

# LABOUR'S POLICY

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## IRISH OPINION

# The VOICE OF LABOUR

EDITED BY CATHAL O'SHANNON.

NEW SERIES. VOL. I, No 50.

NOVEMBER 9, 1918.

ONE PENNY

## Labour Clears the Decks.

The Irish Labour Congress calls for unity on the issue of self-determination and withdraws its candidates as a practical step towards unity. Are the Politicians willing for like sacrifices? - Watch them!

The following is the National Executive's statement on the election policy of the Irish Labour Party as adopted by 96 votes to 23 at the Special Congress on November 1.

Six weeks ago, when the National Executive decided that it was for the best interests of Ireland and Labour that a number of constituencies should be fought by Labour Candidates at the forthcoming General Election, there was little sign of an early peace. The prospect before us was that the election then expected would be a "war election," to be followed at the end of the war by a dissolution and a second election.

The unexpected call for an armistice on the part of the Central Powers has brought us face to face with the crisis which was not expected to develop until the "peace election" was at hand.

We had hoped to use the period between the two elections for an active educational propaganda directed towards ensuring that the building of the new Ireland shall be in the hands of men and women who view the problems of political and social development from the standpoint of the working-class, to determine, as far as our means and abilities allowed, that the Irish Republic—if such were to be the form of government determined upon by a people guaranteed the right to choose its own sovereignty—should be a Workers' Republic, not an imitation of those republics of Europe

and America, where political democracy is but a cloak for capitalist oligarchy.

But circumstances have decided that the election now upon us is to be the "peace-election," not the "war election." The Grand Inquest about to be opened has for a jury the nations of the world. The verdict will be given according to the weight of evidence adduced, and that will depend upon the degree of unanimity marked at the polls on the demand for self-determination.

A call comes from all parts of Ireland for a demonstration of unity on this question, such as was witnessed on the Conscription issue. Your Executive believes that the workers of Ireland join earnestly in this desire, that they would willingly sacrifice for a brief period their aspirations towards political power if thereby the fortunes of the nation can be enhanced.

In the light of these new circumstances the National Executive has reviewed the position, and has decided to recommend the withdrawal from this election of all Labour candidates. They do so in the hope that the democratic demand for self-determination to which the Irish Labour Party and its candidates give its unqualified adherence will thereby obtain the greatest chance of expression at the polls. We shall show by this action that while each of the other political parties is prepared to divide the people in their effort to obtain power, the Labour Party is the only party which is prepared to

sacrifice party in the interest of the nation in this important crisis of the history of Ireland. We shall also, thereby demonstrate to the peoples of all nations as emphatically as peaceful means allow that at this hour, when other small nations of Europe are asserting their freedom, Ireland, too, demands all the rights of a free nation.

### "Forward" Pointers.

A Dubb in Glasgow is exceedingly angry because he got his Military Service calling-up notice the other morning, the postage stamp being defaced by the printed adjuration, "Feed the Guns." He thinks it might have been done more tactfully.

The members of the Chicago Stock Exchange now stop business for one minute every day to engage in silent patriotic prayer.

What greater proof could we have of the spiritual nobility of our cause than that?

[Ireland supplies the answer. The good "Prod." members of Belfast Rotary Club have adopted the Businessman's "Angelus." Of course these cultured gents, only know of the Angelus from the crude reproductions of Millet bought second-hand in Smithfield to adorn their Antrim Road villas.]

Persian dates at 6d. per lb. declares the "National Food Journal," have miraculously transmogrified into Tunisian dates at 3s. per lb.

This does not signify a state of belligerency against Persia; it means economic war by the Capitalists on the British people.

# The FOREIGN POLICY of IRISH LABOUR.

Being the Statement on International Aims, presented by the National Executive of the Irish Labour Party and unanimously endorsed by the Special Congress at its sitting, on Friday, November First.

## TO THE INTERNATIONAL.

[Instead of our editorial this week we print the Statement on International Aims presented by the National Executive of the Irish Labour Party, and unanimously endorsed by the Special Congress at its sitting in November.]

In view of the important and far-reaching events of the past few weeks, their effects upon the international situation, and the near approach, if not the imminence, of peace, the National Executive of the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party feels it imperative that the Irish Labour Party, representing the general body of the workers of Ireland, the most loyal and most unselfish class in this country in the fight for liberty, justice and democracy, and speaking in the names of the unnumbered heroic men and women of that class who have fallen in the fight, as well as in the names of the living men and women still battling in the same cause, should now again in Dublin, as at Derry and Waterford, declare its clear and unequivocal attitude upon the issues which a cessation of hostilities on the Continent of Europe, the Peace Congress of the Nations and the International Conference of the working class will determine.

