

The enactment of legislation and the adoption of measures to

protect the health and life of workingmen and women, in so far as action along these lines was within the power of the Dominion, as for example:

(1) The investigation, under Royal Commission, in 1898, into the death from diphtheria of workmen employed upon the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway.

(2) The enactment in 1899, as a result of the investigations of the Royal Commission of 1898, of an Act for the protection of the health of employees engaged on public work, followed by further regulations by Order-in-Council on January 31, 1900, and again by Order-in-Council on May 13, 1902, providing machinery for the proper carrying out of the measure.

(3) Legislation for the prevention of accidents on railways, and the appointment of an officer to investigate causes of all railway accidents.

(4) An investigation in 1897 into the methods by which Government clothing contracts were being carried out, which has been followed by regulations for the suppression of the sweating system and the adoption of a fair wages policy on all Government contract work.

(5) An investigation in 1907 into conditions of employment of the operatives in the employ of the Bell Telephone Company which resulted in a material improvement in the condition of labour of hundreds of women and young girls, and in the publication of a report which will have a far-reaching effect in influencing Provincial legislation and practice in the matter of employment in this calling.

(6) An investigation during the past few months under Royal Commission into conditions of employment of operatives in the cotton factories in the Province of Quebec, which has brought to light some startling facts in regard to the employment of Child Labour in that industry, and which is certain to result in regulations for the betterment of conditions of women and children, as well as for all classes of labour in that and kindred industries.

(7) The enactment of important measures of social and moral reform, such as the Lord's Day Act, which contains important provisions on the subject of Sunday labour, and the suppression of the opium traffic in Canada, which was a direct outcome of a report prepared by the Deputy Minister of Labour, and a bill introduced at the last session by the Minister of Labour.



The Department of Labour

The Conservative party had a much longer term of office than the present administration has as yet enjoyed, and ample opportunity was afforded during that time for its professions and desires to find expression in the form of legislation. The party professed to be interested in the welfare of the labouring classes, and even went so far on the eve of the election of 1886 as to appoint a Royal Commission on the subject of Capital and Labour. The work of the Commission was elaborately planned, every conceivable subject of interest to labour was embraced in its scope, and its personnel was so widened as to include the names of men prominent in labour circles in the most important centres. The work of this Commission depended on the Government being returned. It was returned on the promises made. The labours of this Commission were extended over a period of almost three years, so that the working classes might be kept mindful in the interval of the interest of the Conservative party in their welfare, but as another election approached, it was necessary that the Commission should be made to again serve the party ends, and its report was brought down. The chief recommendation was the need for the establishment of a Labour Bureau which might undertake an investigation of all the questions in which labour was interested. The Commission had cost the country \$80,000, and for this, if no other reason, it was impossible that its recommendations should be wholly ignored. The Conservative administration at the last session prior to the election of 1891, thereupon passed an Act for the establishment of a Bureau of Labour. The various duties of this Bureau of Labour were set forth at length and the sum of \$10,000 (one-eighth of what the Commission had cost) was voted to pay the salary of a Commissioner of Labour, the clerks, and all expenses for a year. The Act could not go into effect till after the election, and of course the workmen of the country were led to expect that on the return of the Conservative Party to power depended the establishment of the new Bureau created in their interests. The Act did its work, as the Commission had done on a previous occasion, the Conservative party was returned to power, but the Act was allowed to drop. It was not removed from the Statutes, but no appointments were made, no Labour Bureau established, and the vote of \$10,000 which had been appropriated for this purpose

was allowed to lapse. Though the Act remained on the Statutes, parliament was never again asked to vote any money to enable its provisions to be enforced. It remained there a dead letter, a monument to Conservative hypocrisy in the matter of its professed interest in labour, until when the Statutes were being consolidated in 1906 under the present administration, it was dropped from among the Acts of the Canadian Parliament as effete and abortive legislation.

With the advent of the Liberal Party to power, performance took the place of promise and pretence. Public money was not wasted on the appointment of a Commission to take evidence for three years that it might point out the necessity of creating some branch of the Government which might be specially charged with safeguarding the great interests of labour and promoting progressive legislation on its behalf. It was taken for granted that, as there was a Department of Agriculture and a Department of Trade and Commerce, so also should there be a Department of Labour directly identified with the interests of the workingmen and women who are the greatest single factor in the building up of the Dominion of Canada. Accordingly, in 1900, an Act was passed, establishing, not a Bureau of Labour merely, as the Conservative Government had proposed to do—but had not done—but a Department of Labour, and the moment the Act was passed the work of organization was begun. How that Department has grown and what service it has rendered the country and the industrial classes in particular is known to-day from one end of Canada to the other. No branch of the whole administration has developed more rapidly, or been more closely identified with many of the progressive measures of the present government. Its record of the past eight years is the best augury of what under a continuance of Liberal rule, may be expected in the way of further progress.

The Labour Gazette

For the first time in the history of Canada have we a government publication which chronicles from month to month events and happenings of concern to labour, and affords an authoritative source of information on industrial conditions in the Dominion. Prior to the establishment of The Labour Gazette by the Liberal Government in 1900, there were no official records to which reference might be had as to the condition and progress of the working classes. Here, for the first time, we have a continuous statistical and descriptive record of industrial conditions and progress in Canada. For the nominal sum of 20 cents per annum The Gazette can be obtained in either the French or English language. Its circulation at the present time is over 15,000 copies per month. Altogether eight volumes, comprising twelve numbers each, and containing an industrial record amounting in all to some 10,000 pages, have been published by the Department of Labour. Here are some of its main features:

A codification of existing laws for the protection of persons in factories, stores, mines, on railways, etc.;

A record of the nature, causes and results, as well as of the principal features of all the important strikes and lockouts in the Dominion;

A record of industrial accidents sustained by workmen in Canada during their employment, classified according to causes, results etc.;

A record of all trades unions in the Dominion classified according to localities, trades, date of formation, etc., and articles showing the extent of trade union development in Canada, and a directory of union officials;

Statistical tables giving the rates of wages and hours of labour in the several trades for the principal localities in the Dominion;

Statistical tables showing the cost of living in different parts of Canada;

Statistical tables showing important changes in rates of wages and hours of labour, also the prices of commodities;

Special articles on the extent and conditions of employment in the several industries of Canada;

A record of legal decisions in the courts of the Dominion, which in any way affect labour; and

Reviews of reports and publications of interest to labour, and monthly reports by some forty special correspondents on industrial conditions in important centres throughout the Dominion.

The information embodied under these heads is such as has never before been systematically accumulated in Canada, and its value as a basis for legislation, and all efforts looking to the improvement of the conditions of the working classes of the country, is not to be over-estimated. With the exception of the Labour Gazette, there is in Canada at the present time no source to which workmen and their employees are able to turn, or will be able to turn in future days for the story of actual industrial and labour conditions in the twentieth century. The information contained in The Labour Gazette has already been of the greatest service to workingmen and those interested in their welfare in all parts of Canada.

