

WITH THE TRANSPORT WORKERS.

DUBLIN DOINGS.

Drapery Section.

A representative meeting of the Drapery Section held last week, considered and totally rejected the minimum rates suggested by the Merchant Drapers' Association on the ground that they were considerably below the wages at present being paid by the vast majority of drapery houses. It was decided, however, to slightly modify the original demand, and, having in mind the great difference between the conditions in larger concerns, as against those operating in smaller houses, to submit alternative proposals covering both grades, with a sliding scale for boys in each instance.

A fortnight's annual leave is claimed for employees working in first grade establishments, and a week's holiday for those engaged in the other houses, the normal working day in the trade to end not later than 6 p.m., with a half-holiday weekly. In order that the proposed classification of the various houses should be mutually agreed upon, it has been suggested that a conference be convened forthwith between the employers' and Unions' representatives, and the decision of the Association in the matter is now awaited.

Ironmongery Trade.

At a further conference with the Ironmongers' (Employers) Association a minimum wage of 60s. was secured for employees in the industry, together with a flat advance to members of the Union in the firms covered by our recent claims. The suggested rates for overtime are time and a quarter for the first two hours, and time and a half afterwards up to midnight, when double time is payable. The question of holidays was left in abeyance by the Association for the time being, pending the decision of the Employers' Federation on this matter. Upon acceptance of these proposals by our Ironmongery Section, the changed conditions will operate as from the first full pay day in July in the case of the firms immediately concerned, and in the other associated houses from the date on which the agreement is signed.

Smiths' Helpers.

In connection with the recent settlement with the Dublin Coach and Van Builders' Association affecting smiths' helpers and pumicers in the industry, application has been made for the terms of settlement to be now made effective in the case of our members engaged in firms outside the Association.

Grocers' Porters.

A settlement has been made with Messrs. Delahunt, Parnell Street, on behalf of their porters who are members of the Union, and a claim has been served on Messrs. Furlong, Townsend Street, in connection with the grocers' porter employed there.

In the Dublin Evening Herald recently a letter appeared drawing attention to the scandalous wages at present being paid to grocers' porters, and asking for public support in formulating a remedy for this state of affairs. It should hardly be necessary to point out at this time of day that the only certain remedy is the Union, but we recommend that unorganised grocers' porters should join up in our Grocery Section immediately if they want to materially improve their wages and working conditions on similar, or even better terms; than those secured by us in the past for their fellow workers who are Union members.

Shelbourne Park.

The Shelbourne Sports Co., Ltd., have agreed in full to the demands of the Union on behalf of the groundsman employed in the park.

Wire Mattress Workers.

A claim for improved conditions has recently been served on behalf of the employees now engaged by Messrs. Hilton Bros., Townsend Street, and the decision of the firm in connection therewith is expected immediately.

Saw Milling Dispute.

The strike in the builders' providers and saw milling industry has now terminated, a settlement being effected on the basis of an all-round increase of 2½d. per hour on the present working week.

Blanchardstown Mills.

In connection with the claim for increased wages in the case of the women employed at the various branches of this concern, a conference with the management is to be held this week, at which representatives of the I.C.W.U. and this Union will attend, when it is hoped that the matter in dispute will be finally disposed of.

O'Dea and Co., Stafford Street.

A claim for an all-round increase of 15s. per week has been served on behalf of the employees in this firm, with a request that the application be favourably considered immediately, with a view to a satisfactory settlement being arrived at by next pay day.

Mineral Water Section.

Application has been made to the Dublin Mineral Water Manufacturers' Association for a conference to be convened forthwith to discuss our recent claim for improved conditions, together with various other points raised at a recent meeting of the men concerned.

Furniture Section.

Owing to the highly unsatisfactory attitude adopted by the Employers' Association towards the question of retrospective payment in connection with the recent settlement in the furniture trade, grave dissatisfaction exists amongst the members of this section, and a stoppage of work is threatened next week-end, unless in the meantime the whole matter is reviewed, and steps are speedily taken to pay the back money to which the men claim they are justly entitled.

Printing Trade.

As a basis of settlement in the jobbing houses

an offer has been made by the Dublin Master Printers' Association of 10s. increase to the men, 2s. 6d. to juniors under 18, and 4s. to the women and to juniors over 18, and it is believed that, except in the case of the women, these proposals are likely to prove acceptable.

