

Things Worth
Reading.

The Wages Board Fraud, Down
Tools Policy. Solidarity Wins.
Ireland at the International.

IRISH OPINION

The VOICE OF LABOUR

EDITED BY CATHAL OSHANNON.

NEW SERIES. No. 60.

JANUARY 18, 1919.

ONE PENNY

James Ian MacPherson.

James is a person whose clan name renders it unnecessary for him to produce any kind of reputable ancestry. Edinburgh University sent him out into the world to prey upon it as a journalist and hack politician in the employment of the Marconi-fed party funds of the Liberal Party. For the Great Historic Nuisance, now consigned to the lumber-room by the British electors, he fought two forlorn hopes, and was rewarded by being given a seat for Ross and Cromarty, where the faith of the God-fearing wee Frees in Liberal promises of the Land for the People is undiminished.

James, like David Lloyd George, in his early days, has no territorial pull and no party organisation behind him. A glib tongue in English or Gaelic, keen wits, and a conscience educated into elasticity on the Shorter Catechism are his sole title to the patronage of the Imperialists, who, having found him a ready tool at the War Office, have made him Viscount French's office-boy at Dublin Castle.

Space forbids enumeration of the pledges that MacPherson has given and violated. He has been responsible for the muddled state of the Recruiting Department, has persecuted the conscientious objectors, and, although a Radical, has shown himself ready to do any kind of dirty work to enforce Conscription. Perhaps that Bishop who wants two cathedrals in his diocese, and wishes to misapply the Conscription Funds for that purpose, will read the signs of the times.

Mention of dirty work reminds us that James Ian MacPherson is in favour of making sexual immorality safe and hygienic. He is one of those

who were responsible for the notorious 40D Regulation, now withdrawn, by which, on complaint of any male, a woman might be arrested on a charge of having intercourse, while suffering with venereal disease, with members of His Majesty's forces. To clear herself from such a charge, it was necessary for the woman to submit to a personal examination of a revolting kind. This Regulation was the law of the land for several months, but was withdrawn just before the elections. It may be re-enforced at any time, and James is the boy to do it.

When good people in England protested against the toleration of brothels behind the lines in France, James Ian said "he was not at all sure that it was such a bad thing to have a certain house where women were registered, and kept clean." As we commented at the time, "the scientific impossibility of 'keeping clean' will be realised when it is known that fifteen women receive at one of these houses, three hundred and sixty men in one day!"

The appointment of this degenerate son of the Gael to his present office is a deliberate and calculated insult to Ireland. No doubt he is coming into congenial circles in coming among the Castle crowd, whose patron saint or patron devil is the Ganymedian Primate Stone, whose Palace at Leixlip was both inn and brothel for the garrison clique of his day.

It will be interesting to observe the behaviour of those Erastian disciples of Ciaphas, Abp. Bernard, Abp. Crozier and Moderator McGranahan, towards this apostle and propagandist of the art of making the half-world safe for democracy.

Side-lights

on the Housing Question

The feudal landlord is saddled with most of the blame for the horrible housing of the people. He does deserve hanging—but there are others. "Forward" gives us a few pointers.

Cement Trust.

Two companies control the production and distribution of 95 per cent. of British cement. They play with prices as they wish. In 1910 the ton of cement cost 20s. 6d. The new price is £3 8s. 6d. No contracts are made, and orders are booked subject to the price ruling at the date of delivery.

Tile Trust.

The National Tile Association used to sell tiles at 42s. 6d. per 1,000 in 1914. The last price of £4 8s. 9d. per thousand has now been advanced by 25 per cent.

Iron Trust.

The National Light Castings Association formed about 1910 rules the building trade with a rod of Iron. Kitchen ranges then cost 36s. 9d. Now the pirates charge £5 18s. Lavatories have risen from 18s. 6d. to £3 0s. 3d. Guttering was 6½d. per yard, now it is 2s. 6d. and so forth.

Other Trusts.

The Wallpaper Manufacturers Association has raised prices by 400 per cent. The Glass Trust has done likewise with sheet glass. Lime which sold for 15s. 6d. in 1910, now costs 48s. a ton.

Not Due to War.

And dear Henry Dubb, these increases are not due to the turbulence of Bolshevik workmen nor to war scarcity nor to anything except combination among the Boss class.

THE VOICE OF LABOUR

Edited by GATHAL O'SHANNON.

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Republic, Not Colony.

(As passed by Censor.)

With much of the challenging article Patrick Thompson contributed to "The Voice" last week we are in hearty agreement, and to some of it we are just as heartily opposed, and we think our contributor will find in both connections the workers will side with us rather than with him. He is right in his conclusion that the demands not only of Irish Labour but of the Irish nation must be made upon the peoples of the Allied countries and that this and the organisation of Irish Labour groups within Great Britain is eminently desirable. We have long since come to the same conclusion, and indeed something in this direction is already being done by the Irish Labour Party. But we are not satisfied that all that might be done is being done, and we would urge strongly that Thompson's proposal should be taken up and worked for all it is worth. "The Voice" has a growing circulation amongst Irish workers in Scotland and England, and many of them—and indeed to our own knowledge many non-Irish workers in the British Labour movement as well—will, we feel sure, lend a helping hand in this organisation of propaganda. But it must be taken up at home and it must be worked through the Irish Labour Party; and we look to the National Executive and its International Committee to begin now, even if only upon a small scale, an extension of its present activities. At the same time we are not inclined to believe that it is only through propaganda abroad that influence can be brought to bear upon the Governments. Propaganda and agitation abroad by all means, and the more of it the better, not only in Great Britain but as well in America, where Labour (not least the Labour organisations and groups most in accord with Labour in Ireland) is taking part with excellent effect in the present whirlwind campaign on behalf of Ireland, and in France where there is good ground which ought not to be left fallow. But this is not sufficient. Above and before all is action at home in Ireland. Properly directed and relentlessly carried out action in Ireland, especially if we create the foreign agencies for its interpretation and justification abroad, will work the wonders which appear possible to our contributor. We believe

