

IRISH OPINION

The VOICE OF LABOUR

EDITED BY CATHAL O'SHANNON.

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JUNE 29, 1918.

ONE PENNY

The Tragic
Comedians.

Shall we Lose
the Harvest?

The Women
Who Work.

The Path to the Workers' Republic.

Over the signboard of a shop in Belfast hangs a script that is a sign of the new times, and gives hope that the awakening that has marked the other provinces of Ireland these last two years may yet have its parallel in Ulster. The script reads: "The Future of Ireland: A Workers' Republic." It was the end towards which James Connolly worked and fought and died, and it is a living force and inspiration in many a young man and woman to-day. It is indeed the only guarantee of a worthy future for democracy in this island.

But before we can attain to the Workers' Republic much indeed remains to do. Labour in Ireland has, it is true, been organising its forces, and they have become a strong and solid phalanx. This is merely a first step. Side by side with this organisation there has been taking place, and this is even more important than organisation, a change in the spirit and heart and outlook of the movement. It is this revolution in the mind of Labour that has been the real fruit of the work of Connolly and his comrades. For without revolution in the mind and spirit of the people there can be no revolution, and without revolution there can be no Workers' Republic, nor indeed any enduring change in our state.

Labour's Policy.

The new mind and spirit compel not only organisation and that re-moulding of the machinery of the movement which we have advocated, but as well and more urgently and incessantly a change and revolution in the whole policy of Labour. For how many years have we not heard Labour

speakers tell of the day when the worker should come into his own? But what did they mean by this, and what does Labour mean by it to-day? It is not want of charity that makes us suggest that too many Labour speakers have meant little or nothing by the phrase. With too many of them it was but a phrase, a high-sounding sentiment that answered every attack on the worker and nothing more, except to those who foolishly believed that Labour would come into its own when Labour leaders got elected to public positions. The reason of all this is found in Labour's want of thought, not in Labour's incapacity for thought, but in Labour's indifference to thought of a constructive and creative order. No meaning was attached to Labour's phrases, because they embodied no idea that had been cultivated in men's minds, and they had found no expression in clear and precise thought. That day has passed and passed, we hope, for ever. James Connolly, in the "Workers' Republic," and his books and pamphlets, Jim Larkin in the "Irish Worker," and both in their speeches and counsel, brought, above all things, thoughts and ideas and desires into the movement, and these more than the wages they got and the victories won were their great contribution to Labour. We should err grievously if we did not add to them another to whom Labour in Ireland and the young Ireland of these last ten years owes much that has provoked thought and discussion, inquiry and reasoned argument. We mean the "Peasant" and "Nation," which pointed the way to young Ireland in the days of storm and stress of 1907-1910.

Towards the Dawn.

The day of indifference to ordered thought, we have said, has passed, and a new day is dawning. The people are awake, alive and alert, and phrases and vague generalities lacking precision and substance will not feed them. A new generation, eager and critical, has come, and youth must be served. We warn the men who in their way have done yeomen service in the past that neither the methods nor the policy of the past, neither past reputations nor past achievements, will serve to-day and to-morrow. No, it is leadership founded upon thought and daring that the young Labour movement wants, and it must have it. Let Labour then begin to put its house in order, and first let it define what it means by coming into its own. To those who have followed Connolly the meaning is clear. It was expressed in these pages by other hands as democracy in industry. Democracy in politics we have had, but it was only democracy of a sort, imperfect and hesitating. In industry we have not had even so much. But Industrial Democracy we must have, and everywhere Labour is clamouring for it. In short, we want the control of industry.

The Control of Industry.

More and more we hear employers complain that the workers want to interfere in the management of businesses. To our regret we must say we have seen no such demand made anywhere in Ireland as yet. But we believe the time to assert this demand has come. We believe the time has come when the organised working class in

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

The Tragic Comedians.

