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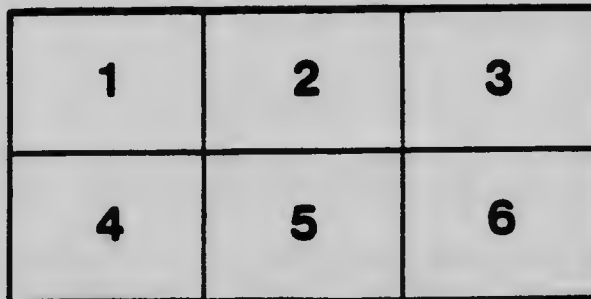
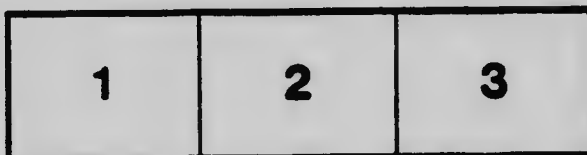
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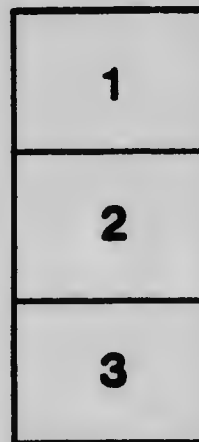
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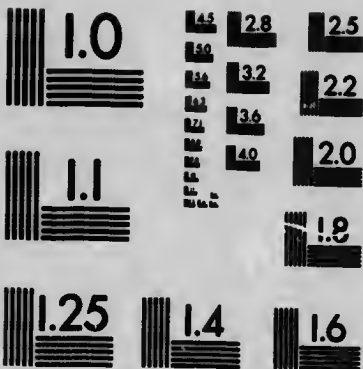
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**Ontario Provincial
Liberal Party**

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Labor

1919

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LABOR

The Liberal policy with regard to labor problems, so consistently advocated during successive sessions of the Legislature, and so persistently opposed by the Conservative Government, is in general agreement with the findings of the Majority Report of the National Industrial Conference (held at Ottawa September 15-20, 1919).

What Is the Liberal Policy?

1. To create a separate department of the Government, in the rank of a Minister of Cabinet rank, to deal with labour questions.
2. To transfer to this department branches of the public service particularly relating to labour.
3. To study social and industrial problems and the legislation relating thereto obtaining in other countries, with a view to ameliorating conditions of labour in Ontario.
4. To grapple with the problem of unemployment along the lines of the report of the Unemployment Commission.
5. To introduce new legislation in place of the present obsolete Factory Act, with adequate provision for the protection of child labour, the regulation of hours of labour and the supervision of conditions of labour.
6. The improvement of the Workmen's Compensation Act.
7. To institute a programme of social reform, including Old Age Pensions, Widows' Pensions, Sickness and Unemployment Insurance.

Government Opposition to Labour Department.

The policy of creating a Department of Labour, advocated by the Liberals in the Provincial campaign in 1914, has been constantly kept to the forefront. During the session of 1915 the resolution introduced by the Liberals in 1914 was revived and strenuous efforts were made to induce the Government to create such a department, but without success. The Government again voted the resolution down.

Text of Liberal Resolution:

"That in the opinion of this House the growing importance of social and industrial problems demands the creation of a department of the government, presided over by a responsible minister, whose chief concern should be to study and promote legislative and administrative action for the betterment of the conditions of the workers of the Province; and to this Department should be transferred the Bureau of Labour from the Department of Public Works, the Factory Inspection Branch from the Department of Agriculture, as well as the other branches of the public service particularly relating to the welfare of the industrial classes, including such administrative work as may be required in connection with the Workmen's Compensation Act; and that provision should be made under this department for the study of social and industrial problems, including the legislation in force in other industrial communities of the world, and the effects of such legislation in the betterment of social and industrial conditions.

"That for the purpose aforesaid the work of the existing departments should be so arranged, if practicable, as to permit of the creation of the new department without increasing the number of Cabinet Ministers."

The Key to the Problem.

The basic defect of our present system is the non-existence of a Department of Labour. The non-existence of a Ministry of Labour in the Province, and the stubborn opposition to Liberal proposals for the establishment of such a Department, denotes that the Hearst Government has no Labour policy, for no adequate effect can be given to the recommendations of the National Industrial Conference looking to the unification of existing labour laws, and the improvement of the lot of the workers, until the Liberal policy for the creation of a Provincial Department of Labour is put into operation.