for one thing that the Irish people can make all government except by themselves impossible in Ireland for long enough to satisfy even an exacting critic like Thompson, and if they do that we shall be pleased with the results even if they do not satisfy all the yearnings of our soul of a young man in a hurry. When we get to that stage we shall follow the gleam further.

Unlike our contributor, we do not believe that what he calls social-emancipation can be gained more quickly or more easily by accepting some kind of self-government within the British Empire. If we did we should advise the workers in Ireland to scrap the Irish Labour Party and get into the British movement at once. Of nothing in many strong convictions which we hold are we more convinced than that until the national question is settled between Ireland and Great Britain we cannot have that unity of the working class in Ireland, North and South, which is a necessary preliminary step to the social reconstruction towards which we work. Empires cannot afford social revolutions. That is why the Russian Empire and the German Empire have gone, and that is why the Allied Governments are warring against both Germans and Russians. British Capitalism would prefer a capitalist Republic in Ireland before it would permit a social revolution in Great Britain or in any self-governing country within the Empire, and we shall have radical social changes in Ireland before our comrades have them in Great Britain. With us it is profound social change or nothing; and we shall oppose with what help we can muster any and every attempt to graft anything less on to the Labour movement in Ireland. If Thompson wants reforms, well and good. He can get them through the House of Commons, through the County Councils, through the Urban and City Councils. But if he wants that transformation of society which is commonly called Socialist he will get it only through social action; and Parliamentary action and degrees of self-government are neither the shortest nor the best roads to that, if indeed they lead towards it at all. No, we hope the Greek Kalends will be reached before Irish Labour declares for Dominion status. Irish Labour never declared for Home Rule and never declared against it. It just didn't bother its head about it, and yet the bogey of Home Rule even now, when it is dead, divides many Ulster workers from their fellows in Ireland. Irish Labour need declare neither for nor against Dominion status, and if it is wise it will not make an ass of itself drawing up paper constitutions until it has the power to rule and govern. But Irish Labour has declared itself opposed to imperialism, capitalism and militarism, and in favour of republican democracy in both politics and industry; and we are greatly mistaken if it will ever declare for less. If it ever needs a war-cry it has got one that will take some beating, in the Soviet or Workmen's Republic.

If our friend will put Dominion status to the test at the Drogheda Congress we are sure he will get an emphatic declaration against it, even though we know that many who have deserted Home Rule and recently voted Sinn Fein would plump for it because they care no more for a Republic than they do for a Soviet. At the same time we welcome his criticism, for we hope the time is not yet when criticism and difference of opinion are anathema in Labour in Ireland. If we reject our friend's suggestion it is because we disagree with it, not because we would have it appear that he has not right to make it. Every man has his right to his opinion, and in the Labour Party a Unionist

working-man has as much right to hold and express his opinions as we have who are Workers' Republicans. But that does not alter the fact that, taken on the whole, the workers of Ireland have shown no desire whatever for Dominion status, and we will wager a week's salary that if put to them they will reject it for that essentially republican democracy in industry and politics to which their delegates declared the adherence of the Irish Labour Party last November. Not that the Irish workers or the Irish Labour Party are committed to a mere formula of words but rather that they want the essence, the thing. And without any shadow of doubt the essence of the thing Irish Labour is out for is republicanism.

IRISH WOMEN WORKERS' UNION.

The annual meeting of the I.W.W.U. will be held in the Pillar Room of the Mansion House on Wednesday, January 29th, at 8 p.m. At the close of the business proceedings a grand concert will be given.

A conference of representatives of the various Trade Board industries in Dublin will be held at Denmark House on Tuesday, the 14th inst., at 8 p.m. The chief object of the Conference is to set on foot a movement to urge the Trade Boards to fix the minimum rates of wages on the basis of a working-week of 44 hours for adults and 36 hours for learners. The difficulty of forcing down the average rate of working hours is seriously increased by the extremely bad precedent set by the Trade Boards.

A meeting to promote the organisation of Domestic Workers will be held in the Central Hall, Exchequer Street, on Wednesday, January 22nd, at 8 p.m.

A large meeting of the women in the Printing and Allied Trades was held on January 9th, when a proposal to work for the abolition of piece-rates in these industries was carried by a large majority. A striking and hopeful feature of this meeting was the fact that a number of workers to whom the change to time rates would (even under the new scale now under consideration) mean a loss of 5s. or 6s. weekly, voted in favour of time rates, because of their realisation that the large mass of the workers would benefit by the change.

The I.W.W.U. secured payment for the Christmas holidays from a number of firms, and are planning a determined all-round campaign for longer holidays and payment of holidays.

DENMARK HOUSE LENDING LIBRARY.

It has been arranged that books can be borrowed from the Denmark House Lending Library on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings between 6 and 10 p.m. The Librarian can always be seen on Tuesday evenings.