It is vain to write what one feels or thinks of many late and current events in this pleasant land of Ireland, especially of happenings which have the Government for their author and inspiration. Of what use to write of the things that cause more merriment, if not jubilation, than any comedy or farce on the boards of the Abbey Theatre this many a year? A playwright with a high sense of the comic and selfish and ironic spirit of satire might indeed do justice to these things, but no mere scribbler could. The only response the antics of the governors of this island evolve nowadays is laughter gentle and low, or loud and mighty as the mood of the merry-maker may be.

Fourteen Irish counties, or almost half of Ireland, have been thrown back into the 'eighties of the last century under the perpetual Coercion Act. Among them is Clare, which has superadded to its regime of martial law, a regime of "resolute government." Offenders against British law and majesty are to be removed from these counties to others for trial by special, that is selected, handpicked, juries. It looks as if the people of Ireland are beginning to live by taking in, not one another's washing, but one another's trials. A Dublin police magistrate sends a number of young men, medical and legal students, shop assistants and tradesmen to gaol on a charge of drilling. On what grounds? Because a policeman swore that from the street he heard them drilling in a hall and they couldn't possibly be there for dancing, because there were no ladies present. When government of a people is reduced to these mean, foolish and ridiculous measures, is it not about time that Government abdicated and left its smiling victims to their own devices? Is the freedom of Ireland going to be won to the accompaniment of roars, not of cannon nor of oratory, but of great Homeric laughter?

Come Over Here.

If life in Ireland to-day has a more comic side than at any period in the past, it may have its tragedy to-morrow, if indeed all the tragedy be Ireland's. The menace of conscription has not passed, and will not pass until this war of devastation is over and done with. We have good grounds for stating that it is the intention of the Castle to enforce conscription by the ordinary methods after the third week in July. We are not alarmists, and we have not even the desire to create disaffection or disturb the peace. Nothing is further from our mind, for we would be creators of affection, and none loves peace more than we. We simply warn all whom it may concern, and in particular the workers and their representatives on the local committees, that the Castle is prepared to conscript the country by the methods originally intended, and that the date presently fixed is in the fourth week of next month. Why Mr. Walter Long

did not fix it for July 12 we can only guess, but there it is. In the meanwhile conscription is to be tried by dismissal, unemployment and release from business. It may indeed happen that next month will see another postponement as did last month. But no risks should be taken. Stand Prepared.

The New Hopes.

Many new sections of workers have affiliated to the Congress since last year and these, we hope, will be heard from this week. Most important among them are the teachers and the agricultural labourers. The numbers and standing of both sections should give them a power and influence in the movement second to no other section, and this influence we look to them to exercise at Waterford. The teachers have the moulding of the minds of the whole youth of the country, and they can make or mar not only the future of Labour, but the future of Ireland. On the whole we do not think they have used their power to the best effect in the past, because of a certain hesitancy and lack of independence as individuals and as a body. Now that a better spirit and a greater independence are manifesting themselves among them the teachers should use their influence in the Labour movement in Ireland in as effective a manner as in other countries. For one thing we look to them to provide Labour with a sane and practical educational programme suited to the country and fitted for the country's needs.

Those unions, too, which have brought so many agricultural workers into their organisations since last year will, it is hoped, figure largely on the agenda of Congress. They are the food producers, and their importance and position make them indispensable. Can we look to the unions to formulate a well thought out programme and policy for agricultural labour?

THE IRISH WOMEN WORKERS' UNION.

Recognising that the first necessity for any section of the community is some amount of economic strength, the Irish Women Workers' Union has, up to this, concentrated its energy upon obtaining for the members better wages, or securing a basis upon which better conditions might be established in the future. We have only made beginnings in these directions, but we are so far safely launched that we can now devote some attention to other aspects of the Trade Union and Labour Movement. Our social and municipal committee is making plans for the registration of women voters. We should be glad if men in the Dublin Trade Union movement would aid us in this effort by advising their wives and sisters to call at Denmark House, 21 Great Denmark St., any evening between 8 and 9 p.m. (except Saturday), to consult with our re-

presentatives as to registration and the use of the municipal and Parliamentary vote in the interests of the workers.