Suppression of the Sweating System

It has been shown how, in 1886, the appointment of a Commission on Capital and Labour, and in 1890 the promise of a Bureau of Labour, were made to serve the Conservative interests on the eve of elections; it has been seen how, once returned to power, the true intent of these acts or promise was made apparent, and nothing more was heard of the reforms that were to be accomplished. The Commission on Capital and Labour could not be made to do service for a third election, and the establishment of a Labour Bureau could not again be mooted, as the Act was lying on the statutes a dead letter. It was necessary, however, as the election of 1896 approached, that the Conservative party should show its zeal in the cause of Labour, and on the very eve of the election Mr. A. W. Wright, the Conservative organizer, was appointed a Commissioner to make inquiry into the Sweating System in Canada. Unfortunately for the Conservative party, the workmen of the country had lost faith in its good intentions, and this subterfuge was of no avail. The Conservative party was defeated and a Liberal administration was returned. It is of interest to read what Mr. Wright had to say as to the existence of the Sweating System. At page 7 of his report he stated: "As far as I could ascertain, the sub-contracting system, which some in England have held to be the only one rightly deserving of the appellation 'sweating system,' does not exist in Canada."

No sooner was the Liberal government in power than they directed attention to this evil. Mr. Mackenzie King, the present Deputy Minister of Labour, who at that time was devoting special attention to a study of industrial conditions, was appointed by the Government in 1897 to make an inquiry into the methods by which Government clothing contracts were being carried out. His investigation covered the important clothing centres in Canada, and his report when ready dealt with the methods as they had been in force during the preceding ten years, a period of time covering that on which Mr. Wright, the Conservative Commissioner, had reported. The public will remember the findings of that report; it was in brief that work of the clothing contracts had been executed in sweat shops, that in some instances women were receiving on government work only two-and-a-half cents an hour, and that at the very time the Conservative

Government had been telling the people of Canada that no such thing as the Sweating System existed in Canada, the government itself was fostering that very system in the methods by which it was allowing its contracts to be executed.* No sooner was Mr. King's report presented to parliament than immediate steps were taken to insure that all future contracts would contain stipulations which would prevent sweating, and secure to the workers a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. The reform was first introduced by Sir William Mulock, the then Postmaster-General, in contracts awarded by the Postoffice Department for letter-carriers' uniforms and mail bags. It was extended to contracts for militia clothing, and in 1900 was made applicable to all contracts of the government, under what is known as the Fair Wages Resolution.

The Fair Wages Policy

The fair wages resolution, which is the basis of the Fair Wages Policy of the Liberal Government, was introduced in the House of Commons by Sir William Mulock, the first Minister of Labor in March, 1900. It set forth: "that all Government contracts "should contain such conditions as will prevent abuses, which "may arise from the sub-letting of such contracts, and that "every effort should be made to secure the payment of such "wages as are generally accepted as current in each trade for "competent workmen in the district where the work is carried "out, and that this House cordially concurs in such policy, and "deems it the duty of the Government to take immediate steps "to give effect thereto. It is hereby declared that the work to "which the foregoing policy shall apply includes not only work "undertaken by the Government itself, but also all works aided "by grant of Dominion public funds."

The late D. J. O'Donoghue, an ardent advocate of labour's interests, was appointed an officer to assist the Government in giving effect to this resolution, and when the Department of Labour was established in July, 1900, the enforcement of this resolution was entrusted to the new department. Mr. O'Donoghue was made Fair Wages Officer, and a second Fair Wages Officer was appointed to assist in the carrying out of the Government's policy. What has been the effect? Ever since the Department has been established conditions for the suppression and prevention of sweating have been inserted in all Government contracts, and practically every contract which has been awarded has contained a clause requiring the contractor to pay to those in his employment the rates of wages current in the locality where the work was being carried out. But more than that—in practically all the important contracts, such contracts, for example, as have been awarded by the Department of Public Works, the Department of Railways and Canals, and the Department of Marine and Fisheries,—Fair Wages schedules, setting forth the minimum rate of wages to be paid, and naming the hours of labour to be worked, have been inserted as an integral part of the contract. These schedules have been prepared by the Fair Wages Officers of the Department. Altogether, up to the close of the fiscal year 1907-8 (being March 31, 1908) 1,157 schedules have been prepared by the Fair Wages Officers and inserted in Gov-

ernment contracts. The influence of this policy has spread far and wide, some of the Provincial governments, and many municipalities, have followed the example of the Dominion Government, and awarded their contracts subject to fair wage labour conditions. The Government of Manitoba, a couple of years ago, adopted the fair wage policy of the Liberal Government of Canada, and appointed a Fair Wage Officer to work along lines similar to those of the Dominion officials. In Natal, South Africa, also, the Canadian fair wage policy has been cited and legislation on similar lines is promised for the coming winter. Not only has the Department of Labour seen to the insertion of fair wages schedules in Government contracts, but it has seen that contracts have been made to comply with these conditions. Where a complaint has been received that contractors were not living up to their obligations under their contracts, these complaints have been investigated and redress secured. Seventy or more claims of workmen for wages alleged to be due in accordance with the schedules inserted in the contracts given to their employers, have been made the subject of special investigation, and have resulted, as the annual reports of the Department will show, in a large number of payments to workmen of moneys to which they were justly entitled, but which, save for the interest of the Department on their behalf, they would never have received. To ensure publicity the fair wages schedules have been published in *The Labour Gazette*, but in August, 1907, to make more effective this feature of the Government's policy, an Order-in-Council was passed on the recommendation of the Fair Wages Officers, requiring that in all Government contracts awarded the contractor should be required to post the fair wages schedule in a conspicuous place on the works under construction; also requiring the contractor to keep a record of all payments to workmen in his employ, and to allow to fair wages officers of the Department access to his works and books for the purpose of inspecting the same when such inspection was deemed necessary by the Minister of Labour.

A further evidence of the determination of the Liberal administration to bring within the scope of its fair wages policy all kinds of work, either directly or indirectly under the Government's control, and to secure a fair wage to workmen, was apparent at the time of the discussion in Parliament of the Railway Act of 1903, when opportunity was taken by the Government to insert in the Act in question a section bearing upon the labour employed in the construction of railways, having regard especially to the interests of the thousands of employees whose services would be required in connection with the construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. This section, which is now part of the law of the Dominion, is as follows:

"In every case in which the Parliament of Canada votes finan-

cial aid by way of subsidy or guarantee towards the cost of railway construction, all mechanics, labourers, or other persons who perform labour in such construction shall be paid such wages as are generally accepted as current for competent workmen in the district in which the work is being performed; and if there is no current rate in such district, then a fair and reasonable rate; and in the event of a dispute arising as to what is the current or a fair and reasonable rate, it shall be determined by the Minister, whose decision shall be final."

No government in the world has adopted a more enlightened policy in the matter of protecting the rights of labour than is exemplified in the workings of the Fair Wages Policy of the present administration, and its method of enforcement by the Department of Labour.