The Library will be enriched this week by a number of books on "Co-operation," loans or gifts from Plunkett House and the Co-operative Union, Manchester. Amongst those are:—"A History of Rahaline," "Co-Partnership in Housing," "Future of Our Agriculture" (Wolff), and "Co-operation in Industry" (C. R. Fay).

The Workers' Republic. The great only appear great because we are on our knees: LET US RISE.

WORKERS' EDUCATION IN CORK.

By Corcaigh.

Your announcement of the starting of real democratic economic lectures by the Dublin Working-class Education Conference ought to stimulate Cork workers into action. Some time ago there was a great deal of talk among the Transport workers here about starting lectures and discussions at Camden quay or elsewhere; a certain professor was approached, and at once promised co-operation, and offered a collection of books and pamphlets. Nothing happened. I suppose the election fever prevented any action. It is about time that something was done.

In Cork the problem ought to be even easier than in Dublin, for the Corporation gives an annual grant of £150 for the sole purpose of education of Cork workers, and this grant is entirely under the control of the workers themselves. I venture to say that 75 per cent. of Cork workers are quite unaware of this fact. For two years weekly "Economic Conferences" were held by two University Professors with the co-operation of the workers, the audience numbering about 400 towards the end. These Conferences were eminently successful in awakening the democracy, in making the workers think, in denouncing local capitalism, in training workmen to discuss and debate. The best tribute to this voluntary effort was the secret and unfortunately successful opposition of some capitalists and University authorities. After two years' propaganda and work, the Corporation was forced to give a grant. And at once the Conferences ceased!

The dodge was simple. Instead of being managed (and even financed) by two professors, a joint committee suddenly emerged from nowhere. It consisted of Four College representatives and Four workers. It sounds all right on paper, but I should like to hear the verdict of Cork democracy on its Four "representatives." For what happened next? The Four workers on the Committee made no attempt whatever to make the University College contribute another £150 (or even a penny) to the education of the workers of Cork. The people, the city ratepayers, pay, and the University takes the credit! Yet this same University, besides educating doctors and civil servants, can invest money in English War Bonds. The modesty of Cork workers prevented them from asking for a single educational facility from the local University. Worse happened. The Four workers' representatives at once agreed to replace the Economic Conferences—which dealt with such subjects as Poverty in Cork, Outdoor Relief, Insurance Act, Strikes, Minimum Wage, Organisation of Women Workers, Socialism, Syndicalism—by Lectures on the Moon, the Geology of the Lee, and Pre-Christian Archaeology! The Cork workers evidently preferred to run a Literary and Scientific Society! There are no nasty industrial disputes, on the Moon, the discussion of

local Flints and Fossils could not possibly lead to any dangerous references to local flesh and blood, and pre-Christian Archaeology avoided any indelicate allusion to post-Christian capitalism. Besides taking these very drastic measures for the education of their fellow-workers, our four democratic representatives arranged for a bookish pedantic series of "tutorial classes" on the law of decreasing returns and similar jargon, all specially calculated to cure insomnia at one sitting.

And there is the end of the great experiment in working-class education! Is it not high time for Cork democracy to examine the question and to put an end to this ludicrous farce? Who are responsible? The Trades Council first, for it was the Council which appointed the four delegates. And next the four delegates themselves, who have allowed themselves to be hoodwinked and bamboozled. So extraordinary was their action that the two men primarily responsible for the whole scheme, Professors Smiddy and Rahilly, finding themselves deserted by the workers, at once resigned. So ever since summer, 1916, there are four workers and two University men (the President and the Registrar) running the show. Labour cannot complain that they have not full control. There is absolutely no excuse for the way things have been managed.

The Trades and Labour Council should, as soon as possible, thresh out the whole question, and insist on appointing delegates who will not be cajoled into apathy and submission. To put it in plain words, the Trades Council of Cork has £150 a year at its disposal for educating the workers of Cork. Are they satisfied with what has been achieved with this for the past two years? Who were right—the two professors who showed their opinion of the camouflage by instantly resigning? Or the four workers who continued basking in the smiles of Sir Bertram Windle? The workers of Cork should make up their minds for themselves.

The Dublin Working-Class Education Conference, without any subsidy of £150, is at once starting two series of manly democratic lectures on the "Economics of Capitalism" and on "Irish Industrial History." That rings true! None of your capitalists' slop about archaeology and astronomy. None of your mawkish pedantry distilled out of books written by goody-goody middle-class economists. Is Cork going to wake up? If we mean business we should bring the matter up at the Trades Council early in January, discuss the whole policy of workers' education, appoint four men who know what we want and will insist on our getting it, and publicly call upon the University to contribute £150 just as the Corporation does. With the right men, the right ideas, and £300 a year, we could do a tremendous lot to educate the Cork workers. Besides real live lectures following a regular course, we could invite down to

Cork men and women who are working and thinking for Labour elsewhere.

CORCAIGH.

[Readers of "The Workers' Republic" will remember the excellent summaries of The Cork Economic Conferences published in Connolly's paper, and we have often wished that we had space in "The Voice" for a continuation of these or similar contributions. It is a standing shame that the unparalleled opportunities of the Cork workers are being frittered away so foolishly as our correspondent bears witness. Now that the whole story has got publicity, we are much mistaken in them if the men and women of Cork do not take steps to remedy this state of affairs. The importance of Cork in industrial Ireland and in the Labour movement, and the growing spirit of independence of the workers, promise much for the South if those who guide and control the movement will but have the vision to act at the psychological moment. We bespeak the active support of our Cork readers for this effort, and in the meantime if the University or the Trades Council has anything to say on the matter we shall be glad to open our columns to either or both of them. If the Dublin movement had the £150 which is at Cork's disposal we are certain that Dublin would have a Labour College to rival the best of the Labour schools or colleges in Great Britain, Europe, or America. We shall return again and often to this most essential work of the movement.—Ed. "V of L."]