Our better wages campaign continues. We have secured the establishment of a scale of minimum wages for the women in the Printing and Allied Trades. It begins at 4s. per week in the first year, 6s. in the second, 8s. in the third, 11s. in the fourth, and 14s. in the fifth. The extent to which "sweating" was carried on in this trade may be gauged by the consternation which even this very low scale has created in some of the city firms. Six months ago we thought that only the setting up of a Trade Board would serve to remedy the deplorable conditions in this trade, but the women show so much determination and loyalty that the Union may look forward to raising them without outside help to a level well above the sweated conditions which have hitherto existed, and which have been doubly a scandal in the case of workers such as the women in these particular trades. We must add that many of the employers realise now how hard these conditions are, and are prepared to help in reforming them. But all employers have certain preconceived ideas as to the amount of money it is right for women to handle, and we shall have something to do to enlarge their habits of thought, to change their outlook upon women's work, and to make them see that wages must be based upon the value of the work, without consideration of sex or the uses to which the earners devote their earnings. It is amazing how much old-fashioned thinking in regard to women workers lingers in Ireland!

Mrs. Callendar has done splendid organising work in Waterford, and has established a very promising branch in that city. We hope that she will be able to continue and extend her labours in that district throughout the summer months.

We are constantly coming up against the need for more women Factory Inspectors in Ireland. There is still only one woman, and she is compelled to spend most of her time in the North of Ireland. But conditions exist in many factories where women are employed which demand a woman's supervision, and women and children are exploited in regard to overtime and other methods of work in a way which needs constant watchful attention. It is a disgrace to leave to one woman important duties which it is physically impossible for her to attend to. By agitation we secured the services of this one. What about further agitation to secure the appointment of a second?

"Voice of Labour" Display.

Mr. W. Kelly, 81 Amiens Street, is making a special display of the "Voice of Labour" and Socialist literature. The handsome banner of the Socialist Party of Ireland, with its portrait of James Connolly, by Tom Kain, enhances the display. Another example of Murray and Kain's art productions, an address by the O'Rahilly S.F. Club to Sean T. O'Kelly, T.C., on the occasion of his wedding, is shown in O'Hanrahan's, N.C.R.

LABOUR IN IRELAND.

TRADES CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS.

Dublin Trades Council is placing these resolutions on the agenda of the Trade Union Congress:—

Self-Determination.

"That this Congress re-affirms its adherence to the principles of freedom, democracy and peace, enunciated in the Russian Revolution the free and absolute self-determination of each and every people, the Irish included, in choosing the sovereignty and form of government under which it shall live, this real self-determination to be by free, equal, adult and secret suffrage, without any military, political or economic pressure from outside, without reservation or restriction imposed by capitalist or imperialist governments and uninfluenced by the power of any force of occupation; calls upon the International and the Socialist and Labour Parties in all the neutral and belligerent countries to make good in the concrete case of Ireland their general promises to this effect; and claims for Poles, Yugoslavs, Serbs, Belgians, Alsations, Lorrainers, Egyptians, Indians and other subject peoples no more than for Ireland, and for Ireland no more than for others."

The International Congress.

"That this Congress regrets the unnecessary delay and hesitancy of the movement in other countries in assembling the International Congress; condemns the elements and sections that allowed themselves to be used by their Governments to prevent the meeting of the Stockholm Conference while those Governments themselves were in communication with one another and with their enemies in the field on the question of peace; requests that the International Socialist Bureau shall call the Congress together without further delay—alike in the interests of all workers the world over and of threatened humanity, civilisation, and liberty in Europe; reiterates its willingness to take part in the International Congress wherever and whenever held; and claims the support of organised labour in all countries for the admission of the delegates of the Irish working class to the Conference."

The Workers and Peace.

"In accordance with its oft repeated conviction that war between capitalist or imperialist governments is waged solely in the interests of the governing capitalist class and is a menace to the working class which is its victim, and believing that Labour everywhere is eagerly desirous that the present holocaust in Europe should cease, this Congress calls upon the workers in the neutral and belligerent countries to make a determined effort to bring about peace now, even should that necessitate industrial or other action involving sacrifices to the working class; and again proclaims its adherence to the Russian formula of a people's democratic peace on the basis of real self-determination for subject peoples, and no annexations, undemocratic or secret treaties."