The Labour problem is the most urgent in the times in which we live. There is probably no other question that interests such a large percentage of the population or that is of more importance to the future of the Province and of the country. Yet there is no machinery available, no organization corresponding to our Constitution, for the establishment of direct relations between our Province and the Dominion Labour Department in arriving at a solution of this most pressing problem. The unification of existing labour laws cannot be satisfactorily accomplished so long

as there is no Provincial Labour Department in existence. The necessity of a Ministry of Labour arises from the fact that in Labour, as in Education, the Province is the unit of all national effort towards the solution of the problem. This gap in our Constitution the Liberal Party proposes to fill, as the first and indispensable step towards the amicable adjustment of the relations between employers and employees.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Government Lethargy.

No attempt was made by the Government prior to the outbreak of the war to deal with the pressing problems of unemployment and consequent distress. The war solved the problem for the time being (1) by absorbing men into the army, and (2) by employing labour on munitions and other war material. But the Liberals in the Legislature have all along been urging preparedness to meet after-war conditions, and to that end have pressed for the co-ordination of the various offices relating to labour under one Minister.

The Liberals maintained that with the **Bureau of Labour** attached to the **Public Works Department**, the **Factory Inspection Branch** under the control of the **Department of Agriculture**, and a separate **Board** administering the **Workmen's Compensation Act**, important questions relating to Labour could not receive the attention from the Government they deserve. Under a proper Minister, labour disorganization could be investigated, legislation brought forward with a view to remedying conditions, and vigorous action taken to protect the rights of labour and to help adjust the differences which arise from time to time between employers and employed.

The climax reached in social and industrial conditions before the war and the problems which are now arising as a result of the war would bespeak a co-ordination such as the Liberals propose. They maintain that a separate department under a Cabinet Minister could carefully investigate both the problems of the past and present, and endeavour to do something to cope with the problems of the future.

This proposal to provide a separate portfolio for Labour will commend itself to all far-seeing electors as being in the general interests of the Province. With lack of cohesion in labour matters little can be accomplished to benefit the workers. The Government, up to last session, persistently refused to move in this direction. At the close of the session of 1919, feeling the pulse of

public opinion growing stronger and stronger in favour of such a step, the Government passed a bill creating a Department of Labour; but, despite the increasing labour unrest throughout the country and the attitude of the Dominion Government in insisting that labour legislation was purely a Provincial affair, the Hearst Government has up to the present failed to implement the provisions of the Act and has not taken any steps to appoint the Minister or to deal with labour problems.

The Government's Compromise of a Trades and Labour Branch.

In the session of 1916 the Government passed an act establishing a "Trades and Labour Branch" of the Public Service. Although facilitating the passage of this measure the Liberal Opposition still adhered to its demand for a broader consideration of the labour question.

The Act in question assigned to the new "Branch" the administration of:

- (a) The Bureau of Labour Act
- (b) The Stationary and Hoisting Engineers' Act
- (c) The Building Trades Protection Act
- (d) The Factory, Shop and Office Building Act
- (e) The Steam Boilers Act

and of "such other Acts relating to the protection of the persons or interests of the industrial classes as may from time to time be designated by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council."

It will be seen that by their action the members of the Cabinet admitted the principle of the Liberal demands. The Opposition contended that their action would not meet the situation. Their criticism was along the following lines:

(1) If the proposal to establish a Trades and Labour Branch represented the extent of the legislation the Government intended to introduce, it was inadequate.

(2) If any real progress was to be made upon the recommendations of the Unemployment Commission, whose investigation was made at considerable expense to the Province, a larger and more comprehensive measure was necessary.

(3) At the conclusion of the war we should be faced with a social and industrial problem of greater magnitude than those which we have been called upon to face in the past. Thousands of men had profitable employment in the supply of munitions. With the war over there would be large numbers needing work in other channels. The problem of securing employment would be

one of the most important and pressing which could face any Government, municipality or individual. The Government, however, refused to go any farther.

Social and Industrial Problem.

Included in the duties of a Minister such as the Liberal, wish appointed would be that of studying social and industrial conditions in other industrial communities of the world, with the object of applying the principles of legislation adopted in other countries for the improvement of the condition of the labouring classes, to the conditions as they are found in Ontario. At the present time the Trades and Labour Branch of the Public Works Department merely controls the administration of stated Acts of Parliament and has no concern with the framing of legislation with a view to working out better legislation. Liberal maintain the Government's provision for labour is entirely inadequate, and that opportunities should be given for a thorough study of the labour question, for the framing of new laws, the non-partisan administration of such laws and the consideration of the pressing question of Representation in Industry.

