

ORGANIZED LABOUR IN CANADA.

The labour movement in Canada is of comparatively recent growth. In all the countries where a widespread national labour movement has arisen, it has done so only when, through the increase of large scale production involving increased investment of capital, the impossibility of the average labourer ever rising into the position of an employer has been demonstrated. When this happens the instinct of class consciousness is excited, and labourers, realizing that great individual success in the future is for them improbable, band themselves together to secure higher wages and greater comfort in the present.

For these reasons, the modern labour movement took its rise in England—the first country to be affected by the so-called Industrial Revolution—the change from hand to machine production. Where this change takes place, business skill—skill displayed in bargaining for raw material, for needed capital, for labour, for the sale of finished products—becomes the predominant factor in business success, rather than technical skill, and the skilled labourers who possess technical but not business skill, find themselves labouring throughout their lives for the entrepreneur. By the organization of trade unions for collective bargaining they attempt with more or less success to change the situation to their advantage.

Trade Unionism in Canada occupies a unique position by reason of the fact that most organized workers in the Dominion are members of organizations whose headquarters are located in a foreign country, viz.: the United States. This condition is explained when it is understood that workers move freely from one country to the other in order to find employment. In years gone by Canadian workmen who sought a livelihood in the United States greatly outnumbered those from the latter country who came to Canada. As industry was further developed in the United States, there arose a number of unions of various crafts, and with these the Canadian workers soon became affiliated. With the development of industry in the Dominion many of these Canadians subsequently returned to their native land, bringing with them the gospel of trade unionism and collective bargaining as a means of protecting their rights. In many instances these trade unionists became the nuclei of strong bodies of organized labourers formed in Canadian cities.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, a number of independent trade associations were formed in Canada, the earliest of which there is record being a printers' organization in Quebec city in 1827. The first union known to have been organized in the province of Ontario was also composed of printers, and operated in York (now Toronto), as early as 1834; both of these bodies were later superseded by branches of the International Typographical Union, which body in 1869 changed its name from National Typographical Union of the United States, on account of the inclusion of Canadian branches.

In 1851 a branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a British organization composed of metal mechanics, was established in Toronto. In the years immediately following other branches were