"The Voice of Labour."

"That the support of the delegates to Congress, the unions and their branches, and the workers generally, be asked for the Irish Labour Press, and its organ, 'The Voice of Labour.'"

THE SPUDS.

Not even Patrick McGill, in his "Children of the Dead End," with its faithful delineation of the moral dangers and physical discomforts of the potato-diggers' life in Scotland can convey an adequate understanding of the true horror of the existence in outhouses and barns, of the underpaid and sweated immigrants from the West and North-West of Ireland. The thing must be witnessed, and the coarsest of townsmen will be revolted. Little wonder that in every district from Donegal to Achill the people refuse to travel this season unless on a guarantee of wages and conditions settled by trade union action.

The Glasgow potato merchants are at their wit's end to secure labour. They have tried to bribe gaffers and failed, but their association has made one offer that marks an advance on the attitude of scorn which they first adopted. "We offer," wires their secretary, "10s. per graip, 35s. outstanding, as a minimum, will reconsider wages after workers are here and started work."

The Achill workers are not to be caught by chaff and they stand solid against the attempts to wheedle them. While they remain at home they can bargain with safety. Once landed in Scotland, without any union agreement, they are at the tender mercy of the Scots' bawbee hunters, who will not scruple even to invoke the Military Service Acts to assist them in dragooning the men of the West.

Alderman Lynch, of Sligo, and Michael Masterson, of Achill, are proceeding to Scotland to represent the migratory workers in negotiation with the potato merchants.

Patch-up at Bolands.

After the Sexton clique controlling Bolands Ltd. had forced a strike and closed the mills, thus compelling the maximum number of workers to lose wages, the Food Controller, who is supposed to be controlling Bolands' plant, intervened, and by an overdue exertion of authority has compelled the firm to submit its books to inspection by a firm of chartered accountants, who will determine the amount required to bring up wages to £1 above the pre-war rate. The Food Controller agreed to this some weeks ago, but Bolands refused to allow their books to be examined. But for that there would have been no strike.

Contractors' Harvest.

13 dairymen supply South Dublin Union with milk. An honest Board would save the ratepayers' money and purchase direct from the farmers or a creamery society.

AN IRISH POSTAL WORKERS' UNION.

(To the Editor.)

Sir,—The article from Eammon Lynch re the formation of Irish Trades Unions deserves consideration from the branches throughout Ireland whose headquarters are in England, as the present time is opportune to create a new industrial Ireland. The present system of being (so to speak) governed from England is a slavish idea comparable with that of our Parliamentary patriots who admit that we are not capable of governing ourselves. Well, action is the thing, and as a member of the Postmen's Federation I assert that our inactivities in Irish Labour circles is solely due to want of proper machinery. I wish to make an appeal to my colleagues throughout Ireland to make an effort in conjunction with the other Post Office organisations in Ireland. Let us strive to become active workers in the labour movement, and who knows but the dawn of 1919 may give birth to an Irish Postal Workers' Union. There are some difficulties to be overcome, but the only one worthy of consideration by the members of the Postmen's Federation is that of the mutual Benefit Society. I intend to remove this barrier. On the 12th April, 1913, the members of the Executive Council of the Postmen's Federation addressed a mass meeting in Cork, and at the time the Home Rule Bill was almost in operation (save the mark). It was intended, of course, to form an Irish Trades Union. Several questions were put to the Chairman of the E.C. (Mr. C. Buckland) as to how members of the Benefit Society would fare under Home Rule. He replied that legal advice had been taken on the matter, and assured the members that they would be treated fairly at the parting of the ways. This advice ought to render invaluable assistance when negotiations are being opened up with the E.C. However, to come to the point, Irishmen have played a prominent part in the construction of Trades Unionism in England, then let us now see to it in Ireland. I observe that the official organ of the A.I.P.O.C. invites the delegates to the forthcoming conference to discuss amalgamation. May I suggest that same be confined to Ireland? May I conclude by saying that the method of Irish Labour ought to be national organisations with an international connection?