In view of the world-wide industrial and social unrest which has developed since the close of the war in connection with the reconstruction period, it is recognised by Liberals that it has become essential that a new basis of relations between Capital and Labour must be established in Canada to enable her to compete successfully with other nations. There is undoubtedly a conflict as to jurisdiction between the Government of the Dominion of Canada and the various Provincial administrations in the matter of labour legislation. This is a matter that should receive careful consideration and conference, so that by legislation or by co-operation, there may be no failure to secure all necessary action.

The Provincial Liberal Convention Resolution.

NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL.

As a result of the wide-spread Labour unrest in Great Britain following the war the British Government found it necessary to call together an Industrial Conference on the 27th of February, 1919. At this conference it was resolved as follows:

"That this Conference, being of the opinion that any preventable dislocation of industry is always to be deplored, and, in the present critical period of reconstruction, might be

disastrous to the interest of the Nation, and thinking that every effort should be made to remove legitimate grievances, and promote harmony and good will, resolves to appoint a Joint Committee, consisting of equal numbers of employers and workers, men and women, together with a Chairman appointed by the Government, to consider and report to a present unrest and the steps necessary to safeguard and further meeting of this Conference on the causes of the promote the best interests of employers, workpeople and the State, and especially to consider:

"1. Questions relating to hours, wages and general conditions of employment;

"2. Unemployment and its prevention;

"3. The best methods of promoting co-operation between Capital and Labour."

This Joint Committee was appointed and reported to the National Industrial Conference at Westminster on April 4th, 1919, in favour of the establishment without delay of some form of permanent, representative, National Industrial Council, to consider and advise the Government on National questions.

The Liberal Platform.

That the Liberal Party is seized of the urgency and gravity of the industrial problem was clearly made known at the Provincial Liberal Convention, held in Toronto in June, 1919, when the following resolutions met with hearty and unanimous approval: Moved by C. M. Bowman, M.P.P., seconded by Mrs. F. Stevens, Toronto:

"That Labour questions are of paramount importance in these times of industrial unrest and world upheaval, particularly matters relating to the maximum hours of the labour day, insurance against sickness and unemployment, old age pensions, and the harmonizing of the interests of employer and employed.

"Therefore, be it resolved that this convention places itself on record as favouring the passage of legislation to give effect to such proposals, and, generally, by means of a Labour Department, to keep in touch with the labour situation with a view to avoiding disputes between employers and employed.

"And further, that the Government create a Provincial Industrial Council, consisting of an equal number of employees and employers, men and women, together with a

chairman appointed by the Government, to consider and report on the causes of the present unrest and the steps necessary to safeguard and promote the best interests of employes, employers and State, and especially to consider:

- (1) Questions relating to hours, wages and general conditions of employment;
- (2) Unemployment and its prevention;
- (3) The best methods of promoting co-operation between Capital and Labour;

and that the Government shall undertake to give legislative consideration and effect to the findings of such Provincial Industrial (Advisory) Council.

Taken in conjunction with the advanced Labour policy set forth in another resolution adopted by the Convention, and with the appointment of a sympathetic Minister of Labour, Liberals believe that the Industrial problem so far as this Province is concerned could be solved to the mutual benefit of both employers and employed.

Detailed Policy.

Another resolution passed at the Provincial Liberal Convention sets forth in detail the Liberal policy on specific issues. It read as follows: Moved by A. W. Roebuck, Toronto, seconded by R. L. Brackin, Chatham:

"Recognizing the necessity for immediate labour legislation of a practical character, this convention resolves as follows:

A general minimum wage for both men and women to apply generally to all industry throughout the Province.

The appointment of a permanent commission to inquire continuously into the cost of living in various localities and from time to time, with power to increase the minimum wage to such a rate as will, under all conditions, provide a respectable living to all wage-earners.

A law fixing the eight-hour day for all industrial occupations throughout the Province, as applied to both men and women.

Better inspection of factories and other industries where men and women are employed, particularly with a view to the protection of women, and a more rigid enforcement of child labour regulations.

A law prohibiting employers from compelling their employees to enter into agreements not to enter into labour unions, and a recognition of the principle of collective bargaining.

Insurance against sickness and unemployment, based on the principles of English law.

Abolition of imprisonment for debt; the increase of the exemption of married men's wages from attachment from \$25.00 to \$40.00; the revision of the list of articles exempt from seizure for debt, so as to leave the actual necessities of home life.

And generally in dealing with protection of men and women, and the improvement of social conditions, the committee recommending the following: "MOTHERS' PENSIONS to be administered by the Department of Labour, with power to provide medical attendance and necessaries whenever required for the PROPER BIRTH AND UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN."