Newspaper Arbitration.

It is reported that the arbitration in connection with the newspaper offices has been definitely fixed for Saturday next at the Mansion House, when Lord Justice O'Connor will arbitrate.

DROGHEDA NOTES.

The Master Builders' Association have torn their agreement with the building workers to shreds. After a three weeks' strike in April last an arrangement was made whereby at the end of three months any increase in the cost of food over 5 per cent. (according to Board of Trade returns) would mean a similar percentage of increase (over 5 per cent.) on current wages. That arrangement was plain and explicit. It meant that as there was an increase of from 133 to 155 per cent. in the cost of food on the three months ended July 1, the men were entitled to 17 per cent. increase on current rates. That increase has not been given. That clause in the agreement has been violated. The men have been offered an increase of 12 per cent. No specious argument based on the clause entitles the men to 12 per cent. The apprenticed workers, who were entitled to a percentage advance on the increased food percentage over 10 per cent. secured the proper increase according to terms; but they got it on the condition that they admitted that the interpretation that gave it to them was wrong. They were bribed to sell the unskilled workers, and sacrifice their own interests during the latter half of the period covered by the agreement. The labourers fought a strike with them, and they have now sold their fighting comrades for a 12 per cent. "mess of pottage." The labourers have had to accept the bosses' violation of the arrangement. They do so under protest. The treachery of their "skilled" fellow workers made anything more than a verbal protest impossible. But it is a long lane that has no turning. If agreements are to be regarded as scraps of paper, if apprenticed workers act the part of traitors to their comrades and their class, we of the "lower orders" will trim our sails for these new breezes of dishonour and treason. "To hell with contracts!" may be an ugly motto, but if one party can send them to hell so can another. We will remember!

A Mysterious Strike.

What is the meaning of the strike of bricklayers and masons? What is it all about? Nobody seems to know. All that we do know is that the practice of one section of workers taking a line of action that results in large numbers of their fellow workers being locked out is a bad policy, and should be condemned. The "brickies" might at least have shown ordinary Trade Union courtesy by informing their comrades of their intention to strike.

"So are they all, all honourable men."

We remember at a famous Meath conference Mr. Mulvaney, of Dunshaughlin, now chairman of the Farmers' Union, expressing the opinion that the Transport Union only regarded agreements as things to be broken when opportunity offered. When challenged for facts in support of the charge he collapsed. We can in a way understand his cynicism now. He must have been measuring our honour by the standard set by his colleagues of the landed class. What has he now to say of those colleagues who are still standing out against the last agreement? Of honour and dishonour, thou, O Bossdom, art not the final arbiter and thy stalwarts, agents and supporters know nothing about the same!

"Suffer Little Children."

The Milk Ring still stands firmly to its policy of profiteering. The robber will defend his loot till the last ounce of public patience is exhausted. He smiles serenely at the Corporation's indictments, for the profits still flow in, and the robbery proceeds uninterrupted. What does the vampire care if children are under-nourished? He grows fat as they suffer the effects of malnutrition. We are tired of prescribing doses to reduce his girth, for no one will assist us in getting him to swallow them. What can be done with a community that so slavishly permits itself to be fleeced and its children to suffer? Twelve good men would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah. Are there twelve in Drogheda?

Slane.

After a long period of languor, is commencing to stretch its limbs once more. Sunday's meeting, the best held for some months, has put a new spirit of determination into the men. Briody and Ledwidge have come back into power. If the portents are reliable Slane rejuvenated will march into the vanguard again.

Munitions Fund Grows.

The £300 mark has now been passed, and the money still flows in. The extension of the fight to Drogheda has brought home to the community the realities of the struggle. Those who witnessed the magnificent stand of the railwaymen at the Drogheda Station will be more anxious than ever to assist these splendid fighters. Their attitude during the past week has been in the highest degree commendable. There was no argument. "Will you drive the train?" Thus the question implying a threat from an important official. "No" was the calm, steady reply, and it was final. The absence of argument was great. Bravo!

(Continued on page 8.)

GREAT ANNUAL LOCK-OUT IN BELFAST

From a Special Correspondent.