The Prevention and Settlement of Labour Disputes

No question of our times is so important as that of the relation of employers and employees. On the friendly relations between Capital and Labour depends much of the happiness and prosperity of the whole community. The substitution of industrial peace for industrial war has been the watchword of the Liberal party in this field of administration. No government in Canada hitherto has sought to grapple with the vexed problem of lockouts and strikes, or to find through the medium of legislation, a more excellent way for the adjustment of those differences which inevitably arise between large aggregations of capital on the one side and large aggregations of labour on the other. By a series of eminently just and fair enactments the Liberal Government since its advent to power has paved the way for the prevention and peaceful settlement of industrial differences. Its legislation has been the means of saving to employers and employees alike hundreds of thousands, if not, indeed, millions of dollars, and equally large sums to the community as a whole.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the value of the work that has been done by the Department of Labour during the last eight years with respect to conciliation in the matter of labour disputes. A beginning was made with the Conciliation Act of 1900, under which from that year to the end of the fiscal year 1907-8, this Department was instrumental in bringing to a settlement not less than 42 industrial disputes, some of which were the most serious this country has ever experienced, and which concerned the employment of thousands of hands. Some notable examples that may be named are the Lethbridge coal strike, which was declared off in November, 1906, as the direct result of the intervention of Mr. Mackenzie King, Deputy Minister of Labour; the telephone operators' strike in Toronto, and the trouble in the mines controlled by the Western Coal Operators' Association at Fernie, and other points in Eastern British Columbia and Southern Alberta in the spring of the past year, which were settled in the same manner. The 'Longshoremen's strikes at Montreal and Halifax, and strikes of cotton operatives

at Chambly Canton, Que., and Valleyfield, all of them settled through the agency of the Department, are among the most recent settlements.

Mention of the following strikes which have been settled through the intervention of an officer of the Department of Labour, under the provisions of legislation enacted by the present administration and most of which are still familiar to the public mind, is sufficient to show wherein this legislation has been of benefit to capital and labour in all classes of industries and to the public in all parts of the Dominion.

A strike of cotton mill operatives at Valleyfield in October, 1900. Three thousand (3,000) employees were involved. At the time the intervention of the Department had been requested the militia of Canada had been brought up by the corporation from Montreal to maintain order in the place.

Core-makers and other employees of the Ontario Malleable Iron Works at Oshawa, Ont., December, 1900, in which 300 employees were involved.

A strike of the employees of the Canada Tool Works, Dundas, Ont., January, 1901, involving 55 employees.

Strike of employees of the Laurentide Pulp Co., Grand Mere, Que., April 1901, involving 800 employees.

A threatened strike of the miners employed by the Nova Scotia Steel Company at Sydney Mines, N.S., in June, 1901, involving 700 employees.

A strike of 150 employees in the cotton mills at Valleyfield, Que., in October, 1901.

A strike of the miners in the employ of the Wellington Colliery Co., at the Alexandria Mines, South Wellington, B. C., in November, 1901, involving 260 employees.

A strike of piano-workers at Toronto in December, 1901, involving 450 employees.

A strike of furniture factory employees at Berlin, Ont. March 1902, involving 40 employees.

A strike of longshoremen at Halifax, N.S., in April, 1902, involving in the neighborhood of 1200 employees, which had the effect of virtually paralyzing business in the harbour of Halifax in the week previous to its settlement. All the steamship companies and a large number of merchants were immediately affected by the strike.

A strike of wharf builders at Port Burwell, Ont., in June, 1901, involving 30 employees.

A strike of the employees of the Ste. Croix cotton mills at Milltown, N.B., during April, 1903, involving 300 persons.

A strike of the employees of the Hawkesbury Lumber Co., Hawkesbury, Ont., during April, 1903, involving 250 employees.

A lockout of carpenters at Calgary, Alta, settled on July 18, which lockout commenced at the beginning of the month of June.

A strike of carpenters at Winnipeg, Man., in October, 1903, involving over 700 employees. The year 1903 witnessed a great amount of building in Winnipeg, and as winter was approaching, the settlement of this strike was the means of preventing great loss to contractors as well as acute embarrassment to business interests in many quarters.

A strike of Dominion Iron and Steel Company's employees at Sydney, N.S., affecting between 1,500 and 2,000 employees. For some weeks during the continuance of the strike the militia had been called in and stationed on the company's works. Had this strike lasted longer it is difficult to say what depression in business and hardships to individuals might not have followed in its wake. As it was, the municipality of Sydney suffered heavily and industries in the district were seriously depressed.

A lockout in the collieries of the Western Fuel Company at Nanaimo, B.C., September, 1905, in which over 700 employees were directly affected. The losses to the Company, the employees and industries throughout Vancouver Island, in consequence of this difficulty, were enormous and the settlement undoubtedly prevented a complete stagnation of business in Nanaimo and district and severe business depression throughout Vancouver Island.

Strikes in building trades and in leather working trades at Calgary, Alta, settled in June 1906, 100 employees being concerned in the former case and some 30 or 40 in the latter. As nothing was more important in Calgary at the time than the extent of its building, the settlement from that point of view was especially significant.

In 1903, a further step in advance was taken by the enactment of the Railway Labour Disputes Act. By this Act machinery was provided whereby a public enquiry under oath might take place as to the causes underlying any difference between a railway company and its employees which might result in the cessation of work, with a view to bringing about an adjustment of such differences. The application of this Act to a threatened strike of telegraphers on the Grand Trunk Railway in 1904 was the means of averting a serious tie-up of the system in the summer of that year. Since the enactment of that measure, though there had been several serious railway strikes in the years immediately preceding, there has not been, until the present machinist trouble a single strike on any of the railroads of the Dominion which seriously affected transportation.

In March, 1907, the Laurier Government went still further in its industrial peace legislation, and enacted the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, an Act which in the case of all industries connected with public utilities, provides machinery for a full investigation and requires that when any dispute connected with such industries threatens to result in a strike or lockout,

the same shall be submitted to a Board of Conciliation and Investigation appointed under the Act before a strike or lockout is declared. The industries indicated particularly by the term "public utilities" are those associated with the great agencies of transportation and communication, railroads, steamship, telegraph and telephone lines, gas, electric light and water and power works, as well as all mining properties. Disputes connected with such industries obviously affect the public interests more closely than those concerning any other class of work and their prevention altogether, or if that is impossible, their prompt and amicable settlement, is even more necessary than in the case of the ordinary labour trouble, since a cessation of work from lockout or strike in the case of a public utility involves not only loss to employer and employed but great inconvenience and possibly serious distress to the public at large. The fuel famine in the West during the winter of 1906-7, which was in large measure the result of the prolonged strike at the Lethbridge Coal Mines, is an illustration still well remembered by the public of the intimate relation between public utility industries and the public welfare. Severe as the situation actually became, it must have been infinitely worse had not the good offices of the Department of Labour resulted in effecting a settlement between the operators and the workmen.

