

LABOR AND CAPITAL.

What the Liberal Government Has Done To Draw Closer Together These Great Nation Building Factors.

Facts Which Will Strongly Appeal to the Working Classes of St. John.

In 1886 the Conservative government of the day appointed a Commission to deal with the subject of the relation of labour and capital. That commission took about three years to prepare a report, which cost the country over \$81,000. The chief recommendation contained in the report was that a Bureau of Labour for the Dominion was urgently needed. An act was passed establishing a Bureau of Labour statistics just previous to the election of 1891, but after the return of the Conservative party to power in that year, nothing more was heard of the act, and no Bureau of Labour was established.

ABOLITION OF SWEATING SYSTEM. Prior to the election of 1896, the Conservative party appointed a commissioner, A. W. Wright, to investigate the alleged existence of the sweating system in Canada. This commissioner reported that there did not appear to be any sweating system in the Dominion.

When the Liberal government assumed office in 1896 they had every evidence to believe that the sweating system had gained a very strong foothold in the Dominion. The present Minister of Labour (Sir William Mulock) appointed a special commissioner, W. L. Mackenzie King, the present Deputy Minister of Labour, to investigate this matter, and he reported to the government that in practically all of the clothing contracts which had been executed for the government during the preceding ten years, a system of sub-contracting had prevailed, which had resulted in sweating in its extreme forms. It was this report which led the government to adopt its anti-sweating regulation and fair wage policy, which it has since carried out.

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR was established in 1900 without any special recommendation from a commission, and has since that time become a permanent department. The total cost of the department, for three years, including the salaries of all its officers, the printing, binding, and distributing of the Labour Gazette, the travelling expenses of fair wage officers, expenses of the conciliator engaged in the settlement of strikes, and all other departmental expenses, have come to about what the Conservative government paid for its commission on capital and labour, which extended its work over a similar period of time, and from the work of which there have been absolutely no results.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURE. Labour Department expenditure, 1900-01, \$28,460.11; 1900-02, 801.67; 1901-02, 32,213.63; 1902-03, 1,061.13.

THE GROWTH OF THE DEPARTMENT. Since its creation the department has grown continually, and has become an increasingly useful, not only to the workmen of Canada, but to the country in general. The department, in addition to a staff of experts resident at Ottawa, has a correspondent in practically every city of the Dominion, and by means of correspondence, and in other ways the government is kept informed of the condition of labour in all parts.

THE LABOUR GAZETTE. The Labour Gazette is published monthly by the department. It relates to matters of interest to workmen and their employers, and to persons who are interested in the industrial development of the Dominion, and in other ways the separate numbers of the Gazette are bound in volume form. Already four volumes, embracing nearly 4,000 pages in all, have been issued.

In the pages of these numbers will be found an account of the important industrial events of the Dominion, and the relation of the labour to the industry; the substance of all legislation passed by the several provinces of the Dominion in the interests of labour; a record of the nature, causes and results, as well as the principal features of all the important strikes and lock-outs in the Dominion; statistical tables giving the current rates of wages in the several trades for the principal localities from the Atlantic to the Pacific; similar tables giving a comparison of the cost of living in different parts of Canada; special articles on the several industries of Canada; a codification of the existing laws for the protection of persons in factories, stores, mines, on railways, etc.; statistical tables showing the number of accidents sustained by workmen during their employment, causes, results, etc.; the extent of the trade union movement in Canada, the number of labour unions, localities where situated, date of formation, etc., etc.

THE CHIEF LEGAL DECISIONS in the principal courts of the Dominion, which in any way affect labour, are also published, and labour reports from all parts of the world reviewed.

Most of the information has been collected for the first time, the tables, for example, as to strikes and lock-outs in the Dominion, the rates of wages, industrial accidents, trade union organizations, etc., never having been prepared at any previous time.

The circulation of the Labour Gazette has grown steadily ever since the first number was issued, and at the present time between 10,000 and 12,000 copies are mailed regularly each month to regular subscribers, secretaries of labour organizations, public libraries, etc.

THE FAIR WAGE POLICY. A most important part of the department's work has been the securing to workmen engaged on all public contract work for the Dominion government of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. The system of sub-contracting, on public work, which was in vogue before the present Liberal administration took office had gone to such an extent as to give the sweating system a strong hold in Canada.