In accordance with its oft-repeated conviction, that war between capitalist and imperialist governments is waged solely in the interests of the governing imperialist class and means nothing but death to the working class, which in its victim Irish Labour rejoices that the holocaust of the last four years is about to cease. In welcoming that peace, Irish Labour again proclaims its adherence to the Russian formula of a peace of the peoples on the basis of genuine democracy, the real self-determination of all subject peoples, and no annexations, no indemnities, and no undemocratic or secret treaties. Only upon this basis can there be a world settlement which will give any hope of permanence or any promise of justice, and therefore only upon this basis can the aspirations of the peoples be raised beyond dreams. From this settlement Irish Labour would exclude no people, no matter to which of the two sets of belligerents this people has been, or is now, subject. Irish Labour, therefore, re-affirms its declaration in favour of 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 gov-

ernments, and uninfluenced and untrammelled by the power of any force of occupation. It rejoices that this self-determination has at last been assured to the Yugo-Slavs, Techecho-Slovaks, Alsations and Lorrainers, as well as to the Poles, Finns, and Ukrainians, and now to the Arabs. But this is not enough, and it is not impartial. To be the one and the other this principle must also be applied in the same sense and under the same conditions to the peoples of Ireland, India, and Egypt, and to such other peoples as have not yet secured the exercise of their inherent right, derived not from the declarations of statesmen and governments, but from their historical position, their national development, and their own conscious and expressed will, to determine their own destiny, dispose of their own national fate, and choose and fashion their own polity. For all these, without exception, Irish Labour claims no more and no less than for the Irish, and for the Irish no more and no less than for all the others.

For these reasons Irish Labour supports both the claim of the workers of all lands to participate directly in the Peace Congress after the war, and the claim of the Irish people, that the case of their nation shall be heard at that Congress. To this end Irish Labour, within its own nation, asserts its right that upon any delegation which shall make the claim of the Irish nation, with the authority of the Irish people, the workers of Ireland shall be directly represented by a duly accredited Labour section.

To proclaim these rights and principles without attempting to secure the exercise of the rights and the application of the principles would be but to repeat the hypocrisy of those governments and parties which, in their imperialist or national interests and needs, proclaimed them only to apply them in the case of peoples not subject to their sovereignty, and to deny them to peoples under their own rule. This Irish Labour is not prepared to do. On the contrary, by every means in its power, Irish Labour will help to secure the exercise of the rights it proclaims, and the application of the principles to which it adheres. In particular it will exercise its influence in this direction in the International Labour movement, since it is convinced that the Workers' International and all its national sections will have what may be a determining voice in the peace settlement and the Peace Congress, and that the International's support will be extended to the still subject peoples, as it has hitherto been gladly accorded to peoples struggling to be free in the Balkans and in Russia and Austria. Irish Labour, therefore renews its request that

the International Socialist Bureau shall call the International together without further delay; re-iterates its willingness to take part in the Conference whenever and wherever held; and again claims for Irish Labour within the International, and for the Irish people within the community of nations the support of organised Labour in all countries, in particular in France, the United States, Great Britain, Italy, and wherever Labour or the Socialist Party is affiliated to the Bureau. Here again Irish Labour is prepared to stand by that most honoured of its principles, internationally as well as nationally, and in politics as in industry, namely, that an injury to one is the concern of all.

That its influence may be exerted effectively and immediately the National Executive has already taken steps to enter into all such relations with the International and with the Labour Parties abroad as may be necessary for the attainment of the end it pursues, and the fulfilment of its international duties.

In the meantime, and in addition to the other measures which it is adopting, Irish Labour, again speaking in the name of the working class, endorses the proposal that a Conference, voicing the united claim of the Irish nation should be called into being to give expression to the national demand for the exercise of self-determination in the same manner as the Mansion House Conference defined and focussed Ireland's opposition to conscription, and declares its readiness to take part in such a Conference.

The National Executive affirms its belief that such a Conference, stating the demand of the whole nation and commanding the respect of the peoples generally, could devise means to prove to all mankind, except, indeed, those heedless statesmen who will not listen to any claim unless it is backed by the crack of insurgent rifles, that this small nation is united in its demand for self-determination.

Finally, and true to its tradition for liberty, for internationalism, for the fraternity of the working class of every land, and for the Republic of the Workers, Irish Labour utters its vehement protest against the capitalist outlawry of the Soviet Republic of Russia, and calls upon the workers under the governments sharing in this crime to compel the evacuation of the occupied territories of the Republic at the same time as it renews its welcome and congratulation to its Russian comrades who for twelve months have exercised that political, social and economic freedom towards which Irish workers, in common with their fellows in other lands, still strive and aspire.

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

(As Passed by Censor.)

## A Woman Prisoner for Parliament.

Madame Gonne McBride writes:—"It is such a joy to be out of Holloway and to see Seaghan.

"I hope the Cumann na mBan will see that Constance Marcievicz is elected to Parliament. She would be a splendid candidate, for she has a great grasp of social and labour questions, as well as of the National question, which would be valuable in an Irish Parliament, and it would show foreigners what Ireland thinks of those whom England persecutes. Influenza is now raging in Holloway, and many of the staff are down with it."