IN DUBLIN.

THE EDUCATIONAL CLASSES.

The students enrolled now number over 100, and interest is keen. Cathal O'Shannon gave his introductory lecture last Sunday, on Irish Industrial History. The course outlined is full of interest. The classes begin promptly at 4 p.m., and finish promptly at 5.30. Next Sunday, J. MacDonnell gives the third lecture on "Economics—Labour"; and Cathal O'Shannon the second lecture on Irish Industrial History.

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION.

Classes in Co-operation will be held once a week, starting on Wednesday, 15th January, 1919, at 5 p.m., in the Co-operative Reference Library. The syllabus of the classes provides for three lectures on the theory, and twelve on the history of co-operation, and all who are interested in the subject are welcome to attend on sending their names to D. Coffey, Hon. Sec., 84 Merrion square. The classes will consist of a lecture of three-quarters of an hour, followed by a discussion on the subject of the lecture. The choice of Wednesday, at 5 p.m., for the class meeting, necessarily debar most workers from attending. We hope, however, that all classes of shop assistants who are free at that hour will take advantage of this opportunity to study a subject which appeals particularly to those interested in reconstructing the system of distribution.

LABOUR IN IRELAND

THE DOWN-TOOLS POLICY WINS IN INCHICORE.

What old trade unionists enthusiastically describe as one of the most remarkable demonstrations of solidarity in their experience of trades unionism was witnessed in the railway works, Inchicore, on Wednesday last, when over 2,000 workers downed tools as a protest against the action of the management in introducing what is known as gentlemen apprentices to the utter exclusion of the sons of the workers employed there.

The trouble, it may be said, originated last summer when a circular from the management was sent to the fathers of those boys whose names were down for apprenticeship to trades. There is, and has been for some time, a very large number of such applications from employes in all departments. The circular informed the fathers of the applicants that no apprentices would be taken on for another two years, and suggesting to them the advisability of seeking elsewhere for an opening for their children. The circular was discussed at most of the Union meetings at the time, and much speculation was indulged in as to whether the new order would also apply to the employment of gentlemen apprentices. When it is understood that the premium paid by the worker's son is only £5, while that of his richer rival reaches the third figure one can readily imagine the indignation of not only the parents, but the workers in general when a short time after the receipt of this circular a gentleman apprentice was introduced; nor can the workers be blamed if they arrived at the conclusion that the deciding factor in the appointment was the ability to pay the higher fee. Action was taken immediately. The new apprentice was removed, and the matter was considered as closed, and it was naturally concluded that the next appointment would be from the ranks of the workers. In this conclusion they had, however, reckoned without the management. The matter remained in abeyance until recently, when to the surprise of all another gentleman apprentice was again introduced. Meetings of the various Unions were immediately held, and it was unanimously decided to down tools at 11 o'clock next day as a protest against the arbitrary manner in which the management had treated them.

Sharp to the minute of 11 o'clock on Wednesday all work was suddenly suspended in the various shops. On this occasion the surprise was experienced by the other side. For the first time in the history of Inchicore the appearance of gaffers, foremen, managers, etc., failed to create the usual flutter in the ranks of their workers. Bereft for the time being of authority they passed unnoticed through files of workmen standing idly by their benches. Delegates from the various Unions participating in the protest were next invited to discuss their grievances with the under-manager. The latter, in the absence of the general manager, who had

gone to England the day before, undertook to have the new apprentice at once removed if the men would consent to resume work after dinner. This was agreed to, and normal conditions were resumed.

The workers very naturally felt much elated by their success, and on all sides the hope was expressed that the lesson of the power of combination and solidarity would not be lost on the various unions. Continued unanimity and mutual understanding would quickly dispose of existing grievances, local conditions of labour would as quickly improve, sectional strikes would be averted, the necessity for any such would disappear for ever. The policy of the One Big Union can be realised at least in principle if "an injury to one is the concern of all" be interpreted in its widest application. With the workers themselves remain the solution. Their destiny is in their own hands.

The Unions participating in the movement were the A.S.E., Transport Workers, N.U.R., and the Engineering and Shipbuilding Federation of Trades.

SOLIDARITY WINS AGAIN.

The members of the International Tailors' Union employed in a city factory were "changed over" from Government overcoats to civilian standard suits. As the piece work prices offered appeared to be too low to yield a living wage, the girls said they would try them for a week. "No Bloody trying here," said the Boss, "if you don't like the prices get out."

They Got!

The other workers hearing of the trouble told the boss that if the girls went, the whole staff must go, for "an injury to one is an injury to all." On Friday last the factory stopped. Next morning the managing director arrived, and the staff resumed on Monday last with a new agreement giving an increase on piece-rates and 25 per cent. on earnings with a guarantee that all war wages will be continued.

The Soviet.

The workers own workroom carried on by members of this union is prospering, but the Factory and Sanitary inspectors evidently inspired are harassing them with regulations nowhere else enforced.

Lavatory Structure.

The lavatory accommodation is being improved, because the workers having control of these conditions want the best. The sanitary authorities are tyrannically insisting on preposterous alterations beyond all reason.

Tolerated Nuisances.