Obviously, the public interest, not less than the interest of employer and employed, lies in the settlement of such disputes in their initial stages and before they have assumed so serious a form as a lockout or a strike. What, therefore, the new Act does is to require that any dispute arising in connection with the class of industries named shall be submitted to a Board of Conciliation and Investigation, with a view to arriving at a settlement before a strike or a lockout can be legally brought about. This may be termed compulsory investigation, during which the parties in dispute will be brought necessarily face to face, and that conference and discussion secured which workmen have always sought, but which in the past has usually taken place only after, instead of before, the rigorous and costly step of bringing about on the one side or the other a suspension of work. Further important provisions of the Act are those which require that employers and employees shall give at least thirty days' notice of an intended change affecting conditions of employment with respect to wages or hours, and that pending the proceedings before a Board, the relations to each other of the parties to the dispute shall remain unchanged, and neither party shall do anything tending to bring about respectively a lockout or a strike. One other section of the Act that should be emphasized is that which provides for the application of the statute to industries other than those connected with public utilities when the parties to a dispute in such class of industries may so desire.

It is believed that this legislation is a long step in advance upon all preceding measures that have touched the vexed and difficult problem of the relation of capital and labour in Canada. It varies in important respects from the labour legislation that has been enacted in any other country where such matters have been seriously regarded, and it is believed such variations from beaten paths will be found helpful in the solution of the problem indicated, which is surely one of the most tremendous that will confront the twentieth century. In the successful working of the Act much depends upon the spirit in which it is accepted by employers and employees respectively; if this be, as there is every reason to hope, one of moderation and conciliation, the present measure may go far to obviate the friction that too often marks the relations to each other of these two all-important elements in the social system, and may thus help to promote the stability and development of Canadian industry, on which latter condition, more than any other, depends ultimately the welfare of the country as a whole, no less than the betterment of the lot of the industrial classes in particular.

The law in question received the Royal assent only on March 22 of the past year, and up to August 1 of the present year has been invoked on over forty occasions.

Some criticism indeed has been levelled at the Act because the finding of a Board is not made compulsory. In matters of compulsion, however, we must go slowly. The Government felt justified in requiring that at least an investigation must precede a strike or lockout. It has not felt justified up to the present time in declaring that the workingmen of Canada shall not have the final right of refusing to work unless conditions shall be satisfactory to them. It may, in fact, be well doubted whether compulsory legislation on this subject could be made effective. The example of New Zealand is continually quoted, yet at the present moment we find the greatest doubt existing in New Zealand itself whether the labour legislation of that country in its compulsory aspect is not wholly a failure; whether it proves so in the end or not we must at least remember how different are the conditions in Canada and New Zealand, the one a vast territory lying alongside a nation with a huge population teeming with industrial activity and energy, the other two or three tiny islands remote from all the rest of the world.

The present measure secures for labour what has long been a principle for which it has fought, namely, the right to have its grievances impartially investigated; at the same time the new legislation does not take away from labour the right, no less important, of refusing to work under conditions which are deemed to be unfair. The Act secures to the public as well as the parties, a truce in the matter of industrial hostilities, which in more than nine cases out of ten means, and has meant, peace

with honor to both sides. It is not surprising, therefore, that at the twenty-third annual convention of the Dominion Trades and Labour Congress, held at Winnipeg on September 16, 1907, a resolution in reference to the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act should have been passed. The following report by the executive officer was accepted by the congress:

"The Trades Dispute Investigation Act, 1907. Your executive after careful consideration, gave its hearty endorsement to the principle of the bill. Organized labour does not want to strike to enforce its demands if the consideration of them can be attained without recourse to that remedy. The strike has been our last resort, and as the bill continued our right to strike, but assured a fair hearing of the demands of the workers, there was nothing to do but to give our support to it. Nor is organized labour blind to the fact that in every great industrial struggle the public have a large interest as well in the result as in the means adopted to reach that result. The least the public are entitled to is a knowledge of the merits of the dispute. This knowledge will be given to them under the procedure outlined in the bill. Your executive believe it will be a happy day when every labour dispute can be settled by the parties meeting together in the presence of an impartial tribunal to discuss their differences. Our great difficulty in the past has been that we could not get a hearing. The act has been tested already in the case of the Machinists and the Grand Trunk Railway Company, and no better tribute could be paid to it than the settlement arrived at in that case, which was reported to your executive at the time of writing this report as being satisfactory to both parties. The arbitration lasted three days, thus meeting the objections of those who, not unnaturally, thought that the delay possible under the bill might be too great to make its provisions of any avail."

The congress endorsed the act by a vote of 81 to 19. The words of the resolution are follows:

"Whereas organized labor has from time to time expressed its disapproval of strikes except as a last resort in industrial disputes; and whereas particularly in disputes connected with public utilities the public have rights that must be respected and considered; and whereas, the Lemieux Bill is designed to avoid strikes and lockouts in connection with industrial disputes in certain utilities until such time as the merits of the dispute are publicly investigated; and whereas organized labor always courts investigation of its grievances by reason of the justice of its claims and its desire to be fair: Resolved, That this Trades and Labor Congress of Canada hereby expresses its approval of the principle of the Lemieux Bill as being in consonance with the oft-expressed attitude of organized labor in favor of investigation and conciliation."

The Trades and Labour Congress showed that its approval

of the Act was sincere by voting—59 to 22—in favor of an amendment for bringing all trades under its operation.

Up till August of the present year in all somewhat over forty Boards have been established, affecting over 40,000 employees and many millions of capital, and in only two cases have strikes followed investigations under the Act. One of these cases was the strike of miners at Springhill, which terminated in three months, without a change of conditions, and the other strike that of the machinists on the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Briefly, one may mention among the cases where investigations have resulted in amicable settlements and prevented serious strikes, that of the Grand Trunk Railway Company and the Locomotive Engineers on its system; those of the longshoremen of Montreal and Halifax; that of the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company and its employees at the Lethbridge mines; that of the Intercolonial Railway and the Freight Handlers at Halifax; that of the cotton spinners at Valleyfield; those of the Grand Trunk Railway and Canadian Pacific Railway Telegraphers; those of the Canadian Northern Railway Firemen and Grand Trunk Railway and Canadian Pacific Railway Carmen; and that of the Dominion Coal Company of Nova Scotia, the last named alone involving directly not less than seven thousand men with their wives and children, and indirectly the industrial and transportation interests to a large degree of the whole province. Satisfactory agreements were concluded under the Act, in the case of the Hosmer Coal Mines at Hosmer, B.C., the Hilcrest Coal and Coke Company, at Hilcrest, Alta., the Canadian West Coal and Coke Company, the Domestic Coal Company, Duggan, Huntrods & Company, all located at Taber, Alta., the Strathcona Coal Company at Taber, Alta., the Canadian Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company at Moyie, B.C., the seamen of the Great Lakes and the employing shipping companies; the Ottawa Street Railway Company and its employees, the Acadia Coal Company of Stellarton, N.S., and its employees, the Intercolonial Coal Company of Westville, N.S., and its employees, the Port Hood and Richmond Railway and Coal Company, and its employees, and the Maritime Coal, Railway and Power Company, Chignecto, N.S., and its employees in its coal mines.