There is not a great deal to report in the industrial world at the moment, as the larger industries are enjoying (?) what is euphemistically called a holiday, but which we prefer to call this paragraph is headed, the Great Lock-out. For, Mr. Editor, it can surely not, with any show of reason, be termed a holiday when the workers are compelled to forego their wages; and when we consider that some of the Belfast workers spent the holiday carrying and beating huge drums on the Twelfth a distance of twelve miles or so, in celebration of the Glorious, Pious, and Immortal event, for ourselves we would prefer, we think, the drudgery of the shipyard or the mill to the more robust and muscular form of celebration indulged in.

We will be patient, however much we think the energy wasted, for does it not provide an opportunity to the scions of aristocratic families to make their debut as political orators—such debut being invariably preceded by a contribution to the Orange fund—and remind their auditors of the brilliant achievements of their forefathers at the Boyne and elsewhere, and does it not also give that weird and fantastic creature, the Unionist Trade Unionist, an opportunity of displaying an enthusiasm which up till the present he has refused to display on Labour Day, but which we think coming events will make him see the folly of his ways.

We refuse to be downhearted, for has not Colonel Madden been making speeches, and however much the local papers "dark it" we have heard the rumbling in the distance. If we know anything about this Colonel, he is the last we would have suspected of such an utterance, but speaking in Co. Monaghan last week he denounced the Unionist Party for deserting their comrades in the proposed excluded counties of Ulster, and signified his intention of working with his fellow countrymen of different shades of political and religious opinions for the better government of the country.

Exactly, Mr. Madden. We have been preaching it for years to the workers of the North, and we think we are shortly to come into our own. We have seen the Ulster Volunteer movement, with all its panoply for war, inaugurated, we have read its pronouncements of never accepting self-government for Ireland under any circumstances, we have watched its movements, we have seen its program modified and its willingness to accept the exclusion of Ulster and now the exclusion of the six counties. We can leave the Labour movement to complete the good work. The Socialist movement locally could help, if they would put their own house in order first, but isn't it deplorable, or worse—pusillanimous—to find this movement still a British one. Progressives are expected to lead, but evidently the Colonel Maddens are going to be allowed to set the pace.

Many queer happenings have taken place recently in the textile trades, and we have more than a suspicion that a considerable amount of "thimble-rigging" and duplicity is being indulged in for the purpose of "jockeying" members into a union against their wishes. We don't want to be unfair, as we know it is impossible to satisfy all members. We are not convinced, however, that everything is being done in a straightforward manner, and moreover, is not the swing of the pendulum in favour of organising on a national basis, and being federated nationally and internationally, rather than federated in an ambiguous way, which will be tantamount to the amalgamation of a quarter of a century ago.

We would think this should be apparent to those who are directing the movement. If not, will they pause to consider the treatment Irish railwaymen received in the matter of wages up till the beginning of the war. We have it on the authority of Mr. A. R. Neal, general manager of the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland, giving evidence before the Ratas Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Transport in London, that Irish railwaymen were paid 20 per cent. below English railwaymen. We would like to know if Irishmen are inferior beings in the eyes of English executives.

A public meeting was held in Cusendall on Tuesday, July 13, and was addressed by Colonel Malone, M.P., on "The New Order in Russia," Captain J. R. White on "Ulster and International Labour," and by Wm. McMillen, secretary Belfast branch I.T. & G.W. Union, on "Trade Unionism in Ireland." The meeting was a large and attentive one, and as it was a mixed audience of all classes and creeds it clearly demonstrates the better spirit of tolerance which pervades the North just now. The wisecracks shook their heads, and prophesied disturbances. They were false prophets. More meetings of a similar nature will do good.

W.M.M.

JOTTINGS FROM ULSTER.

Holiday Week.

A blue sea with a cooling break of foam, sands golden in the rays of a glorious sun, a slight breeze wafting now and then the music of the band or a discordant hoot from the hobby horses. What matters, the children play around, building mighty castles. Young men and maidens enjoy life. While the old people, basking in the sun, sit content and happy. "Holiday time, yes." And the hours pass swiftly, we seek to forget the mean streets of the sordid city and the end of the week, which brings once more the drudgery of the workshop and the stern fight of the coming months, to overtake the expense of this one brief week's respite. Six days out of three hundred and sixty-five. Little as it seems, it was only the fortunate few who received that much and were

able to get away. Thousands were forced to spend the week amid the foul air and dull monotony of the back streets in the city, cut off from all that's pleasant, all that's pure. For them the word holiday is a mockery. Made in the image of God, twentieth century industrialism merely condemns them to exist in what is best, perhaps, described by Wilde in writing of prison:

"With bars they blur the gracious moon
And blind the goodly sun,
And they do well to hide their hell,
For in it things are done
That Son of God nor son of man
Never should look upon."