The inspectors' notions of sanitation seem to be peculiar. We can tell them of one sweating den where the only lavatory is in a partitioned-off corner of the workroom where both sexes are engaged. Many tailoring workshops are in tenement houses, where only one water-closet is provided for workers and residents alike. There are several noxious privies which workers will not use on account of the excreta fluid and solid that covers the floors.

But these are attached to the workshops of private exploiters, and authority winks at them!

RAILWAY CLERKS' ASSOCIATION.

The annual general meeting of Cork Branch was held on 17th inst. at Desmond's Hotel, Mr. Maher (chairman) presiding over a very large attendance. In a brief address the chairman reviewed the work of the past year, and congratulated the members on the great work they had performed in bringing the branch to such a perfect state and to the admirable manner in which almost insuperable difficulties were surmounted. Trying as were the times through which they had passed the coming year promised greater trials and difficulties. They had now almost every man organised, and he urged on the members present to appreciate the gravity of the times before them and to prepare for same by electing the best men for the various positions so that they will be able to successfully deal with the drastic changes which are contemplated in the railway world.

The election was then proceeded with, and resulted in Mr. E. O'Mahony being elected chairman unanimously, as were also Messrs. McCarthy and Mackey as secretaries. The other positions being filled, Mr. O'Mahony was then moved to the chair. He thanked the members for the honour conferred on him that night, and promised to do his utmost in the future as in the past to further the interests and objects of the Association. He always took a deep interest in the trade union movement, and especially in the work of their own Association, which now occupied a foremost place among the trade unions of the world. They had now a membership of over 70,000, and occupied a strong financial standing. Dwelling on changes about to take place in the railway world, Mr. O'Mahony emphasised the fact that the railways would not again revert to private ownership. In pre-war days the wages bill of the railways of the United Kingdom was 47 millions, whereas it was now 152 millions, and no company or set of companies could bear this burden. When Nationalisation comes about we will not have to deal with railway directors out of touch with the staff, but with men fully conversant with the working of big concerns, and it will be for us to say what will be our conditions of work, etc.

As they were all aware our Association had put forward a completely new programme to meet the altered conditions, and it was for each and every member to do his part in the strenuous times ahead. Summing up, Mr. O'Mahony again thanked the members, and paid a striking tribute to the outgoing chairman, who suitably replied.

Lucan.

Arbitration in the woollen mills claim takes place on 18th inst.

Killenaule, Fethard and Tipperary (Gloving School) are the new Transport branches established by Eamonn Hayes.

The Wages Board Fraud.

Again, never in history had agriculture and industry been so profitable. The farmers and traders were making money, the banks were flourishing—everything looked well.—Lord Chancellor Campbell, Legal Assessor, Ulster Provisional Government.

He was not able to realise how a working man, with wife and children, could live under present conditions on less than the statutory rates fixed. The farmers said that they could not pay such wages and live, and if that be true—and its accuracy was challenged—then the prices for agricultural produce must, after careful inquiry, be raised to enable them to do so.—Sir T. W. Russell, Vice-President, Department of Agriculture.

Every single rate fixed for men and women is a starvation rate.—“Scottish Farm Servant” on the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board Rates.

It is a convention of the Press that some time or other the Editor will find space for a “puff” of the advertisers. We are going to puff the Agricultural Wages Board for Ireland, which recently advertised its order fixing minimum rates

At the head of this column we print the opinion of Sir T. W. Russell, that the workingman and his wife and children cannot live on less than the minimum rates fixed. Sir Thomas, whom the farmers ridicule as a “Scotch hotel-keeper,” should be a good judge of food values and their prices, and we should like to ask him if he considers that a workingman can live properly on 28s. 6d.

B. Seebom Rowntree, England's greatest authority on the cost of living, in his book, “The Human Needs of Labour,” written as recently as March, 1918, and corrected to the date of issue, a few months ago, estimates that a man with a wife and three children requires for the bare necessities of life, with no provision for amusement, holidays, religion or culture, not less than 44s. a week, and for single women, 25s. a week.

A Deadly Parallel.

Because the Scottish Wages Boards have fixed no higher rate than 40s. a week, and that for Border shepherds only, the official organ of the Scottish farm workers condemns the rates as “starvation rates.” We agree.

But if the Scottish rates are starvation rates, the Irish rates are murder rates. We are not going to indulge in rhetoric. We have drawn up a comparison of the new rates authorised in Scotland and Ireland. The facts are more telling than any argument.

MEN'S WAGES.

In Ireland: Group I., 28s. 6d.; Group II., 26s.; Group III., 23s. 6d.

In Scotland: Clyde and Forth, 38s.; Dumfries and Galloway, 33s.; North East Counties, 35s.

BOYS' WAGES—16 to 18 years.

In Ireland: Group I., 17s. 6d.; Group II., 15s. 6d.; Group III., 14s.

In Scotland:

Clyde and Forth, 24s.; Fife and Kinross, 16 to 17, 18s.; 17 to 18, 21s.; South West Highlands, 20s.

BOYS' WAGES—18 to 20 years.

In Ireland: Group I., 23s. 6d.; Group II., 23s. 6d.; Group III., 22s.

In Scotland. “Men,” 18 to 21 years:

Clyde and Forth, 36s.; Dumfries and Galloway, 33s.; North Eastern Counties, 30s.

FEMALE WORKERS—Over 18.

In Ireland: Group I., 16s. 6d.; Group II., 15s.; Group III., 13s.