The amendment of the Dower Act so as to ensure to a married woman a fair and adequate share of her husband's estate which he cannot will away from her.

A MINIMUM WAGE

The Liberal Party has not contented itself with pronouncements of a more or less general character. At the Provincial Liberal Convention it placed itself definitely on record as taking an advanced and progressive stand on practically all of the specific labour problems of the day. The Convention declared its recognition of "the necessity for immediate labour legislation of a practical character" and accordingly declared that the Labour Party stood for:

"A minimum wage for both men and women, to apply generally to all industry throughout the Province," and for "the appointment of a permanent commission to inquire continually into the cost of living in various localities and from time to time with power to increase the minimum wage to such a rate as will, under all conditions, provide a respectable living to all wage-earners."

Perhaps in no department is the sloth of the present Government more apparent than in its indifference to the claims of labour and its lack of interest in labour problems.

Backward Ontario.

With the exception of the Eastern Provinces, Ontario is the only Province in the Dominion which has not enacted a minimum wage law. Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Quebec all have acts in operation working for the protection of and against the abuse of the more helpless of the workers. In all of these Provinces, Boards of Inquiry are empowered to declare the minimum wage which it shall be lawful to pay to women and girls in industrial occupations. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan these Boards are also empowered to regulate working conditions and hours of labour for female employees. The British Columbia and Quebec Acts give authority as well for the calling of conferences of all classes engaged in any particular industry.

The High Contracting Parties to the Treaty of Peace have laid down, as a principle, "The payment to the employed of a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life as it is understood in their time and country."

The Royal Commission on Industrial Relations in Canada, which made a most valuable report in July last, noted the failure of Ontario to keep pace in this humanitarian legislation, and recommended that such laws be extended at once to cover not only women and girls, but unskilled labourers as well: while the National Industrial Conference which met in Ottawa at the call of the Dominion Government, in September of this year, unanimously recommended that the Governments of all those Provinces which have not adopted minimum wage laws, (and the reference was aimed particularly at Ontario) should speedily investigate the necessity for such laws.

In the Provinces, whose Governments are sufficiently interested in the workers to have enacted such protective legislation, preliminary investigation revealed a dire need for governmental action. In some cases girls were found working for as long as ninety hours per week for wages which meant starvation and immorality.

Social workers in Ontario give assurance that extreme conditions would also be found to exist in some instances in the Province of Ontario.

The Saskatchewan Fair Wage Board has given Ontario a notable lead in this connection in its investigation into the conditions of women and girls in the retail stores of that Province, and in August last this Board is reported to have announced a scale of wages which it found to be suitable for that Province.

No class in this community desires excessive cruelty to its workers, and least of all respectable employers who recognize that the laxity of the Government in protecting the weaker classes of labour has but given the coldly unscrupulous an opportunity for unfair competition.

The Liberal policy recognizes that no legitimate industry should exist at the expense of the moral or physical well-being of its workers, and that the unscrupulous exploiter should not be permitted to do so.

AN EIGHT-HOUR DAY

The Royal Commission on Industrial Relations (July, 1919), and the National Industrial Conference have followed the example of the Peace Conference (Treaty of Peace) in declaring for "the adoption of an eight-hour day or a forty-eight hour week as the standard to be aimed at where it has not already been obtained." So far, however, the Governments of the Dominion and of Ontario have declined to follow in practice what they have endorsed in principle. To date Sir Robert and Sir William have contented themselves with "passing the buck" from one to the other. The Liberal Party will be more courageous. At the recent Liberal Convention in Toronto, it declared that it stood for:

"A law fixing the eight-hour day for all industrial occupations throughout the Province, as applied to both men and women."

Aside entirely from humanitarian considerations, the financial interests of all classes demand some real reform with which to allay the widespread industrial unrest which has followed the close of the world war. The Government's policy of suppression is not the remedy, and the present Administration has proven itself incapable of any real constructive policy.

Returns received by the Dominion Government from 6,250 firms in Canada, employing 615,000 employees, show that in June 1919, as many as 283,132 men worked eight hours or less per day, or about 47%. These returns covered 50% of the actual number of persons engaged in industry in Canada. It is therefore reasonably correct to say that one half of those engaged in industrial occupations in Ontario have already achieved an eight-hour day. These more reasonable hours are not, however, confined to any particular class of workers but have been secured indiscriminately as the result in some instances of bitter indus-

trial warfare. The hours of the other fifty per cent. of the workers vary all the way from nine to sixteen hours per day.