## Women Candidates.

We are in hearty agreement with the suggestion made by our correspondent (and by many others as well). It will, we think, be a reflection upon Ireland if, when the present splendid opportunity offers, nobody but men candidates are put up for election. We are not believers in the right of men to election as men, or of women as women, but we are most emphatically in favour of the election of both as citizens. Now that so many women are in a position to exercise the franchise as citizens (but not yet enough, and there will not be enough until equal adult suffrage is secured) the argument is all the stronger. To everybody's knowledge there are several women in Irish public life whose claims are equal, and in some cases superior, to some of the men candidates whose names we have read in the daily papers. Those claims are based, not upon sex, but upon the ability, the political standing, and the public services, national and social, rendered by these women both to their respective parties and to the people and nation. We refer specifically to women of such outstanding merit as Miss Louie Bennett for Labour, Countess Markievicz, Mrs. Clarke and Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington for Sinn Fein, Mrs. Kettle and Mrs. Stopford Green for Home Rule. From all points of view the calibre of women like these is higher than that of some men candidates already in the field, not to speak of some of the already elected mediocrities, and it will not be to Ireland's credit or to Ireland's benefit if all of these women are passed over in favour of men, merely because they are men. Now that Labour has, so to speak, renounced its rights in the General Election, it is not unbecoming that the "Voice of Labour" should ask the followers of Mr. De Valera and the followers of Mr. Dillon to invite some of the abler women in their respective movements to allow themselves to be nominated for the General Election. As a beginning we would plump for the Countess and we are glad to note that Alderman Tom Kelly, with that generous spirit of his own, is prepared to stand down in her

favour. But that course is both unnecessary and undesirable. The proper course is to nominate her for some other seat.

## Deeds, not Words, from Irish Labour.

The Special Congress has come and gone and with it the fears of many, of different sections, within the Labour movement, for the future of the party and the workers' cause. Taken all in all, it was a veritable triumph not less than that of Waterford. It was lively and dignified. It was more: it was dramatic and inspiring and, above all, it was successful. From the opening to the close high drama marked its every act, and it was drama charged with power and unexpected surprise. We have heard many keen observers state that it was well staged. It was, but its best scenes were unrehearsed and impromptu. Right at the beginning its spirit and tone were made by Tom Foran's motion for the expulsion of the delegates of the Seamen and Firemen's Union because of that Union's blackguardly action against the International and against Huysmans, Henderson, Bowerman and others, who were prevented from travelling on the business of the International. The act of expulsion was well deserved and it was long overdue. Irish Labour rose magnificently to the call made by Huysmans in "The Herald" for deeds and not words. Once again, as with conscription, Irish Labour has given a lead to British Labour and to International Labour. To the Unions in Great Britain Irish Labour can now say: Go ye and do likewise. Is it too much to hope for?

## The Gentle Art of Proving.

By the way, we invite Mr. J. H. Bennett to produce his alleged evidence that Huysmans does not represent the workers of Belgium. When he does this in "The Voice" we shall publish alongside it the protest of the Belgian workers against the British seamen's first act against Huysmans and their vote of confidence, the French seamen's protest at the Inter-Allied Labour Conference against Havelock Wilson's second act against Huysmans, the protest made by Vandervelde, leader of the Belgian Labour Party and partisan of the Entente, against the latest act against Huysmans, and much more besides. Now, then, Mr. Bennett!

The "Irish Times" libels the Congress by stating that the seamen were expelled because of their boycott of the Germans. Nothing of the kind. They were expelled because of their Union's frequent attempts to Tupper the International. We hope the rank and file of the seamen and firemen will know now what to do with their bosses.

## The Burning Question.

Once Congress had well opened the great question was undoubtedly the National Executive's policy in the elections. When Johnson stepped forward to state the Executive's exact position you would almost have heard the hush of expect-

ancy. Before he had gone very far it was seen that those who were "against the Government" had been vanquished, or at least outmanoeuvred. The National Executive had taken the bold course of reversing its recommendation to contest the elections and backed up its withdrawal by well-marshalled and well-reasoned arguments arising out of the admittedly big international events that had occurred between the issue of its Electoral Manifesto and the Special Congress. This took the Congress by surprise but on the whole it was a pleasant surprise, although disappointing to some of the elements in Congress. When everything is said and done the Executive was wise as well as daring, and its success is the measure both of its wisdom and of its courage. It was a great game, it was well played, and it won. We repeat again, as we did after Waterford, our congratulations to Labour on the General Staff it has chosen.