It is no small triumph in the cause of Industrial Peace to be able to assert that for the whole of the first twelve months succeeding the enactment of this measure, Canada had an all but complete immunity from strikes and lockouts in any of its mines, railways, street car, telegraph and telephone systems.

Restriction of Alien Contract Labour

The Liberal Government was the first in Canada to enact a law to prohibit the importation of alien labour under contract. The Alien Labour act was passed as early as 1897 and has been twice amended to make its provisions of easier application. Where there has been reason to believe that any large number of aliens were being employed to the exclusion of Canadians, the Government through the Department of Labour has instituted special inquiries by Royal Commission, as for example in the case of the alleged employment of aliens on the Grand Trunk Pacific, and the alleged employment of aliens on the Pere Marquette Railway in 1905. The Government's determination, as expressed in these commissions, to see that Canadian labour was protected on the great works of construction and railways of Canada, has unquestionably had a most important effect in causing a due respect for and observance of the provisions of the law. Where the constitutionality of the law was questioned in the courts, as in the case of the famous decision by Mr. Justice Anglin in 1905, the Department of Labour carried an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which appeal resulted in the reversing of Mr. Justice Anglin's decision. Where prosecutions under the Act have been commenced in the courts by individuals and have resulted successfully, the Department of Labour has secured for the informers half of the penalty inflicted by the Courts. Several hundreds of dollars have in the last few years been paid over in this manner from the funds of the Receiver-General, through the Department of Labour, to parties who have assisted in securing the enforcement of the provisions of the Act.

False Representations and Fraudulent Practices of Employment Agencies

Among other matters which deserve very special mention in any record of the achievements of the Liberal Government are the steps taken to prevent fraudulent practices of employment agencies and to secure legislation both in Canada and in England to prevent false representations being made in Canada or in Great Britain to induce immigrants to come to Canada under unfair conditions. Hardly less dangerous in some respects than the importation of the Chinese and other Orientals have been the inroads of other classes of undesirable immigrants which have been brought to this country on occasions despite the desires and endeavors of the Government to prevent their coming here. A large influx of Italian labourers into the city of Montreal in the spring of 1904 resulted not only in suffering and hardship to the Italians themselves, but seriously threatened the condition of the labour market in Montreal, and gave grounds sufficient to authorize an investigation in the first instance by the Deputy Minister of the Department, and subsequently the appointment of a Royal Commission. The last-named investigation took place before His Honour Judge Winchester, and resulted in the exposure of the fraudulent practices employed by certain employment agencies in Montreal with a view to inducing immigration to Canada, while swindling on every side in connection with the same practices was clearly indicated. In the report of the Commissioner the fraudulent practices of one Cordasco were dealt with at length, as well as the methods adopted by other employment agencies in the city of Montreal. The treatment of immigrants by agencies in Montreal, the extortions of Cordasco, the overcharges for provisions supplied by him, and fees collected from labourers were all dealt with in special detail. In conclusion the Commissioner stated that the evidence fully established the fact that the large influx of Italian immigrants into Montreal in the early part of 1904 was the result of advertisements and representations of Cordasco, acting with the assistance of steamship agencies in Italy and the cooperation of a special labour agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In the Commissioner's

opinion, Cordasco's main object was to compel men thus brought into the country to pay him the large sums he was shown to have received, and this he was enabled to do by the company's agent refusing to employ any Italians except through him, and further assisting him in obtaining steamship agencies which it was his evident intention to use in carrying out his object and in making further extortions.

The Commissioner recommended that the City of Montreal should pass a by-law similar to that in force in Toronto respecting intelligence offices, which provides that every person keeping an intelligence office for registering the names and addresses and residences of, and giving information to labourers, workmen, clerks, domestic servants, etc., should procure a license before being permitted to carry on business, and fixes a penalty for extortion, false representation, etc., at a maximum fine of \$50 for each offence, or imprisonment for a period not to exceed six months.

As already stated, the immediate effect of the inquiry into the large influx of Italian labourers into Montreal was to put a stop to this influx, and to relieve the critical condition of the labour market in that city, and other parts of Canada in consequence of the heavy immigration of this particular class of labourers. More important, perhaps, were the results which followed from the exposure of the fraudulent practices of certain of the employment agencies in Montreal. Prosecutions were commenced against Cordasco, and successfully maintained by some of the Italians who had had money fraudulently extorted from them by him.

To prevent other actions, Cordasco refunded the sum of \$2,017.25 of moneys received by him from Italian labourers. Steps were also taken by the companies immediately concerned, to see that in connection with their business there should be future immunity from the frauds exposed.

The most important and far-reaching result, however, was the passage of an Act in 1905, making it a criminal offence for parties to induce labourers to come to Canada under false pretences, or, in other words, through methods similar to those adopted by the fraudulent agencies in Montreal:

"Every person who does, in Canada, anything for the purpose of causing or procuring the publication or circulation, by advertisement, or otherwise, in a country outside of Canada, of false representations, as to the opportunities for employment in Canada, or as to the state of the labour market in Canada, intended or adapted to encourage or induce, or to deter or prevent the immigration into Canada of persons resident in that country, or who does anything in Canada for the purpose of causing or procuring the communication to any resident of such country of any false representations, shall, if any such false representations are

thereafter so published, circulated, or communicated, be guilty of an offence, and liable, on summary conviction before two justices of the peace, to a penalty of not more than one thousand dollars, and not less than fifty dollars for each offence."

This Act has prevented labour agencies and individuals from carrying on in Canada operations similar to those revealed in Cordasco's case. Thwarted in this manner, they sought to evade the law by going to the British Isles and there making false representations. This was a favourite method adopted where the desire was to bring in strike-breakers to assist in defeating a strike. A case of this kind came to the attention of the Department of Labour in 1905, in connection with the immigration of a party of English printers, about sixty in number, who had been induced by representations made in England to proceed to Winnipeg during a strike of printers in that city. The incident was the subject of a good deal of correspondence, and the printers who had come from England to Winnipeg, feeling themselves aggrieved, sent a petition to King Edward. Mr. Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister of Labour, proceeded to Winnipeg in the summer of 1905, and made a full investigation into the whole matter.