TRADES UNIONIST.

Meath Labour Union.

The Meath Labour Union, which withdrew from its affiliation with the Trade Union Congress and Labour Party, has, in view of the menacing situation, decided to re-affiliate. Mr. Wm. O'Brien, President of the T.U.C., will address a meeting at Navan under the auspices of the Union on Sunday, 29th inst.

Tiemakers' Requests.

Walter Carpenter reports he is in friendly negotiation with several scarf-makers who are prepared to give consideration to the wage scale proposed by the International Union of Tailors, etc.

Our task is truly to Democratisise Civilisation.—A.E.

CO-OPERATIVE NOTES.

Real National Economy.

According to an official publication the 46,000,000 inhabitants of the British Isles obtain their food as follows:—

- 12,000,000 from 5,000 Co-operative Shops.
- 7,000,000 from 10,000 Multiple Shops.
- 5,000,000 from 15,000 grocers' shops.
- 22,000,000 from 70,000 small general shops.

The co-operative movement saves labour and reduces the cost of service to the consumer, for on the average one co-operative shop supplies 2,400 persons, the multiple shop (of the Maypole class) supplies 700 persons.

Co-operation Pays.

In the review of balance-sheets in 'the current "Producer" we see no mention of Irish societies. St. Cuthbert's Edinburgh Society has, in a population little in excess of Dublin's, a membership of 55,151. In other words, five Edinburgh families out of every eight are co-operatively fed and clothed. The dividend on purchases is 3s. 6d. per £1.

Loyalty.

Co-operative loyalty is high in Blaenau (Wales) where the members' weekly purchases average 22s. 5d.

Milngavie, a one-horse village in Scotland, is more co-operative than Dublin. Its share capital is £11,127, and the quarter's trade £13,308, yielding a dividend (what co-operative saves from the profiteer) of 1s. 10d. per £1 spent at the store.

Dublin's Progress.

Phibsboro' branch of the Dublin Industrial is going great guns. New members are being made daily, while the service, quality, and variety of goods is certain to retain their support. Since last year the industrial Co.-op has exactly doubled its sales. Another new branch is being opened shortly in the North Strand district. The new organiser is receiving every support.

Try Co-operation.

The suspension of deliveries of Boland's bread caused considerable inconvenience to their customers. We suggest these customers should cease to patronise this firm and join the Industrial Co-operative Society. The Society has bakeries capable of catering for a much larger membership. In co-operation, the members of the society dictate the quality of the bread and regulate the conditions of labour for all engaged in its manufacture. All the difference between cost price and selling price goes not to the do-nothing shareholders of Bolands, but is returned to the purchasing members.

The Newest "Rat."

The Reverend John Pentland Mahaffy, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, has been made a Knight Grand Cross (not XXX) of the O.B.E. (Order of Bad Eggs)

Limerick.

Mr. Thomas Foran will address a general meeting of the I.T.W.U. in the Theatre to-night (Thursday).

TRANSPORT UNION'S RECORD.

On December 1st, 1917, "Irish Opinion" announced that the I.T. and G.W.U. had 30 branches. To-day there are 100. The membership then was over twenty thousand, now it exceeds 100,000.

It is now Ireland's biggest union, and in Great Britain only the N.U.R., Weavers, Textile Workers, Miners, and General Workers' Union exceed it in numerical strength.

The rapidity of growth has severely taxed the headquarters' staff, but it is desired to take advantage of the approaching end of the half-year to compile a complete statement of the numerical strength and financial position of the Union as a whole.

Members are asked to give attention to the following points:—

All members must clear their contribution cards by 30th June.

Secretaries must complete returns to 30th June, and forward them, with cash remittances, to headquarters with the least possible delay.

Branch committees, shop stewards, and individual members are asked to co-operate with branch secretaries to ensure that all members pay up arrears and are clear on the books on the last day of June.