## The Lonely Fighter.

We can do this with all the greater sincerity because both in the National Executive and in the Special Congress we dissented from the recommendation to withdraw. We recognise the honesty of the majority in both bodies and appreciate to the full the arguments against us. On its part the National Executive recognises the honesty of our motive and the weight of the arguments we put up. We shall not labour those arguments now. We shall only say that over and above the Labour arguments and the national arguments we esteemed the international arguments the greatest. Frankly, we regret the decision, because it will render more difficult and less effective the influence of Irish Labour on the International in favour of self-determination. The International will undoubtedly affect public opinion and Government opinion and action in foreign countries, and it will undoubtedly affect the Peace Congress and the peace settlement. Irish Labour, even before it was asked, has been using its influence in this eminently desirable direction, and since it has been asked (although that was never necessary) its exertions have gladly and willingly been redoubled. Personally, then, we were anxious that the very last ounce of Irish Labour's influence should be exercised upon the International. Since the Special Congress that is no longer possible. At the least Irish Labour can now have only two instead of three representatives on the International Bureau, and since the third and absent representative is the Irish delegate on the Inter-parliamentary Commission Irish Labour loses one-half its moral strength in addition to one-third of its numerical strength, while the Tchecho-Slovaks, the Finns, etc., have their full moral and numerical strength because they have their parliamentary groups. But the Tchecho-Slovaks are Tchecho-Slovaks and the Irish are the Irish, and that is not always merely an imperialist attitude. The reduction of our strength will be of some

account, for it is the Bureau which is the Executive of the International, and it is the Bureau which not alone arranges the order of the day and the agenda for the Congress proper, but recommends the number of votes which shall be allotted to each national section in the International. The allotment of votes to Ireland has not yet been made, and when it is made the non-existence of a parliamentary group may reduce the number of the Irish vote as a third vote on the Bureau might be the determining vote.

#### The International.

However that may be the die is cast and the decision is irrevocable in spite of our minority of 23 against 96. Labour does not enter the election, but at least the experiment was well worth while and the political education begun within the last seven weeks will bear good fruit in due time. We can promise the movement that even if shorn of some of its strength Irish Labour will give a good account of itself in the International, and the success already attained at home and abroad gives rich promise that the National Executive knows how to do its business with both bold courage and wise statesmanship. The statement of International aims presented by the Executive and endorsed by Congress exactly defines Irish Labour's position and puts it beyond misunderstanding and misinterpretation. The Executive has already taken the steps necessary to carry out its foreign policy, and its efforts are meeting with considerable success. This is so not only abroad but at home, where its initiative in calling a National Conference to voice the Irish demand for self-determination is already producing results. But we are sorry that that last ounce must be lost.

#### The Speeches.

Comment on the debates upon the new Constitution must be held over until next week. But what shall we say of the speeches? On the whole they were of a high order and a credit to Congress. Cassidy on the "Leinster" disaster, Johnson in exposition of the Executive's policy and the Constitution, Foran on the seamen, O'Brien on the political prisoners, MacPartlin on party, and Campbell in criticism of the Executive's change of mind, were good and some of them seldom better.

Finally, and not inappropriately, Congress wound up by unanimously condemn-

ing the imposition of the oath of allegiance upon workers both inside and outside the Civil Service. It was in spirit, in word, and in act a great Congress, the first of a real Labour Party, and it was not unworthy of the movement and these great times:

#### Brón:

Owing to the necessity of publishing as fully as we may the two important statements on election policy and on international aims adopted by the Special Congress last week our space is more than ever limited this week. We are therefore reluctantly obliged to refrain from comment on the great and dramatic changes in Europe these past four days, the need for an industrial policy to meet the peace situation, the prevalent plague and many other matters of the first importance. We cannot, however, but remark that on human life the ravages of the plague have been greater than many successful insurrections. And here we take the opportunity of extending to the relatives of one of the victims, Liam Staines, the sympathy of "The Voice" and its friends. Liam Staines was one of the most promising of the younger Republicans, and his death, after a brief illness, and after his recovery from very severe wounds at Easter, is one of the most poignant personal tragedies of these terrible days. Go ndeanaidh Dia trocaire ar a anam.

#### The Unsuppressible.

The "Socialist" for October has at length reached us. The Socialist Labour Party had its own press stolen by the police in August. E. H. Williams, the publisher of "Solidarity," has been closed down for printing the September "Socialist." Now J. E. Francis, the printer of the "Athenæum," has undertaken to bring out the "Socialist" as a protest against the suppression of anti-government criticism. Mr. Francis has several times risked the wrath of Lloyd-George by printing the "Workers' Dreadnought."

We heartily commend to our readers the appeal of the S.L.P. for funds to re-establish their press. Remember, they printed the "Worker" when it could not be printed in Ireland, and send to Tom Bell, 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, for a collecting card.

#### LOOKING FORWARD.

The following points from a speech delivered recently by Hector Hughes to the members of the Irish Women's Franchise League may interest our readers:—

The limited franchise recently won came with all the suddenness of an April shower, and it was just as refreshing to minds grown angry and hot and arid with political struggle against reactionary forces.

Hope and faith in statesmanship sprang up again, fresh and green; after all justice will prevail and women have votes. But all women have not votes. This is another application of the principle: "Divide and conquer."

Do not forget that the milk of political sagacity which came like an April shower was watered down.