Perhaps no other remedial legislation could be suggested which would more effectively stabilize opinion among the industrial classes than the giving of the eight-hour day to the remaining one-half of our workers who have not yet secured it. The very fact that some work for eight hours only, while others are forced to toil from nine to sixteen hours per day, is sufficient to unsettle the whole industrial order. To meet this condition the Liberal Party, if returned to office, proposes to take steps towards establishing in industrial occupations a uniform scale as to hours of employment, at once moderate and beneficial, and of as general application as possible.

The benefits to be derived from such legislation have been abundantly proven in other countries, where experience has shown that the reduction to reasonable hours does not necessarily involve any consequent reduction in production. Much authority can be quoted in support of this proposition.

Ontario is far behind other countries in labor legislation, but even in Ontario there is some little law on the subject.

No child or woman can be employed in a factory or shop for more than ten hours per day or sixty hours per week, except on Saturdays and days preceding statutory holidays, when the hours may be from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

No person shall be employed in bake shops for more than twelve hours per day or sixty hours per week.

Railway employees are not permitted to work for more than six days of ten hours each in one week, while trainmen and dispatchers must be given six hours rest after sixteen consecutive hours of duty.

With the exception of the limitation of the hours for underground miners, this is the extent of the present Government's humanitarian interest in labour.

As the result of years of persistent agitation, the workers of Northern Ontario forced an eight-hour day for underground miners. The concession was wrung from an unwilling Conservative Administration as a political necessity after the measure had been repeatedly moved on the floor of the House by the Liberal members, the Government setting aside an Opposition bill in order to pass its own.

Prior to that time, men had been toiling in the dark and damp and rock dust of the underground workings for eight, nine, ten, and even longer hours. The health of the workers was seriously affected, and great dissatisfaction existed among the miners by the haphazard and disorganized condition of affairs. On the first of January, 1914, the eight-hour day became the universal rule in underground workings. The benefit to the men, and to the industry as well, was marked and immediate. The miners settled down contentedly to regular work, and it is worthy of note that no general strike has taken place in the silver or gold regions during the five years in which the law has been in operation, until the present summer when the question of recognition of the Union caused trouble. The law is now recognized by all classes in the North as of inestimable benefit to both employers and employees.

Men and women cannot possibly live normal lives, or reach their highest development in citizenship, unless they are given sufficient time for rest and recreation. Man does not live by wages alone. The Liberal policy of the limitation of the hours of labour is reasonable, and its uniform application will give to industry a human touch of inestimable value to all.

The Factories Act.

The Liberals in the Legislature have repeatedly pressed for a revision of the Factories Act, which is much out of date. Effective protection of workers, particularly of women and children, is, however, more a matter of administration than that of the passing of laws. The Government has demonstrated its lack of interest in the welfare of the workers. The Liberal Party has remained consistent in its humanitarian policies in declaring for:

"Better inspection of factories and other industries where men and women are employed, particularly with a view to the protection of women, and a more rigid enforcement of child-labour regulations."

The Convention declared itself in favour of "insurance against sickness and unemployment, based on the principles of English law", for "mothers' pensions", and for the provision of "medical attendance and necessaries whenever required for the proper birth and upbringing of children."

The Right to Organize.

It is now nearly one hundred years since the British Parliament enacted legislation legalizing trades unions. Since that time a tremendous struggle has been waged by the workers to enforce what to-day is recognized as a fundamental human right—"the right", as the Commission on Industrial Relations phrased it, "of workers to group themselves together for the purpose of selling their labour power collectively to their employer, instead of making individual agreements."

The Liberal Party has consistently proved its friendship for organized labour. Its leaders believe in industrial organization. Trades unionism is not an experiment; it is the product of centuries of human experience. According to the Labour Department returns there were 246,000 organized workers in Canada in the year 1918, and that number has since been greatly increased. There are over a million industrial workers in Canada, and over twenty-five per cent. are organized. That the Liberal Party is in accord with this important section of the community is indicated by the Toronto Liberal Convention which declared its stand for:

"A law prohibiting employers from compelling their employees to enter into agreements not to enter into labour unions, and a recognition of the principle of collective bargaining."

The Liberal Party has recognized that labour is something more than a mere commodity, and that the time has gone by when capital can safely continue to appropriate to itself the sole control of industry. The workers and the community must be called to the councils of industry.

With this in mind, the Liberal Party has declared in favour of councils of all classes in industry, both in the individual establishments, in particular trades, and for the Province at large.

Should the Liberal Party assume office an era of democratic interest in Labour and its problems will be inaugurated.