Co-operation to secure a fresh start for each branch and for the headquarters as from the first of July will contribute more than a little to a continuance of that growth as remarkable in its solidity and extension as in its rapidity during the past seven months.

Cork.

The Cork Regiment (Connolly's Own) I.S.A. sold £31 12s. of flags for the Connolly Flag Day.

Guy's strike still continues.

Fethard.

Sean Burns addressed a Transport and General Labour demonstration last Sunday.

TRANSPORT UNION AND THE CONGRESS.

In view of the forthcoming Trade Union Congress at Waterford, on 5th August, the Executive have arranged that the entire membership of the Union will be represented by 30 delegates, covering the following areas:—Dublin, Belfast, Sligo, Limerick, Cork, Wexford, Waterford, Arklow, Co. Kildare. Arrangements for election of delegates are being proceeded with.

The following resolutions have been placed on the agenda:—

Agricultural Workers' Rates:—

That this Congress considers the rates of pay fixed for farm workers by the Agricultural Wages Board for Ireland as totally inadequate to meet their needs at present, and we call on the Wages Board and the Department of Agriculture to increase the minimum wages for farm workers by 15s. in each scale.

Industrial Control.

In view of the continuous depreciation in the value of money, and the fact that every increase in wages won for the workers is at once added, with interest, to the cost of the goods or services by the employers, this Congress declares that mere increases of pay, however, necessary, are only a temporary palliative for the evils of poverty, that what is wanted is a sufficiency of real wages rather than of money wages, and that the only effective remedy for our present disabilities is the control of industry in the interest of the community by the organised working class.

Soldiers at North Wall.

After months of negotiation, General Fry has given his promise to the Trades Council and Transport Union that Sir George Askwith will be asked to inquire into the dispute at North Wall.

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Thomas Foran, Liberty Hall, Dublin.

Shall We Lose the Harvest?

FARMERS AND LABOURERS.

After many months' negotiation the Co. Dublin Farmers' Association has at last come to terms as an association with the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The basis of discussion adopted some time ago has been converted into an agreement which is as follows:—

"92s. per week wages; £3 harvest-money; 3s. extra for feeding horses and cattle on Sundays (when necessary); one man to look after from four to six horses; working hours 60 summer and 54 winter; no half-holiday; no free house; that the existing arrangements as to Catholic holidays should hold good, and that the agreement should cover a period of from May to May the following year; the agreement to be operative as from the week ending the 18th May, 1918."

The conclusion of such an agreement is an emphatic condemnation of the award of the Agricultural Wages Board of Ireland fixing 25s. per week as the minimum wage for Group I., which includes Co. Dublin. In our first number (Dec. 1), J. T. Mallon, the well-known authority on sweating, characterised the order as starvation by law.

While the agreement represents a triumph for trade unionism, its conclusion does not make organisation less necessary. The workers organised in the I.T. and G.W.U. are disciplined, and hasty action on their part is unlikely. On the other hand, not all Co. Dublin farmers are members of the association, and some, like Kinsella of Blanchardstown, announce that they will not be bound by the decisions of their own association.

If that is the spirit of many of the Co. Dublin farmers, the Peace, Peace which the ex-apostle of Teetotalism, Sir T. W. Russell, was preaching at Cork I.D.A. annual meeting, will not be realised. Sir Thomas went to much trouble to clear the farmers from the charges of profiteering so freely made, but unfortunately for the success of his plea, Sir Thomas did not commit himself to anything but vague generalisations on the higher cost of materials, seeds, fertilisers, machinery, etc., and the restriction of prices which, however unwisely administered, represent a very necessary form of protection for the consumer.

The reports of his speech do not show a similar concern on the part of Sir Thomas for the farm-labourer. With the latter the increased cost of living is not merely a reduction of the profit obtained by the sale of a commodity. He has only one commodity, his labour power, to sell. He cannot, under private capitalism, realise a profit on its sale. The price he obtains is no more than sufficient to maintain life. Therefore, a reduction of wages means a restriction of the necessities of life, a lessening of comfort, and in the long run an actual shortening of life itself. And a rise in prices—reducing the amount of food and clothing he can buy for his money—means a reduction of wages.