Women . . . for the achievement of their aim suffered privation and prison-blaspheming mobs and batoning mobs-men.

It ought to be a matter of principle with men and women who have votes to help forward by every means in their power the enfranchisement of the voteless women.

But what of the voteless men?

Should you not enter into a rapprochement with the great forces of democracy and progress which are now working in Ireland.

#### BELFAST IN TROUBLE.

The Unionist Corporation, after six weeks of uncleared streets and courts and laneways, has refused to submit the workers' grievances to arbitration. Those who have not seen the "City of Dreams" during the dispute can have no conception of the foul condition of the streets of a modern industrial city with six weeks' filth accumulated on the surface, rotting and germinating all kinds of disease.

And the Unionist Corporation—Sir Edward Carson's handymen—refuse to arbitrate.

To these troubles has been added a dispute at the docks. On October 9 the Transport Workers agreed to claim an eight-hour day, with payment at the rate of 1s. 9d. per hour (an increase of 4½d. per hour), time and half for the first four hours' overtime, time and three-quarters after four hours, and double time for Sunday work, with an increase of piece-work rates of 2d. per ton.

The employers procrastinated, and last Saturday all work ceased, the military being brought in, not, at present, to repeat their feats of 1907, but to replace the men on strike.

Ten years have elapsed since the Belfast shippers asked for trouble, in 1907. It is a pity they have forgotten, but they have now to face a union welded by ten years of struggle and backed by the working class of Ireland.

The electioneering aspect of these two strikes will not be lost on the Unionist workers of the North. They see their political leaders in their true colours, the active organisers of black-legging and the resolute foes of Trade Unionism

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Explained in a pamphlet which embodies information about the rules and working methods of the Union that gives "benefits every pay day."

**THE INSURANCE AGENT.****His Fight for Freedom. By Bernard Brooke.**

Labour has a direct interest in helping the insurance agents to a position of financial and moral independence. As fellow trade unionists their claim on Labour needs no argument. Now that Labour is facing municipal and parliamentary elections it is well to remember that the old-time unorganised insurance agent was the most potent weapon in the hands of the employing class political parties. Seventy thousand insurance agents are calling every week on working-class homes in Ireland and Great Britain, and in time the agent becomes the friend and adviser of the family. The direct influence wielded by this army of agents is difficult to estimate, but it is so considerable that the Dillonite Party has its own battalion working in Ireland under the command of J. D. Nugent.

Is Labour going to make the agent its friend? If so it can help him in the time of need.

The Refuge Assurance Agents' strike is still proceeding. It began in Belfast, where, owing to the impossibility of living upon their earnings, the Refuge agents determined to strike for improved conditions, and 18 of them downed tools on July 5th, 1918, and are still out on strike, now 14 weeks;

ten of the 18 agents on strike were in receipt of the magnificent sum of 30s.

per. week, and the earning capacity of the best paid agent was 39s. per week, and these are men that have served the Refuge Company from ten to 20 years, fully employed by the company, with families of three, four, five, and six children.

This rich company refused to negotiate with the men, but threatened them with dire penalties, and went so far as to take action against these men in the Chancery Court. However, the National Union of Life Assurance Agents took up the case of these Belfast men, and they appealed to the agents of the Refuge Company in Ireland to stand by their Belfast comrades, with the result that the whole of Refuge Agents in Dublin, Drogheda, Kingstown, Navan, Naas, Skerries, Dundalk, Enniskillen, and Portadown have been out on strike the past month, for the company refuse to meet the officials of the Union, thereby they deny their agents the common right of all workers, viz., the right of combination, as they intend to keep their agents down as slaves.

Yet Trade Unionism has been the best friend of the Refuge Company, for it has won the workers a standard of living that enables them to indulge in insurance. Industrial Insurance is confined to the wage-earning class, and mainly to the trade unionists in that class, for the Assurance Companies have no interest in the down-trodden slum-dweller, and indeed forbid the canvassing of the people whose need of insurance is greatest.

The National Union of Life Assurance Agents, which has doubled its membership in twelve months, is on the war-path, with vigorous and progressive leaders, leading a body of intelligent, battered, and despised but determined agents into a fight for right and manhood; and it is the duty of every worker to help us to improve the position of assurance agents; and the way to do so is to refuse to pay any premiums to any agent not a member of the National Union; for our motto is to clean the business from all shady practices, and to achieve our purpose we must have every agent enrolled in the National Union, so that he will not be at the mercy of any assurance official, for only by Trade Unionism can such be achieved. It is absolutely necessary that all Trade Unionists should shoulder part of the responsibility of organising the assurance agent, for it is your money these money lenders, the companies, are speculating with.

**You Can Help**

the thirty bob a week insurance agent to a better time and a happy home by paying no premiums to the Refuge. Tell your wife.

**Refuge Agents are on strike.**

Refuge Assurance Agents on entering the service must sign a binding agreement of which they are forbidden to make use or have a copy.