This evil has been virtually swept out of existence so far as government work is concerned, in consequence of the rigorous measures for the protection of the working classes, which have been introduced into all government contracts by the present government. In contracts, for example, for the uniforms of soldiers and post office letter carriers, conditions are now inserted requiring that the work shall be performed in places that comply with sanitary regulations, that not less than a certain wage shall be paid to any of the men or women engaged upon the work, and that the hours of labour shall not be excessive. Before contractors received a contract they are obliged to furnish a statement of the rates of wages and hours of labour, and the conditions governing the employment of those to be engaged on the work which is being done for the government, and these conditions are submitted to the Department of Labour for its approval.

If necessary a fair wage officer of the department is sent to inspect the premises and report as to what would be a fair rate of wages, and a fair number of hours work. Not only are the workers in the clothing trades protected, but the fair wages policy of the government is extended to all branches of its work.

ITS INFLUENCES SPREAD FAR AND DEEP. For example, in contracts given out by the Public Works Department for the building of public buildings, such as post offices, court houses, custom houses, armories, and the like, fair wages schedules are inserted along with other conditions for the protection of labour to be employed on such work. These schedules are prepared by fair wage officers of the Department of Labour, and they specify in plain language what minimum rate of wages shall be paid to the several classes of labour engaged upon the work, and the hours to be worked. The schedule is published in the Labour Gazette, so that the workmen, as well as the public generally, know what are the wages to which they are entitled. In the event of these rates not being paid, and the matter being brought to the attention of the government, the fair wage officers of the Department of Labour make investigations, and contractors are required to comply with the terms of their contract.

SEVENTY CLAIMS INVESTIGATED. The Department of Labour, since its creation, has investigated some 70 or more claims of workmen for wages alleged to be due in accordance with the schedules inserted in the contracts given to their employers, and in a large number of cases has compelled the payment by contractors of amounts to which the men were entitled, but which they might otherwise not have received. Where contractors have refused to make payment, the department which has awarded the contract has not hesitated to sue to the courts to enforce its award.

An indirect effect of this work of the department has been that the example has been largely followed by some of the provincial governments, municipalities, and councils throughout the several provinces of the Dominion, with the result that a general movement has been stimulated, which has in view the securing to workers engaged on public contract work a just reward for their labour, as well as its performance under proper conditions as to hours, sanitation, and the like.

SETTLEMENT OF STRIKES AND LOCK-OUTS. Under the provisions of the Conciliation Act the department may appoint a conciliator to endeavour to effect a settlement of industrial disputes wherever appeal is made to the department by either of the parties interested. As a consequence of this legislation, and the effective administration of the act by the department, some of the largest and most threatening strikes of the Dominion have been settled through its intervention. The numbers affected in most of the industries and establishments have been large, between 15,000 and 20,000 employees in all having been immediately affected. Among some of the most important settlements may be mentioned the following:

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 at the Canadian Tool Works, Dundas, Ont., January, 1901, involving 55 employees.

A strike of employees of the Laurentide Pulp Co., Grand Mere, April, 1901, involving 800 employees.

A threatened strike of the miners employed 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 and sympathetic strikes at Halifax, N.S., in April, 1902, involving in the neighbourhood of 1,200 employees, which had the effect of virtually paralyzing business in the harbour of Halifax in the week previous to its settlement. All the steaming 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 St. Croix Cotton Mills, Miramichi, N.B., during April of the present year, involving 900 men.

A strike of the employees of the Hawkesbury Lumber Company, at Hawkesbury, Ont., during April, involving 250 employees.

A lock-out of carpenters at Calgary, Alta., which was settled on the 18th of July, which lock-out was commenced at the beginning of the month of June.

A strike of carpenters at Winnipeg, Man., settled during October, 1903. This strike was seriously affecting building operations in Winnipeg.

A strike of the employees of the Dominion Iron and Steel Co., at Sydney, N.S., in July, 1904. Between 1,200 and 1,500 workers were affected by this strike.

In addition to the benefit which these settlements have conferred upon the workers involved in the dispute, it is also fair to estimate that the saving to capital in consequence of the settlements has amounted to thousands of dollars.