The purchasing power of the sovereign on May 1st was reduced to 9s. 10d. The average wage of the Irish agricultural worker in 1914 was 13s. With the Wages Board minimum wage of 25s., he is reduced below the miserable pre-war standard of living. Under the new Co. Dublin scale of Trade Union wages the labourer has gained less than three shillings in purchasing power over 1914.

Seeing that all the labourers in Irish agriculture, except those fortunate enough to be working under the new Co. Dublin scale, are actually worse off now than in the summer of 1914, Sir Thomas Russell's apprehensions of the loss of the harvest through strikes and labour disputes are likely to be fully realised, unless the farmers show a new spirit.

The farmers have been met by the Government guarantees of fixed prices. Even now the country papers are displaying advertisements urging extended planting of root crops, because the Government will give them higher prices next winter for beef and mutton. The higher prices guaranteed them under the Corn Production Act involved one condition, the payment of a legal minimum wage to their workers. That condition, an obligation of honour as well as of law, is not being kept.

Not an unfair estimate of the prosperity of Irish farmers is afforded by the progressive sales of the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Society, which rose from £268,384 in 1914, to £651,568 in 1917, while the capital was increased in the same period from £3,378 to £11,175, mainly subscribed from the profits of the farmers. The increased bank deposits bear even better witness, not only to their prosperity but also to their penny-wise, pound foolish; incapacity to manage the nation's business.

Irish agriculture is indeed, as Sir Thomas says, at the cross roads. Labour has, in the unduly prolonged negotiations just closed, shown its patience and, perhaps, too much willingness to concede in bargaining what it could win a fight. Sir Thomas, we believe, would admit so much. His advice to the farmers was: "Agree with thine adversary quickly while thou art in the ways with him." If the harvest should be lost, the burden of criminality must lie upon the farmers, for whose sake Irish Labour has too long withheld its claims, and for whose profit it is sharing an uneconomic impost of £96,000,000 under the Corn Production Act.

The "Post."

In acknowledging the presentation of an address by Dublin Trades Council, Mr. John Lawlor paid a well-deserved tribute to the "Saturday Post." In a later discussion on the reporting of Trades Council meetings, the President wisely said: "The day they were ashamed to let the public know what they were doing in the Labour movement, was the day they went down and out." At its lowest, the Trades Council could not behave like a summoned meeting of the Chamber of Commerce.

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The splendid progress made by our Branch must be most gratifying to all concerned except, of course, the employers, who will be much concerned soon.

The development of the sectional system, which has been worked out successfully this week, shall prove not only a means of stimulating the interest of all members in their respective sections, but shall very much strengthen the position and lessen the strain on the general committee, thereby giving them opportunity of considering other urgent matters which need their attention for your welfare.

Now that our forces are well mobilised it is your duty to yourself as well as to the Union to endeavour to bring in every available member of our community who is still foolishly standing aloof.

There are still a few firms with which I have found it difficult to get into proper touch, but I hope to reach all this week.

The committee take this opportunity to thank every member of the branch for the enormous help you have given in making our efforts so successful.

There remains, however, much to be done to ensure our complete success, and I would impress upon you, at the present stage of our development the absolute necessity of sincere loyalty to the Union.

T. GORDON.

Roscrea.

The Bacon Factory directors have dismissed two boys for daring to ask for an increase in wages granted to other employees. They are now closing down the factory owing to "the unreasonable demands of the Transport Workers' Union." They profess to do this in the interest of the shareholders, but the shareholders would be better pleased by receiving interest on their capital. This resolute band of capitalists, who declare they must fight the I.T.W.U. on behalf of "every employer of labour," have not so far been able to pay a dividend on a not unprofitable business. Cathal O'Shannon and Sean Burns have the dispute in hand for the Union.

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THE PATH TO THE WORKERS' REPUBLIC.

(From Front Page.)