# THE HOUSE THAT VALUE BUILT.

The Industrial Co-operative Society has been a power for good in Dublin. It controls the market, and is never without supplies. In the beginning of the year we brought down the price of butter with a rush, and the same thing happened with bacon. Similarly with bread; we own our own bakery, and refuse to advance the price.

**It is still 4½d PER 2-lb LOAF. Co-operation Pays.**

Apart from these benefits all profits are divided among the members, and thousands of pounds are returned to the workers in this way.

When the workers get an increase in wages, the Industrial consolidates that rise by checking inflated prices.

It is YOUR movement. The shops and bakery, live stock and rolling stock, belong to You, so why not lend a hand to make the Industrial a greater success than ever? Join now, even to-day.

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# LABOUR IN IRELAND

## WHOLESALE CHEMISTS.

The employees of Messrs. Boileau and Boyd have received an increase of 25 per cent. as from August 1, and the minimum wage scale for the trade has been adopted in this house. The total advance exceeds £1,000 per annum. The entire wholesale trade is now organised in the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks.

The negotiations carried on by the same union for the Retail Drug trade continue at the moment of writing. We commented last week on the employers' offer. Slightly better terms have now been tendered, but they fall far short of what the local members and the Union Executive consider reasonable.

With the recent enormous advance in the price of quinine on account of the epidemic, the bosses can well afford to spring the few extra coins.

## Tobacconists Alive.

The salesmen and sales-ladies in the Fag shops are now awaiting the employers' answer to their demands.

## R.I.C. AND TRANSPORT UNION.

The closing down of the Sinn Fein Hall at Ballina has resulted in the eviction of the Transport Union branch, which had a temporary tenancy of part of the premises. We understand that papers belonging to the Union have been misappropriated by the authorities.

At Galbally, Co. Tipp., the R.I.C. threatened the owner of the Gaelic Hall with dire penalties if he permitted the Union to hold a meeting there. The meeting was held in the open yard of the school, with a sergeant and constable in attendance. The former asserted the meeting was an illegal assembly, but the only illegality was the intrusion of the police.

There is, we believe, an official supervisor of police manners and morals called the Inspector-General. If he is drawing pay, he owes it to the Majesty of H. B. M.'s Law to remove the Galbally Sheridan to another spot.

Coal-carriers in Glasgow earn 2s. per hour.

## Rathgormack Scandal.

Farmers in this district have given "Farming on Factory Lines" a meaning Wibberley never meant. Having been compelled by law and the Transport Workers' Union to pay the legal but miserable minimum wage to their employees during the past summer, they are now dismissing them wholesale, in imitation of the factory-owning capitalists.

This is carrying the capitalist theory of labour-power as a commodity into practice. They buy labour-power when it is profitable to do so. When it is not immediately profitable they don't pay.

Unfortunately, labour-power is only delivered in one kind of package—a clay tabernacle, endowed with a belly, usually hungry, and, as we have heard, with an immortal soul in temporary lodgment.

Owing to the Parnellite folly which alienated the people of Ireland from the soil and gave it to a section of the population, the labour-power package cannot fill its belly unless it obtains an employer.

Rathgormack farmers have determined that Labour must be punished for demanding what the law allows. Ninely men have been sacked. Many of them were placed in Co. Council jobs, but the employing class Co. Council ordered them to be sacked.

A large planting job was started, and some of them found employment there, but Count de la Poer—inheritor of the old robber barons and jobbing peers and churchmen of the past—ordered the dismissal of all men who could not produce certificates from their last employer—certificates which His Highness knew the farmers would not give.

"Farmer," in last week's "Homestead," recommends this selfish one-sided certificate system. Does he approve of employers demanding them when employers refuse to give them?

Rathgormack labourers are not disheartened. Their comrades are giving generously their own increases to sustain the unemployed, and they are determined that if employers are going to play the stand-off-in-slack time game, that next season the wages in the busy months will guarantee a twelve-months' keep to the worker and his family.

## TRANSPORT NOTES.

The feature of the Labour movement in Kilkenny recently has been the wonderful affection for the Transport Union shown by the pub-haunting emissaries of Upr. O'Connell street, and the not less aggressive representatives of Harcourt street. Owing to the persistent display of undissembled hostility to labour by farmers and employers of both political persuasions, their touts have been coldly received. Castlecomer has been a special object of attention, but the demand for progressive literature in that area is the guarantee of solidarity. The Railway Workers' demand for 50s. a week and a guaranteed day of six hours has been referred to arbitration.

In the West and North-West great progress is being made by Peadar O'Donnell and W. J. Reilly, while Roscommon and Longford counties are being sown with branches.

Lucan branch is to be congratulated on its successful negotiation with Captain Colthurst, where, in addition to an increase of 6s. 6d. a week, with free lodging and firing, 3s. for Sunday work, 3s. travelling money, and overtime at 9d. per hour, it has been arranged to stop work on Saturdays at 12.30. This is the first instance of a mid-day stop on Saturday for agricultural workers in the British Isles. "A beam in darkness. Let it grow."