In Scotland:

Clyde and Forth (over 17 years), 20s.; Border Counties, 20s.; South West Highlands, 3s. 6d. per day (21s. a week); byre-women and dairymaids, 25s. a week.

The first-mentioned Scottish districts are strictly comparable with Group I. in Ireland; the second with Group II., and the third with Group III. The Irish wages quoted are the highest cash rates in the schedule for the sixty-hour week. Lower cash wages are specified for the fifty-four-hour week.

The products of Irish and Scots farmers are largely sold in the same markets. In respect of transit costs the North-Eastern Counties farmer, for example, is no better off than the Co. Westmeath farmer. No wonder, then if we consider labour costs alone, Lord Chancellor Campbell is able to say: “Never in history had agriculture and farming been so profitable.” The difference in wages between Ireland and Scotland is a free gift which the Irish farm labourer pays directly into the bank account of the Irish farmer.

Irish farmers may say they cannot pay the miserable minima fixed by Mr. O'Connor. Sir T. W. Russell says if that is so, prices must be raised; in other words, the urban consumer must pay the wages of the rural worker, so that the farmer's profits may be kept intact.

Town-workers and rural workers have a common interest in preventing new imposts and the privateering taxation of the profiteer. Higher prices reduce the worth of wages. Let wages be raised, even if profits are reduced.

Some patriotic farmers are contemplating evasion of income tax. We present them with the suggestion that a well-paid rural population, making an effective demand for the townsman's products, and thereby stimulating the demand for food and raw materials, can be brought into existence by the farmers paying The Living Wage to their labourers. Money so paid will not fall into the British Treasury. Farmers will at last allow themselves the luxury of a conscience, and the nation will gain.

Otherwise—though it may shock Father Humphreys—we can only recommend to the labourers direct action through their trade unions. It is a sacred duty that men owe to their families to obtain a living wage. If employers will not grant it, no methods are immoral which obtain it.

ΛΙΟΒΑΙΝ ΝΑ ΝΣΑΕΘΕΑΛ.

Α ΌΙΑ ΡΑΟΙΗ ΕΙΠΟ,
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Α ΌΙΑ ΡΟΪΗ ΟΡΡΑΙΝΝ ΑΣΥΡ ΑΥ ΑΥ ΤΟΪΗ.
C. H.

ΣΑΟΙΗ Ϊ, Α ΤΪΞΕΑΡΝΑ.

Pride's Purge.

In 1648, Thomas Pride, a Cromwellian Colonel, brought a file of soldiers into the House of Commons, and cleared out the members who supported King Charles at the point of the sword. What a pity the English “Demobs” of to-day don't know history!

To Soldier Readers.

We regret we have no copies of the proclamation, “Why have you come to Mourmansk,” by N. Lenin and G. Tchitchevine. See last week's “Workers' Dreadnought.”

Lloyd George's “Greatest Enemy.”

The Allies in Siberia have revived the sale of vodka to stupefy and demoralise the people. The Bolsheviks have, in European Russia, not only continued to forbid its sale, but have destroyed all stock and distilleries.

Ireland and Stockholm Conference.

Resume of the statement sent to the Stockholm Committee by the Committee of "Friends of Irish Freedom," established on 7th March, 1916, by the Irish-American Congress.

A.—Ireland's Right to Self-Government.

The Dublin Insurrection of 1916 has drawn the attention of Europe to the situation in Ireland. The Irish Republic was then proclaimed by the Provisional Government. This rising was bloodily suppressed. It makes one more link in a long series of fights the Irish people have put up since the 16th century. The most elementary justice requires that Ireland's voice be heard at the Peace Conference. The Irish have the same right to Freedom as the Poles, the Finns, or the Belgians.

B.—The Claims of the Irish People.

The objective of their efforts is complete separation from England and the setting up of an independent state, republican in character. This has always been the claim of those who fought for Ireland. It has been reiterated by the National Congress of the Irish of America held in New York on the 6th and 7th of March, 1916. It has been put forward in Ireland by the Sinn Fein Party, which certainly represents the majority of the Irish people, and again at a National assembly of 1,200 delegates called by Count Plunkett on 19th April, 1917.

C.—Possibility of Realising these Aspirations.

If England is not beaten (in the war) Ireland will not be completely freed. Ireland will then have to be content with less on condition, however, that any provisional settlement will lay the foundation for general development of resources which would be of advantage to the Irish people. The Home Rule Bill as such a basis is out of the question. It was disregarded, for instance, by the General Council of County Councils (which is more representative of Irish public opinion than the political parties of the country) at its meeting in the spring of 1917. The latter protested against partition of Ireland and declared instead for a courageous measure of fiscal and legislative autonomy, with an Irish army and navy, control of harbours, and fiscal protection for home industries. The Irish in America, sympathetic to the Entente Powers, have also adopted this programme, which constitutes the minimum Irish claim capable of realisation.

D.—The Irish Question is International in Character.

Count Plunkett's Congress in 1917 and the demonstration held by Irish organisations in America on 23rd December, 1916, have clearly stated the demand of the Irish people for representation at the Peace Conference. It is probable, however, that arguments of international law will be used against this claim because there is no Irish Government. In any event, it is important that the Irish case should be part of the Peace Conference programme. Recognition of the Irish Nation, with all its logical consequences, is an essential element in the Irish claim for right and liberty. Ire-

land does not admit that her case is a mere domestic question for England, to be solved in a one-sided manner in the interest of British Imperialism, no more than the problem of the Papacy is a domestic issue for Italy, for this would be a contradiction of the principle of equality among nations and would sanction the conquest of Ireland.