In his report the Deputy Minister of Labour pointed out that the Canadian Act was necessarily restricted to offences committed in Canada, while the action that had induced the British printers to emigrate to Winnipeg had taken place in Great Britain. Mr. King, therefore, suggested that a remedy to meet future cases of a similar character should be provided by Imperial legislation analogous to the Dominion Act. Mr. P. M. Draper, secretary-treasurer of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, later, in a letter to the Minister of Labour, urged that in the interests of the workmen of Canada, every effort possible should be made by the Canadian Government to secure legislation by the British parliament on the lines suggested by the Deputy Minister of Labour, and in September '06, Mr. King was sent by the Minister of Labor to England to present the views of the Department of Labour to the British authorities and to endeavour to secure legislation along the lines proposed. It is not necessary to follow this question in detail, but it is sufficient to state that Mr. King's mission was wholly successful and resulted in the incorporation of the following section in the Merchant's Shipping Bill, which was at that time before the British House of Commons:

"If any person, by any false representation, fraud, or false pretence, induces, or attempts to induce, any person to emigrate or to engage a steerage passage in any ship, he shall for each offence be liable to a fine not exceeding £50, or to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a period not exceeding three months."

This is another signal instance of the prompt and energetic manner in which the Liberal Government through the Department of Labour which it established for the purpose, has responded to the wishes of the labouring classes and has endeavored to protect their interests.

The Restriction of Immigration From The Orient

Chinese—Japanese—Hindoo

In no particular have the well-being and interests of the working classes in Canada been so seriously menaced as in the threatened invasion of a tide of skilled and unskilled labour from the Orient. Inasmuch as the interests of the whole of Asia, with its countless hordes of Chinese, Japanese and Indian natives are one in this matter, and international and imperial considerations of the highest importance involved in the handling of it, it is within the mark to say, that no problem which has ever confronted this country has called for more skilful handling or a higher statesmanship. Considered from this standpoint, how brilliant has been the record of the present Liberal administration! Recognizing the proportions of the question the first steps taken were very properly in the nature of an inquiry under Royal Commission with all the facts and circumstances surrounding Chinese and Japanese Immigration, the evidence taken before the Commission which was appointed in 1900, and the Commission's report created an intelligent public opinion on the whole question, and afforded grounds for the Government's action in imposing a head tax of \$500 upon all Chinese entering the country. This tax had been fixed by the Government at \$100 in 1900, but the Commission found this to be inadequate, and it was raised to \$500, at which amount it has since remained. Only at the last session did parliament enact additional measures safeguarding such exemptions as had been made on behalf of Chinese students and Chinese children that the prohibition of this class of labour might be the more effective.

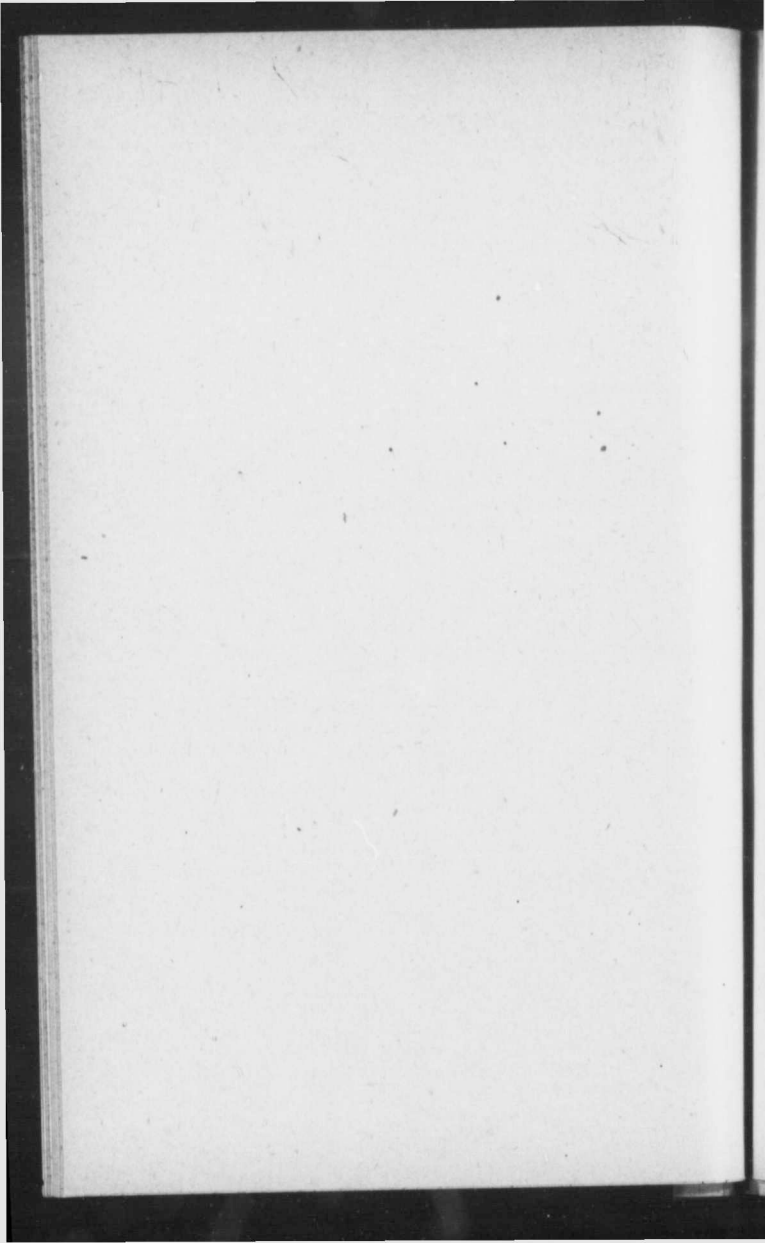
The problem of Japanese immigration or immigration from India did not become one of any importance until the beginning of last year. Then the influx of these classes of labour became such that serious unrest was occasioned in the Province of British Columbia, resulting in anti-Asiatic riots in the City of Vancouver. Immediately the Government took the matter in hand; the parties who suffered in the riots were compensated for their losses, that

neither they nor the countries from whence they came might have any just grievance against the people of this country, and immediately investigations and international negotiations commenced which have resulted in a complete restriction in the numbers and classes of these people who shall be entitled to come to this country. In the solution of this problem the Department of Labour, which is the best versed in the many bearings of this question upon the lives and conditions of the working classes, has been particularly active. In fact with the strong endorsement of the Government in all its proceedings, it has had the all but entire handling of the whole matter.

The successful mission of the Minister of Labour, Hon. Rodolphe Lemieux, to Japan to secure an arrangement for the restriction of Japanese immigration to Canada; the inquiry at Vancouver by the Deputy Minister of Labour, Mr. Mackenzie King, into the methods by which the Oriental labourers have been induced to come to Canada, the successful mission of the Deputy Minister of Labour to England to interview the British authorities on the subject of Oriental Immigration, and to secure a restriction of further immigration to Canada from India, are all still fresh in the public mind, and are further indications of the widening scope and increasing activity of the Department of Labour, as well as of the thorough and increasing attention given by the Government to the industrial interests of the country. The arrangement effected by the Minister of Labour has resulted in the practical elimination of the Japanese immigration as a factor in the social and industrial life of Canada. The Government recognized that Canada is and must be a white man's country and has not hesitated to take prompt action to secure this end. At the same time the Government realized the gravity of the question and the desirability of proceeding on lines compatible with the present standing of Canada as a leading and progressive country and as an important member of the British Empire, and no step was taken without a due consideration of the interests of the Empire. As a result, the wishes of Canada were realized without the least disturbance of the good relations prevailing between Canada and Japan on the one hand, or Great Britain and Japan on the other, and without endangering the growing trade between Canada and Japan which is expected to add so greatly to the prosperity and upbuilding of our Pacific Province. The investigations of the Deputy Minister of Labour revealed the causes and sources of the immigration, assisted greatly in clarifying the atmosphere and enabled the Canadian and Japanese authorities to take common action.