## Birr Comes Into Line.

In opening a Transport branch at Birr, Eamonn Hayes said that before the recent wages movement in Nenagh workers had to be satisfied with 15s. or 17s. a week. The town standard was now 25s. The Union had in one case secured a refund of £17 arrears of wages. In Birr, the usual wage was 22s. 6d. M. Dalton was appointed secretary of the new branch, and a committee representing the various occupations of the members was installed.

## GOREY TALK AT PILTOWN.

D. J. Gorey, the valiant swashbuckler of Kilkenny, has been at Jamestown, Piltown, endeavouring to form a branch of the Farmers' Union, which appears to have for its object, not the common-sense development of co-operative purchase of plant and seeds, or the co-operative marketing of goods, but the smashing of the Transport Workers' Union. The gem of Gorey's oratory was: "Remember, I do not want any of my remarks to be published in the press." We oblige him with pleasure, and present our readers instead with an appropriate quotation from the Gospel: "The children of darkness loved not the light, because their deeds were evil."

## Cartoons.

A selection of the best of E. Kavanagh's cartoons from the "Worker" and "Irish Freedom" has just been published, and is on sale at all Irish-Ireland shops. The drawings are valuable commentaries on the stirring events of 1912-16, and are still good propaganda, none the less effective because their author made the great sacrifice. Further selections are in preparation, and will be welcomed.

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### THE COAL SHORTAGE AND THE CASTLECOMER COLLIERIES.

One would imagine that, in view of the threatened "coal famine" this winter, the Board of Trade, which is responsible for the construction of the railway to connect the Castlecomer mines with Kilkenny, would speed up the completion of the work, but the winter will have come and gone long before it is finished.

I learned from a reliable source four months ago that the officials immediately in charge of the job calculated that the "Black Diamonds" would be travelling over the new rails in November of this year. Now they anticipate another six months' work at the very least, before the line will be open for traffic.

No blame, I think, can be attributed to the local offices; but those in "high places" deserve to be severely taken to task.

True, the proposed route has been changed several times, and the one now decided on is, I am informed the longest and most difficult of construction; but that does not exonerate the Board of Trade from blame, because at the moment the number of men employed is only about 250.

Cannot the N.E.O. of the Trade Union Congress make those primarily responsible for the funeral-like progress "get a move on?" Now that the winter, the slack season in agriculture, is approaching, the extra employment provided would be a great boon to the farm labourers. Why cannot 1,000 more men be immediately started on the work?

PATK. COATES.

The Foresters' Hall,  
Parliament St., Kilkenny.

### CLERKS' PROGRESS.

The dispute at Crane's music shop, Upr. O'Connell street, continues. There is no truth in the story being circulated by friend of the firm that the I.C.W.U. refused a 50 per cent. advance.

Messrs. Crowe, Wilson and Co., Bridge street, have given advances of 33 1-3 per cent to all members of the I.C.W.U. under £200 per annum present wages, and 25 per cent. to those over that figure, the increase to date from 1st September last. Hodges, Figgis and Co., Grafton street, have given 25 per cent. increase as from 12th September. Messrs. E. Smithwick and Sons, Brewers, Kilkenny, have given a similar increase.

The Plate Glass and Silicate Marble Co., Dublin, has agreed to give a sum of £20 to each of their clerks, with an increase of 7s. 6d. per week as from October 26.

The Blanchardstown Mills Co.'s offer of 7s. 6d. a week to male employees and

2s. to women has been refused. 15s. to 17s. seems to be the high-water level for experienced clerks here, and 2s. is not enough.

The Dublin Alliance Gas Co. has conceded an advance which totals 24s. 3d. a week on pre-war wages. The claims of several grades are still under negotiation.

Messrs. Hunter and Co., Lt. Ormond Quay, have given increases of from 10s. to 15s. as from July 1. Claims have been made on O'Loughlin, Murphy and Boland for increases of 75 per cent. on present wages, and war-bonus to be consolidated as wages, and to be retrospective as from 1st January, 1918, with the abolition of overtime or payment at Union rates. The matter is being considered by the directors.

A strike has been called at J. Sharkie's, Ironfounder, Church street, where in 1918 the weekly wage was 22s., the excessively modest request for an advance of 50 per cent. having been declined.

The sanitary officers of the Corporation have, through the I.C.W.U., asked for an advance in wages of 50 per cent., and the increase of the war bonus to 20s. per week.

### Ware Serpents.

Thousands of Irish homes welcome "Ireland's Own," which has the reputation of being a clean and non-political weekly, but in answering a query about the number of prisoners of war made by the belligerents in the present conflict, the non-political editor speaks thus of the Russian Revolution:—

"Before Russia 'ratted' and was given over to the Bolshavik regime of rapine and murder."

This unscrupulous misrepresentation entitles him to wear a "War Worker's" Badge.

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## THE MOONEY CASE.