OTHER WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT. The Department of Labour was instrumental in gathering a large number of opinions from labour organizations all over the Dominion, and also from other parties with reference to compulsory arbitration. The general consensus of these opinions was adverse to the adoption of a compulsory arbitration measure, but there was a strong sentiment in favour of a measure which would lead to the event of compulsory arbitration, making a provision for a compulsory investigation by an investigating board, this board to have power to examine witnesses under oath, and to compel the production of books and other documents as required. This measure is now law.

ALLEN LABOUR LAW. The first Alien Labour Law enacted in Canada was passed by the Liberal administration. As first enacted, it required the consent of the attorney-general of the Dominion before any action could be brought for a violation of its provisions. In response to a general feeling on the part of workmen that the law should be amended in such a way as to place its enforcement in their hands, the law was amended, enabling any person to bring an action of his own accord, where he believed that the provisions of the act had been violated, and in order that no loss might be sustained by the person bringing the action where it was rightly brought, a provision of the act specified that as much as fifty per cent. of the fines imposed on conviction might be paid to the original informant. Several cases have already arisen under this law, and in all cases where a conviction has been obtained one-half of the penalty has gone to the informer. For example, in the case of Rex v. Geeser, where a miner in the employ of the Le Roi Mining Co., at Rossland, B.C., had information that the law had been violated in two cases, fines were imposed to the amount of \$500 in the one case, and \$50 in the other. The miner who laid the information has received from the department a cheque for \$275, being half of the penalties, to which he was entitled under the act.

COMMISSIONERS TO INVESTIGATE LABOUR MATTERS. An important labour commission to investigate the nature and causes of industrial disputes was appointed under the British Columbia act in the spring of 1903. The Department of Labour has since distributed free of charge the report of this commission, and undertaken the printing and publishing of the evidence as well.

A commission was appointed under the Department of Labour in the spring of this year to inquire into the employment of aliens by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway Co. Also a commission to inquire into the fraudulent practices of employment agencies in Montreal in bringing large numbers of Italian immigrants to Canada to compete with Canadian labour.

The reports of these commissions are being printed, and will be published with the evidence by the department. Their effect has been to draw public attention to many important abuses, and in large measure to put a stop to them for the future.

A commission was appointed during the early years of the present Liberal administration to inquire into cases of distress and suffering by workmen in connection with the building of the St. John's Railway. As a result of the investigation made by this commission and its report, a law was passed in 1899 known as the Public Works Health Act, making provisions for the protection of the health of workmen engaged on public work, or work aided by public funds in outlying districts. A special officer has been appointed to see to the effective carrying out of the provisions of this act.

TAX ON CHINESE. One of the most serious problems with which labour in Canada, and more particularly the labour of the west, has been confronted, is the severe competition with which it was threatened as a result of Mongolian immigration. In order that the interests of the working classes might be protected against harm in this connection, the government appointed a royal commission to investigate fully the past results and possible future effects of this immigration, and on the basis of a report submitted by the commission enacted legislation which is calculated to have the effect of removing any serious harm to Canadian labour from this source. A poll tax of \$500 has been placed upon all Chinese entering the Dominion, and other measures to render effective the restriction of their numbers have also been passed.

PREVENTION OF RAILWAY ACCIDENTS. One of the important duties placed upon the Railway Commission, established in 1903, is to examine into the causes of accidents on railways, and to enforce regulations which will prevent accidents occurring. A special officer has been appointed in connection with this work. The Liberal government has also

passed important amendments to the Railway Acts, framed particularly with a view to procuring greater safety to employees.

ISLAND WHERE WOMEN SHUN MEN. (Kansas City Journal.) On a small island in the Greek Archipelago there is a colony which is composed entirely of women. It is a sort of religious order which considers it a disgrace for one of its members to even look at a man. When a fisherman approaches the island the women pull the grey covers of their cassocks over their heads and turn their backs. Provisions are never imported, as the women, strict vegetarians, grow their own products. Only the matron, who is annually elected head of the colony, is ever allowed to leave the island. The others remain there all their lives, taking their turn at tilling the soil, washing and housekeeping.

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