Ireland should declare its will that it wants the control and management of industry. We believe further that to-day Labour is in the mood to make that declaration. We are not so foolish as to pretend that if to-morrow Irish capitalists left their offices and works and factories the workers could step in the day after and run all these concerns. Labour is not yet equipped for that task, and we hope Labour will not make the attempt until it is ready, as it is willing. The day of readiness is the day for which Labour is preparing. Organisation alone will not bring it about, numbers alone will not bring it about. No, for besides all these we need education, a working class movement that has set before itself clearly and consciously the conquest of industrial and political power, a working class that is drilling and training, equipping and disciplining itself for the possession of the world's good things. Thought, then, and education, drill and discipline, these be our immediate duties, the control and management of industry our objective and our policy. This is the path that leads to the Workers' Republic.

A FAITH THAT FAILED.

POLISH HOME RULE SOCIALISTS DEMAND INDEPENDENCE.

M. Camille Huysmans, writing in the London "Herald" says:—"In the beginning of the war the Galician Polish Socialist Party hoped that Austrian policy would be favourable to their national conception and at least realise the unity of Poland inside of an Austrian Federal State. But the events taught how difficult it is to promote democracy in Austria, and when the Austrian Government betrayed the hope of Daszynski and his friends the party turned to a bitter opposition. Echoes of this state of mind were already perceived when Daszynski and Diamand came to Stockholm in July, 1917, and now, at the last Congress, even the Right wing of the Polish Party turned to Left tactics. It was decided to vote against the Budget, to work for the creation of a fully independent Poland, with access to the sea, and to ask the other Socialist parties of the International to support these views. In other words, the P.S.P. has abandoned the idea of a Polish unity inside the Austrian federative Empire. Socialist Poland is against Germany, for it claims access to the sea. Socialist Poland is against Austria, for it claims independence. But if we had a compromise Labour and Socialist Government in Russia now, all Socialist groups of Poland would probably seek support in the Russian Republic. In any case, all the inter-allied Socialist parties agree with the aims developed by Dr. Diamand and Daszynski—the Allied Governments

have made a declaration of sympathy—and at the Polish Congress the members all rose when the chairman reminded them of the high Socialist virtues of Keir Hardie."

We are glad the Allied Governments have endorsed Poland's plea for independence, although it is not clear that Poland will be helped thereby. We are glad because the Allies' endorsement of the Polish claim destroys once more the arguments opposed to Ireland's demand. Our joy is moderated, of course, by the reflection that not argument keeps Ireland subject, but force.

Radical Error.

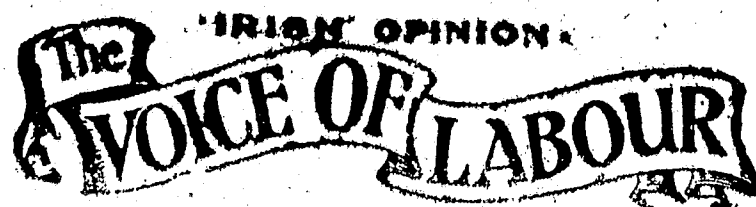
The Dublin "Telegraph" says:—"When Sir Ignatius O'Brien was forced to retire from the Lord Chancellorship the last 'Papist' was rooted out." In the interest of accuracy, we object to "rooted." The gentleman was "bought out" with a peerage and a pension.

At Bodenstown.

The annual commemoration at the grave of Tone in Bodenstown churchyard last Sunday was like one of the old gatherings. Many comrades were, indeed, missing, but in their places were thousands of new comrades of the rank and file. In numbers the gathering compared well with the older greater gatherings. Men and women, militants all, were there in thousands, but more significant and more promising were the countless boys and girls, the flower of Ireland's youth. While these keep the faith, this faith is imperishable, this national rock impregnable, and this people unconquered and unconquerable. Beside this, boys and girls, scaffolds and gaols and graves and internment camps are so much useless lumber. After the address, Mr. Joseph O'Doherty sang. Mr. M. W. O'Reilly directed the proceedings, and the prayers were recited by Mr. Michael O'Suilleabhain. Youth ruled at Bodenstown, and maybe the dead veterans saw and heard.

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