Merely commonplace facts. Why write them? Simply, reader, to point out that you and I, who perhaps were among the fortunate few, have still a big job in front of us, if our class is to win some of the joys of the present life. Let the contrast above spur us on.

Twelfth July oratory may mean much or little—but I put it to you shipyard and textile workers, are you likely to ever be paid for the holiday week or earn such a wage as will enable you to take your children away to all that is best for them by going cap in hand to a lawyer or a landlord, or in fighting with your fellow man because he doesn't worship at your particular shrine? What little advantages you have gained have been won by your determination and unity. The enemy know that. It is nearly time holidays were being paid for. This would be the first step towards giving your less fortunate fellows a chance of getting away and help in converting your employer to the fact that you want less than 50 weeks' work in the year and more than six days' holiday.

Linen Trade Board.

The Piece Goods Trade Board (Great Britain) have settled on a 9d. per hour minimum for girls over 18, and 3½d. per hour for girls of 14 to 14½. This board is similar to the Irish one which met recently and after two days' conference came to no decision.

THOMAS AND ULSTER.

To the Editor of WATCHWORD.

The following taken from the Belfast News Letter's leader of July 10 is such a good corrective of J. H. Thomas's wriggles that I give it in the words of that paper:

"Mr. Thomas says there can be no settlement of the Irish question by following either extreme view, but in the next sentence he said there could be no solution which did not recognise as a first essential 'Ireland a nation.' But if Ireland were a nation the Sinn Feiners would be right, and the Government should concede their demand as promptly as possible. Ireland, however, is not a nation, never was one, and never can be allowed to become one. The partition of Ireland, he says, can never be a solution, and would leave a sore. But Ireland was partitioned for centuries before the English came, and the Home Rule Bill is only a partial return to 'the good old times.' But while Mr. Thomas is opposed to partition, he told the delegates that they would be foolish not to recognise that there is an Ulster problem. What exactly does he mean? As Ulster will not come under an Irish Parliament, there must be partition or coercion, and he is opposed to both. Yet he must choose. If he were a member of a Labour Government, as he hopes to be, he would have to adopt one policy or the other, and he should announce his intention now so that the electors would know how to vote. It is not to be assumed that he would want to obtain votes by false pretences. For a man who claims to be a practical politician his position is extraordinary. He is opposed to partition, but will not coerce Ulster; and he is opposed to separation, but will not condemn Sinn Fein. We suggest that he should go into retirement for a few weeks so that he might do a little clear thinking on the question which he has undertaken to settle."

Carsonism, by its vital falsehood, is to be thanked for exposing the kind of spineless Menshevism for which Thomas stands.

If Thomas was true to the workers whose cause he is supposed to represent, he would see the way out of the dilemma to which the News Letter pins him.

In the words of Sean MacCaughan in "Old Ireland" for July 19: "The plantation of Ulster was a violation of every moral law. It established in the Gaelic economy a social, religious and political structure based on murder, theft, chicanery, religious and national bigotry and legal fraud."

For proof of this read Lord Ernest Hamilton's (who is by way of being an apologist for the plantation) "Irish Rebellion of 1641." He speaks openly of the native population being "inconveniently large and prolific," and of Clanchester's methods of making room for the planters.

Thomas should realise that the judgments of history are slow but sure and terrible.

Hot burns the fire
Where wrongs expire,
Nor spares the hand
That from the land
Uproots the ancient evil.

Providence has permitted the great wrong done in the Ulster plantation to wait unavenged till it could play its part in the achievement of a greater right.

Ulster will not be coerced from without, but from within, and that by a double process: (1) the steady growth of the Irish Volunteers restoring Ulster to Ireland; (2) the steady growth of international communism among the Protestant workers restoring Ireland to the world.

J. R. WHITE.