## PRISONERS' RESPONSE TO PRISONER'S APPEAL.

Jack B. Mooney writes that he was more than pleased with our Mooney special issue, and asks us to express his warm thanks to Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington for her contribution, which gave him a new proof of her kindness of heart and her zeal for justice. It was at one of her meetings in 'Frisco that Jack joined the Friends of Irish Freedom.

Last Saturday the Irish Trade Union Congress instructed the secretary to send a further cablegram to President Wilson and Governor Stephens demanding Tom Mooney's release, and recommended delegates to support the appeal of the Mooney Defence Fund for money to carry on its European campaign for the liberation of Mooney and Billings. Remittances should be sent to Jack B. Mooney, "The Voice of Labour," 27 Dawson St., Dublin.

Branch secretaries will please note that while we wish to receive notification of the adoption of resolutions on the Mooney case, we cannot promise publication.

## Irish Rebels Help Mooney.

As we go to press we receive from our old friend and comrade, Joe M'Grath, interned in Usk Prison and a candidate for the St. James's Division, a letter enclosing a subscription of £1 15s. 0d. for the Tom Mooney Fund. The subscription is made up by the following Irish prisoners interned in Usk: Joe M'Grath, George Geraghty, Barney Mellowes, Frank Shouldice, and J. J. Clancy, all noted fighters for freedom, rebels in spirit and deed and old friends of "The Voice" and "The Worker's Republic." Joe writes: "Comment from us unnecessary and impossible under present circumstances. I may add that reading the story in 'The Voice' one was struck with the likeness to many, many cases nearer home. I see you are kept very busy these times, and pray that your labours will have abundant fruit. I sincerely hope Tom Foran is quite well by now." Both our Irish and our American readers will appreciate this tribute from Irish prisoners to an American comrade, and wish all of them a speedy return to their labours. There is something fine about this exchange of fellow-feeling between jail and jail. Up, Usk!

## SHALL MOONEY HANG?

We have just thirty-six copies of Robert Minor's 48-page pamphlet, with fifty-eight pictures and we want as many shillings for them. 1,200,000 copies have been sold in U.S. and all profits went to the Mooney Molders' Defence Fund. Send us a shilling and we send you a copy of this book—the entire shilling goes to help to win Justice for Mooney. Address—JACK B. MOONEY, o/o "The Voice of Labour," 27 Dawson Street, DUBLIN.

## IRISH WOMEN'S FRANCHISE LEAGUE.

On Tuesday, 12th November, Mrs. Kettle, M.A., will deliver a lecture on Women in Politics at Westmoreland Chambers, 84 Westmoreland Street, Dublin.

## CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS.

To the Editor.

Sir,—Mr. Thomas Johnson struck the true note at the Labour Conference when he said they wanted to see our questions of political, social and economic policy looked at from the point of view of the working classes.

From the actions of the vast majority of the working classes it is obvious that they are the only class who refuse to look after their own interests. Every other class in the country spares no effort in safeguarding its interests. The only class which appears indifferent to its own interests is the working class. The working class will never come into its own until it becomes class-conscious, until it is prepared to look after its own interests, instead of placing them in the hands of members of the other classes.

The workers have already realised that it is necessary to unite in Trades Unions in order to safeguard their interests. They realise that it is necessary to have a powerful Union in order to compel the capitalists to give them a wage a little more than will satisfy their mere material wants. They would be insulted if anyone suggested making a leading capitalist the president of their trades union, for they realise that it is necessary to fight the capitalist in the industrial field.

But when we turn to the political field we find this policy reversed, and lawyers, militarists, capitalists and landowners being returned by the workers to represent their interests.

Now, if it is necessary to fight the capitalist in the industrial field it is also necessary to fight him in the political field.

So long as the political machine is controlled by capitalists, so long shall we have laws passed which will help to prop up our present social system, with its poverty at one end and luxury at the other.

The workers must learn to look after their own interests, and in order to do that they must be taught the necessity of controlling the political machine, after which it will be only a matter of time before we arrive at that state of society in which there will be equality of opportunity for all, a society based on justice and equity.

The working man must realise that no one can look after his interests as well as himself. Therefore it behoves every working man to join the Labour Party to-day, return Labour men to Parliament—and see that they do their duty.

I am, sir, yours fraternally,

FRED ROBINSON.

Dublin, Nov. 3rd, 1918.

## To Correspondents.

P.C. (Kilkenny).—Article too late for this week's issue. All current matter must be in hands before Tuesday. We quite agree with you, and have made arrangements for giving our views on the Irish Labour Party and a policy for Local Government elections, in an early issue.

B.J. (Belfast).—We appreciate your comments, but—we are more modest than that!

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## BELFAST I.L.P.

The following Public Meetings will be held on Sunday, 10th inst. :—

Central Hall, 77a Victoria St., at 7.30 o'clock. Speaker—Comrade Nolan.  
North Belfast Hall, Langley St., at 7.30 o'clock. Speaker—Comrade Kyle.

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