In dealing with the allied question of immigration from India to Canada, Imperial interests were again considered jointly with those of Canada, and Mr. Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister of Labour, was sent to England to negotiate with the British au-

thorities and see what could be done to end the influx of East Indians at Pacific ports. It was of course open to Canada to take radical action on her own account, for no other Government has a right to say who shall come within her borders, but by working in concert with the British authorities, Canada did her best to protect the interests of her own people without arousing the antagonism or resentment of the people of India, and sought particularly to avoid increasing the agitation and unrest at present existing in the eastern dependency of Britain. As in the case of Japan, Canada again succeeded in securing such an arrangement as she wished, promptly and effectively, through the British Government, and the Dominion has again the privilege of remembering that no step taken by her has been detrimental to the great interests of the Empire, while she has, nevertheless, not failed fully to protect the welfare of her own people. It is the more needful to dwell on these points because with the growing importance, and dignity of Canada, among the nations of the world, international problems will confront Canada with increasing urgency and it is well to see how tactfully and advisedly the Liberal Government has succeeded in handling those that have arisen during the last year, preserving the dignity of Canada, securing all that Canada could ask, yet endangering no international relations and working in the strictest accord with the British Government. The Opposition so far as it gave evidence of any policy on the subject of Japanese immigration would have inconsequently and recklessly shattered the treaty with Japan, causing the gravest relations with the Eastern Empire.



The Protection of the Health of Employees on Public Works

Just as the Fair Wages Resolution of the House of Commons and its administration by the Department of Labour protects workingmen employed on public works in the matter of their wages and hours, so the Act for the Preservation of Health on Public Works passed by the Liberal Administration in 1899 compels a proper regard for the physical wellbeing of workmen, more especially in cases where the work in question is being carried out in districts remote from civilization and where the workmen are wholly dependent upon the contractors for provision as to their health and comfort.

In a country of such extended geographical area as the Dominion of Canada, operations of the kind referred to are of frequent occurrence in the process of opening up the country to development and settlement. At the present time this legislation is of special significance in view of the scale on which public works and especially railway construction under subsidy of the Dominion Government are being undertaken in unsettled portions of Canada. Most prominent of these is the transcontinental line to be constructed and operated by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Company. Besides this, however, numerous new branch lines projected by companies already in operation in Western Canada increase the total mileage of railways under construction in unsettled or only partially settled territory by many hundreds of miles. There are also a number of railway companies recently incorporated whose lines operate in districts to which the Act of 1899 particularly applies.

The circumstances under which the Act had its origin will throw considerable light on the conditions which it was intended to remove, and assist in helping to define its precise application.

In 1897 the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was engaged in the construction under subsidy by the Dominion Government, of a line of railway known as the Crow's Nest Pass Railway, extending from Fort Macleod some 300 miles westward through the Rocky Mountains. The operations carried on were in a rough and unsettled country very difficult of access and far re-

moved from sources of supply, and the men engaged on the work were wholly dependent upon the contractors and subcontractors for all provisions relating to their food, accommodation, medical attendance and the like. The prevailing scale of wages paid was \$1.50 per day, board being supplied at the rate of \$4 per week.

During the autumn of the year various complaints were received as to the treatment of the workmen, and the death from diphtheria of two young men under circumstances of peculiar hardship, brought the whole matter prominently before the attention of the public. The company was vigorously attacked in parliament, and after a full discussion of the charges a commission was appointed in 1898 to investigate the whole matter of the treatment of the men by the contractors of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway Company, and report thereon to parliament.

In brief, the findings of the commission were that, though machinery had been provided by the company for the accommodation and medical attendance of the men, the measures adopted were not on an efficient scale. Instances were proved of violations of agreements, threatenings and illegal arrests by contractors, lack of medical attendance, non-providing of accommodation, unsanitary houses, tents without stoves, overcharges on supplies, bad methods of wages payment, and other abuses. The commission recommended a system of government regulation of the feeding, housing and transportation of men engaged in this class of employment; also that no liquor should be allowed to be sold on such works, and that wages should be paid at shorter intervals, the company or chief employer to be held responsible for the same, and this provision to apply to all works contracted for by the Dominion Government or assisted by funds of the Dominion Treasury.

As a direct result of the report of the Commission, a Bill was introduced during the session of parliament of 1898, by the Hon. the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who explained, in referring to the measure, that the legislation in question was offered by the Government as a means of preventing in future the recurrence of such conditions as had attended the construction of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway. In a discussion which occurred in the House of Commons on July 18, 1898, on the occasion of the Bill's second reading, the Prime Minister further explained its purport and necessity as being in view of the vast unpeopled stretches of territory existing in Canada, and the likelihood of many public works being constructed therein in the due course of time, requiring, it might be, some thousands of men to be employed at points distant from civilization and without the means of communication and the settled districts.

Briefly stated, the Act grants to the Governor-in-Council power to make regulations, either of a general or special nature,

for the preservation of health and the mitigation of disease among persons employed in the construction of public works. Regulations of this kind may have reference to (a) the housing of employees while so engaged, (b) inspection and cleansing of the men's quarters, (c) the number of qualified medical men to be employed on the works (d) the providing of suitable hospitals and the proper care of persons suffering from contagious diseases, and, generally, all such matters as may seem relevant to the Governor-in-Council. The application of the Act was made to include all public works in Canada, including either railway, canal, bridge or telegraph or other work within the legislative authority of the Dominion parliament.

By way of carrying the Act into operation, suitable regulations have been passed, and an inspector has been appointed to carry out the various regulations proposed under the supervision of the Inspector-General of Health of the Dominion.