E.—Ireland Appeals to International Socialism.

International Socialism is a powerful medium for upholding the idea of justice in the relations between peoples. No people has had to suffer like Ireland. Therefore it is the duty of the Stockholm Conference to raise its voice on behalf of the Irish people and to secure that the Irish question be part of the programme of the Peace Conference.

In addition to above statement by Irish Nationalists, declarations in favour of Irish Independence were received by the Committee at Stockholm from the Socialist Party of Serbia, the Social Democrats of Germany, and Australian Socialists. The B.S.P. of Great Britain also demanded for Ireland, in common with India, Egypt and Algeria, the right of deciding their own destiny.

[It is difficult to say whether this resume correctly summarises the statement put forward by the Friends of Irish Freedom, and we should be obliged if any of our American readers would send us a copy of the full statement. We are not at all in agreement with the position as set forth in the third paragraph above, and have no recollection that the General Council of County Councils or any such body took up in 1917 the attitude here attributed to it; but it is possible that an error in translation from the original English to the French of "Stockholm" has occurred, although this is not characteristic of the secretariat of the International Socialist Bureau.—Ed., "V. of L."]

Irish Ores Boycotted.

The pressure for higher wages for the dockers engaged loading iron ore at Belfast and for the miners employed by the Antrim Iron Ore Co. has drawn attention to the practical boycott of Irish ores at Middlesborough. The Government is paying to the ore firms of Northampton a bonus of 26s. per ton of pig-iron, but refuse to make any such payment to the Antrim Company. The Northampton ore is only 30 per cent. metallic, while the Antrim ore is 46 per cent. The effect of the bonus is to give the English mining companies a subsidy 8s. 8d. per ton of ore.

This enables them to cut out the Antrim Co. in the open market, while, of course, the Middlesborough merchants and smelters are heavily interested in the new schemes for the exploitation of the mineral resources of England. The disadvantage under which the Irish company suffers keeps the ore lading docker in Belfast Harbour at the wage of 10½d. per ton, while other dockers get 1s. 3d. The miners are working for less than 6s. a day—the poorest paid miners in these islands.

JACK GARNEY'S "HAIL AND FAREWELL."

May be Going to Jail Soon in Wilson's America.

Dear Cathal,—Your Mooney edition was certainly one fine paper. I am sending you herewith an article on the work of Rena Mooney which should prove interesting reading. (This was not in the censored envelope.—Ed.)

I am glad that you are emulating the example set by James Connolly in advocating industrial unionism. It is absolutely necessary that at all times we should recognise the truths of biological science, and draw corresponding analogies. The laws of social evolution insist that only those who are able to adapt themselves to the environment of any given period shall survive in the "struggle for existence."

Previously, the worker set the pace. He had complete control of the tools he employed. Hence trade unionism was the logical and most workable form of organisation. To-day the position is reversed. With the advance of mechanical science, the skill of the craftsman has been displaced and to-day men are only required to guide the machine.

Under the new order of things, the chief concern of any industry is the machinery and not the worker. The worker has become subsidiary to the mechanical equipment. Therefore if we are to succeed in our propaganda, the worker must of dire necessity adapt himself to the new environment. He must recognise the change and completely revolutionise his former ideas as to the methods of economic organisation. Therefore I am more than pleased to see that the "Voice of Labour" is keeping pace with the new developments that are taking place in industry.

At this time I wish to extend to the readers of your paper my deepest sense of heartfelt gratitude for their kind and appreciative letters. In a few weeks I must stand trial for an offence under the Espionage Law. My crime is one of having remained true to the principles of the cause of international justice.

I have no hopes of being acquitted because my case has already been disposed of by a most reactionary press. Permit me to say that I shall endeavour to maintain the magnificent spirit that was so much in evidence in Dublin in 1913. If prison is my lot, then I have no fear for you, and I know that the great social change is coming.

Give my warmest regards to all at home. Ever yours,

JACK GARNEY,
Editor "Truth."

Duluth, Minnesota, United States of America.

Mourmansk Proclamation.

Is printed in the January "Freedom," which may be had from 127 Ossulton Street, London, N.W.1. Price 2½d.

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TRANSPORT NOTES:

Flour Mills Arbitration.

The "award" of Prof. J. B. Baillie as furnished by him has not met with the approval of the Irish Transport Workers' Union. That gentleman's position in the negotiations was not that of arbitrator, but mediator, and the so-called award was merely the minute of an agreement come to between the employers represented and the I.T. and G.W.U.

The agreement come to at the meeting gave an increase of 7s. 6d. to all employes. Prof. Baillie limits this to those over 21 years of age. Age was not discussed at the conference, and it is expected that Prof. Baillie will amend the published statement.

Waterford.

The first year's trading of the Waterford Co-operative Society shows a turnover of £8,957. During last quarter sales had increased by £1,068. A dividend of 8d. per £1 was paid on members purchases and employes wages. The Society is raising an educational fund, thus showing a needed example to older societies.

Fermoy, Co. Cork.

On Sunday, the 5th inst., a large meeting of the Fermoy Branch, I.T. and G.W.U. was held at Chapel Square. The secretary, Mr. James Carroll, and the chairman, Mr. Flannery, were kept busy renewing membership cards and issuing badges for 1919.

Considering that the Fermoy Branch is only yet in its infancy, it is surprising what a large number have joined up to the present, whilst at each meeting new members are being enrolled.

