

**DELEGATES ARE DIVIDED  
ON QUESTION OF TAKING  
UP SOLDIERS' PROBLEMS**

# One Labor Man Says Time Shouldn't Be Wasted Discussing Treatment of Soldiers and Demobilization.

## BACK TO THE LAND IDEA FINDS LITTLE SUPPORT

The relationship between problems confronting labor men and soldiers was considered for a time at this morning's session of the Trades and Labor Congress, and while no definite conclusion was arrived at the brief debate on the subject indicated a division of opinion on the position the convention should take on the matter. The other special war-time topic was that dealing with a proposal to have a tax imposed on aliens employed in Canada who have not been naturalized. There was little discussion on the latter question, the Congress deciding to take steps to see if the end desired might be brought about.

### Soldiers' Problems Up.

There was some discussion on a resolution proposing that a special committee be appointed to report to the Congress on the following subjects: Soldiers' pay, separation allowance, Patriotic Fund payments, pensions and demobilization.

Delegate Kerrigan started the ball rolling by saying he saw no reason why the convention should "waste time" taking up such a question. He declared that the labor men could not assume the interests of the soldiers when the latter were not members of organized labor, and said it was absurd to attempt to do so. He concluded by asserting that returned men were being "driven into the factories in order to reduce our wages."

### An Insult to Labor.

Delegate Stevenson sprang to his feet and declared such statements as those made by Kerrigan were an insult to the labor movement. "How any man can make such a declaration before this Congress, I don't know," he said. "We have 25,000 of our number fighting. Are they not as good as we are? Are they not entitled to our fullest support?"

Delegate Cassidy, of Montreal followed, first attacking the American Federation of Labor, saying that if he had not previously insulted the Federation it was due to an oversight; he would do so later. He opposed the resolution proposed, saying that in Montreal union men in uniform had been called upon to wield the club on behalf of the "bosses." When a man enlisted he left the ranks of labor to take up something entirely different and out of the scope of organized labor. He considered that the question did not merit the attention of the Congress.

### Goes to Pensions Committee.

The report was referred to the committee on pensions, of which Delegate Sullivan, of Hamilton, was made a member.

On motion of D. H. Wright, of the Metal Polishers', Buffers' and Brass Workers' International Union, it was resolved that the Congress place itself on record as being in favor of uniform blower laws for all process of manufacture employing the use of abrasives, particularly in Ontario. It was also decided to recommend to the provincial authorities the necessity of appointing practical metal polishers as blower inspectors.

### Letter Carriers' Half-Holiday.

A resolution proposed by the Federated Association of Letter Carriers, proposing that an extension of the Saturday half-holiday be urged upon the Postmaster-General, was adopted.

### Goes to Committee.

The proposal for a general strike of all branches of organized labor, as a protest against the conscription of man-power without the conscription of wealth, was referred to the committee on officers' reports.

It was decided to recommend to the Provincial Government that moving picture operators' apprentices be compelled to serve not less than two years under licensed operators.

"Back to the land," was the principal subject of discussion at the session. Brought before the delegates by a resolution proposing that the governments of the various provinces be requested to establish a system of agricultural credits, it proved a fertile theme, and many of the delegates took part in the discussion of it.

### Tells of Objections.

Delegate Knight, of Edmonton, was the first speaker. He went at length into the question, prefacing his remarks by the statement that he could knock on the head the aspirations of any present who had ambitions to get back to the land. Until the last three years, the position of the average farmer in the west was an unfortunate one. They were carrying a heavy load of mortgages, which many had not even yet managed to free themselves of.

"It's no sinecure to own land in the west at the present time," said Delegate Knight. "The farmer's position is better than for years, but it's almost certain to change for the worse as soon as the war comes to an end. Great Britain, which in the past has produced only 17 per cent. of the grain she consumes, is now increasing her production to such an extent that she will soon produce 68 per cent. of her needs. Other countries are doing the same. The man who now contemplates going back to

the land is going to face those conditions. Value of all products of the farm are bound to slump when the war ends. It's a cheerful outlook, isn't it?"

### Question Too Large.

The speaker went on to declare that big corporations owned large tracts of land on which they paid no taxes, and said he knew men who had been in the west for thirteen years and had managed during that time to eke out only a bare existence. He considered that "socialization" of the land was the only solution.

"It's too big a question for this Congress to take up and try and dispose of within a few hours," he concluded.

Delegate Sullivan agreed with some of the remarks of the previous speaker, but contended that "if we get back to the land under the system we hope to, it will be perfection." He thought the governments of the various provinces should assist the farmers directly, instead of through middlemen.

### Scores the Farmer.

Delegate MacMorley said he could not understand why the farmer should send his sons and daughters to the city and then call upon organized labor to help him out when he found himself short of help.

"It's a joke," said Vice-President Simpson, apropos of the Government's plan to give grants of land to returned soldiers. "These men will get their little plots and then have to compete with the man owning a thousand or more acres, with his modern machinery."

Delegate Hoop, of Winnipeg, expressed the opinion that the idea that wealth came from the land was a wrong one. He said all wealth was produced by labor. Sending a man back to the land he thought was about the same as giving him a death sentence.

### "It Was All Promises."

"They told me it was a land of promise," said Delegate Cassidy, of Montreal. "I went there and found that it was — all promises."

Delegates Arcand, of Montreal, and Naylor, of Vancouver, contributed to the discussion, both expressing the view that the "back to the land" idea was a fallacy.

The question of representation on the Compensation Board of Ontario was discussed at length, and finally referred to the Ontario executive for further consideration.

### Tax the Aliens.

The Congress decided to take steps to bring about the enactment of legislation compelling all aliens to pay a war tax on their earnings, counting 26 days in the month. The resolution in question was brought before the convention by delegates from the Sault Ste. Marie and Steelton Trades and Labor Council.

It was stated that in the steel works at Sault Ste. Marie there were employed 1,050 Austrians and Germans, and attention was drawn to the fact that while the men at the front get \$1.10 a day these receive 35 cents an hour.

Delegate Daley considered that such a course as proposed would discriminate against members of organized labor, as many of these aliens belong to trade unions.

### Arrested Strikers.

Vice-president Rigg told how at Winnipeg, during a strike of the building laborers, the strikers went

to Transcona in an effort to secure the support of men employed at the grain elevators there. Twenty-seven were arrested by the military and police, five were sent to internment camps and 13 to jail. These men were not aliens, but were sent to internment camps because the Builders' Exchange in Winnipeg wanted to get them out of the way, according to the speaker.

### May Attend Congress.

It was stated by one delegate that Captain Jacques, of the Ottawa Fire Department, had been refused permission to attend the convention, and it was decided to have a deputation see Mayor Fisher with reference to the matter. When called by The Journal regarding the question, Chief Graham said Captain Jacques could certainly have leave of absence to attend the Congress.

The convention then adjourned, the delegates proceeding to the City Hall, where a group photograph was taken.

At the opening of the session, all present stood in silence for a moment, as a tribute to the memory of the late J. P. Williams, whose death occurred since last year, when he attended the meeting of the Congress as fraternal delegate from the Old Country. It was decided to send a suitable resolution to Mrs. Williams.