With a view to securing as wide as possible application to the Act every Government department or company, before entering upon the construction of a public work, is required to notify the Minister of its exact location, its dimensions, and the probable number of men to be employed. The enforcement of proper sanitary conditions for the men on public works after construction operations have begun is provided for as follows: A duly qualified medical officer approved by the Inspector must be engaged by the company to attend the men where the number of the latter exceeds 100, but does not exceed 500. In cases where men are located within a distance of 30 miles, and are living in houses, tents or other quarters provided by the company, an additional medical officer is required for each 500 additional men when the number of employees exceeds 500. These officers must be properly supplied with medicine, means of conveyance, etc., and must visit each camp in the district at least once a week; their district must not extend over 30 miles in length, except with the consent of the Inspector, who has discretion also in the matter of the number of men to be allotted to each medical officer. The Inspector, the medical officer or officers, engaged upon the public works, and the Government engineer in charge of the work, constitute what is termed the health board, of which the Inspector is chairman, and on which devolves the general supervision of the health of the employees, including such matters as the inspection of houses and quarters according to a stringent method of procedure, to see that necessary provisions for ventilation cleansing, etc., are provided. With regard to hospital accommodation, the Inspector, or in his absence, the board of health, must see that suitable hospital accommodation is provided by the company within a reasonable distance of public works. A temporary hospital must also be provided of size sufficient to accommodate at least six persons or more, as the medical officer may require, and

located as near the centre of each medical district as possible. Provisions for the isolation of persons suffering from contagious diseases are also inserted, the company being required to provide a tent for each camp and have the same supplied with bed, bedding, and attendance necessary to accommodate at least two persons. Breaches or non-observance of the regulations are punishable by a fine not exceeding \$100, or imprisonment not to exceed three months, or both, and a conviction does not constitute a bar to any action which may be brought against such person for neglect of their duties under the regulations.

Protection of Workingmen Against Accidents

Other legislation for the protection of life and limb of workingmen has been enacted by the Liberal Government largely through representations which have come through communications addressed by labour organizations, or representative labour men, to the Department of Labour, or other departments of the Government. Of such legislation may be mentioned the amendments to the Railway Act, requiring all trains to have efficient apparatus to admit of immediate communication between the conductor and engine driver, brakes of a kind to permit of bringing the train to a standstill as expeditiously as possible, automatic car couplers, capable of being coupled without the necessity of men going in between the ends of the cars; freight cars to be supplied in future with outside ladders projecting below the frame of the car on two of the diagonally opposite ends and sides of each car, with hand grips placed angle-wise for the ladders on each car.

The appointment of a special officer in connection with the Railway Commission, to enquire into and report on the causes of accidents on railways, and the best means for the prevention of such accidents, is also deserving of mention. It may be added that the Department of Labour has for some years been gathering accurate statistical information as to the number, nature and causes of industrial accidents in Canada, whether on railways or in other classes of employment, which occur to workingmen in the course of their employment. The records thus far show that over 1,000 workers are killed annually while regularly engaged in the work of their several trades and callings, and that more than three times this number suffer through loss of limbs or otherwise a permanent impairment to their industrial efficiency. Statistics such as these will pave the way for further legislation.

The Labour of Women and Children

Notwithstanding that all factory legislation and questions of wages contract and the like are matters for the legislatures of the several provinces, the present Liberal Government has never lost an opportunity to draw attention to the need for improvement in the conditions of the workers, and especially female and child labour where such has been apparent. The full investigation in 1897-98 into the methods by which Government contracts were being carried out, the outcome of which was the Fair Wages Resolution of the House of Commons already referred to, was in reality an inquiry into the Sweating System of which women and children were the main victims, and the result of that inquiry was not only to improve the conditions of the workers immediately concerned, but to give rise to a far-reaching agitation against the Sweating System itself.

Similarly when in 1907 it came to the notice of the Government that women employed in the exchanges of the Bell Telephone Company's offices at Toronto were being worked excessive hours, and subjected to too severe a strain, the Minister of Labour immediately recommended the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole matter. Mr. Mackenzie King, the Deputy Minister of Labour, and His Honour Judge Winchester were appointed Commissioners, and they made a searching inquiry, which resulted not only in an immediate betterment of the conditions of employment of the operatives concerned, but in the accumulation of a mass of medical and other testimony and the publication of a report which have already had a strong influence in shaping public opinion in regard to the conditions which should prevail in this class of employment, and which cannot fail to lead to further legislation.

Similarly an investigation conducted under Royal Commission during the present summer by the Deputy Minister of Labour into conditions of employment in the cotton factories in the Province of Quebec, has brought to light many startling facts in regard to the employment of child labour in that industry and has resulted in an agitation throughout the province against the employment of children in factories, which is destined to have a wholesome and far-reaching effect. This is only one phase of the inquiry, the whole of which is deserving of special mention, but it serves to illustrate how unrelenting and many-sided have been the efforts of the present Liberal Administration to improve the conditions of employment, and better the lot of the industrial classes of this country.

Social and Moral Reform

The whole record of the Liberal Administration in its endeavours to improve the conditions of the working classes of Canada is a chapter in social and moral reform which constitutes one of the brightest pages in the political history of Canada. Much of the legislation enacted has attracted the attention of other countries and been imitated in whole or in part by them. Canada has led the way in some of the reforms, she has shared in world movements which have to do with the enlightenment and betterment of mankind. Space forbids mention of such measures as the Lord's Day Act, the anti-cigarette legislation, and other like measures. It is sufficient to note in conclusion that not even the pressure of work in the closing weeks of a long and tedious session did not preclude the Liberal Administration from dealing in July of the present year, a parting blow at an evil which was drawn to the Government's attention through the Department of Labour, and which had already become a corrupting force in the community. The enquiry by the Deputy Minister of Labour into the claims of the Chinese residents of Vancouver for damages received during the Anti-Asiatic riot of September, 1907, brought to light the fact that an extensive traffic in opium was being carried on in the Province of British Columbia, to the grave injury of many of the white residents, as well as the Chinese. The Deputy Minister of Labour, in a special report to parliament, commented strongly on the evil effects of such a traffic, and urged its abolition. The recommendation was promptly embodied in a Bill, which was introduced by the Minister of Labour, and an Act of Parliament was passed before the session closed, abolishing a traffic of so nefarious and shameful a nature. That Liberalism is synonymous with reform has many times been proven by the present administration, that it stands for progress its entire record shows.

A Comparison of Records

The workmen of Canada will do well to contrast the passive attitude of the Conservative administration during the eighteen years, from 1878 to 1896, with the active record of the Liberal administration, from 1896 to 1907, toward labour, though the latter covers a shorter period of time, and to judge for themselves which party is deserving of their support.

On the one hand, the record of the Conservative party in so far as it has any record at all in matters of concern to labour, is one of unfulfilled promise and unlimited pretence. It is a record which from the financial side exhibits a gross waste of public funds, with not so much as a single practical result to be pointed to in extenuation of the shameless extravagance.

The record of the Liberal government, on the other hand, is one which manifests a continued and progressive interest in the welfare of the working classes, and the creation and existence of a large number of practical measures of reform, effected at a minimum of cost to the country as a whole.

Both parties have had many years in which to disclose their position, and to show where they stand, and human nature, being what it is, it is only reasonable to expect that the past will be some index to the future, and that the Liberal party which has been a true friend to Labour, will receive that support which faithful service merits, and that the Conservative party which has been tried in the balance and found wanting, is not the party which either deserves or may expect to receive the support of those whose trust it has betrayed.