Some letters from the Executive having been read, it was decided to issue leaflets throughout the district for the benefit of tradesmen and labourers coming into the town, requesting them to communicate with the secretary, Mr. Carroll. Messrs. L. Dowling and M. J. Sweeney were appointed auditors. Some claims were put forward and considered. Mr. John Sheehan was appointed to investigate matters in connection with agricultural labour.

Economic Reconstruction.

A lecture on this topic by Hector Hughes, B.L., last Sunday, presented opportunities for discussion which was participated in by Mrs. Richardson, W. O'Brien, and many others. Practical difficulties were faced and discussed. For next Sunday, the S.P.I. is arranging a Hands-Off Russia meeting, at which Mr. J. J. Walsh, M.I.P., and others will speak.

Thos. J. Ryan,

Premier of Queensland, will arrive in England early in February. We hope he will find time to visit the Dean.

PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT.
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THE TRUTH, Duluth, Minn.
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Ban Lifted.

We welcome the return of the "Galway Express." Saturday's issue contained a report of Thomas Johnson's address on "Labour's Purpose," and of a speech by that persistent and practical social revolutionary, Father T. A. Finlay, S.J.

Co-operative Development.

Father Finlay laid the foundation stone of a new store for Moycullen Co-operative Society. The building, when complete, will not only give increased facilities for business, but will also provide an assembly hall, refreshment rooms, and a library, making the Co-operative Building the economic, social, and cultural centre of Moycullen commune.

HANDS OFF RUSSIA!

MEETING
OF
DUBLIN
CITIZENS
REPRESENTATIVE
SPEAKERS.

To assert the right of the Russian People to Self-Determination and to condemn the intervention of English Militarism in Russia as in Ireland.

SUNDAY, 19th JAN., at 8 p.m. TRADES HALL, CAPEL ST.

This was James Connolly's estimate of the I. T. & G. W. U.

"It found the Workers of Ireland on their knees, and has striven to raise them to the great position of manhood; it found them with all the vices of slavery in their souls, and it strove to eradicate these vices, and replace them with some of the virtues of free men; it found them with no other weapons of defence than the arts of the liar the lickspittle and the toady, and it combined them and taught them to abhor these arts and rely proudly on the defensive power of combination."

IRISH TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS' UNION.
THOMAS FORAN, GENERAL PRESIDENT, LIBERTY HALL, DUBLIN.

Ireland and the International—An Appeal.

CUMANNAGHT NA H-EIREANN.
Room 3, Liberty Hall,
Dublin, 11th January, 1919.
Ireland at the International.

The International Conference of Socialist and Labour delegates is due to assemble at Lausanne, Switzerland, on Tuesday, 21st January, and to sit concurrently with the Peace Conference of the Governments meeting at Versailles. The assembly and the occasion will be unique in history, confronted, as the Conference will be, with the task of formulating the views and intentions of the workers on the problems involved in the reconstruction of Europe.

For the first time in the history of the International, delegates representing State Governments will appear at the Conference. The Socialist Governments of Russia, Germany, and German-Austria, living proof in themselves of the power and efficiency of the Socialist idea, will give weight to its decisions by their support and attendance. Socialist members of the Governments of Belgium, Hungary, etc., are also participating in the Conference.

It is of prime importance that Ireland should be represented at this Council of the peoples. It is essential to secure that the needs and claims of the Irish Nation at this crisis in its affairs should not be lost sight of amidst the welter of post-war problems, but on the contrary, that this sympathetic assembly be fully informed as to our position and our aspirations, and the help of the delegates enlisted in our cause. The Socialist Party of Ireland (Cumannacht na h-Eireann) has been represented at past

Internationals, and is now sending as its delegate J. J. Hughes (Seamus O h-Aodha), of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The Party has also given a supplementary mandate to Messrs. William O'Brien, Thomas Johnson and Cathal O'Shannon, who will attend as delegates on behalf of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress. Two of these delegates are Irish speakers, and the Irish case will be stated in the Gaelic tongue, thus linking the Ireland of 1919 with the Ireland of 1418, when the sovereign status of the nation was undisputed and indisputable at the Council of Constance.

The expenses connected with the dispatch and maintenance of this delegation for even a short period will be considerable, especially in view of the high prices at present ruling on the Continent. We therefore ask all who believe that Ireland should appeal from Westminster to the Bar of the Nations of the earth to subscribe generously to the International Delegation Fund. Over £100 is required in the first instance, but much heavier expenditure would be entailed should the Conference be prolonged. Personal donations and collections from Labour and Irish-Ireland bodies should therefore be forwarded without delay to the Treasurer, Cumannacht na h-Eireann, Room 3, Liberty Hall, Dublin. They will be duly acknowledged in the "Voice of Labour."

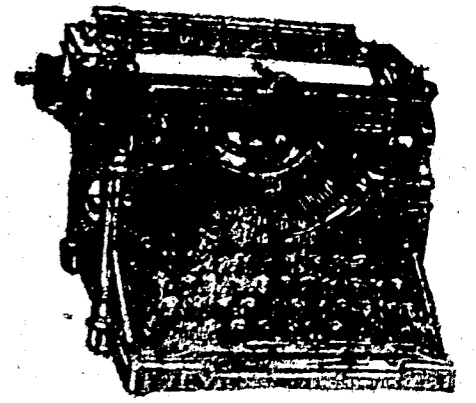
Your service and co-operation are invited, and further information will be supplied should you so desire.

WM. O'BRIEN, President.
T. KENNEDY, Secretary

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