

THE PAPER FOR "INSECTS."

IRISH OPINION

The VOICE OF LABOUR

EDITED BY CATHAL O'SHANNON.

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JULY 13, 1918.

ONE PENNY

Organising the Women.

Wage Slavery.

Insect Language Article by C.U.

The Proclamation—Hush!

Labour in Ireland is the uncompromising enemy of Tyranny, and the unsatisfied lover of freedom in whatever manner tyranny and freedom may manifest themselves. We care not in whose name or under whose banner tyranny may assert itself, there is the enemy of all that Labour stands for. We care not in whose name or under whose banner freedom may raise her voice, there is the divinity in whose service and for whose love Labour will spend itself both in body and soul. How could it be otherwise when freedom is the most precious thing in all the world's store? Beside freedom, wealth, riches, prosperity, material conditions are as nothing; they are the merest material dross. But freedom is of the soul, godly, divine. With a love that is passionate, strong and fierce, and yet gentle, mild and kindly, the lover of freedom pursues his enchantress and his soul is in torment until the satisfaction of its desires brings him content.

We are, therefore, the champions not only of our own class, but of every class and party and people to whom freedom is denied. In all ages, in all countries, we of the working class have toiled and suffered, slaved and fought in every battle and war for freedom of which history has any record. In Ireland our devotion to liberty is no less notable and glorious than in any other country. We have fought and sacrificed and suffered; if need be, and there may well be need, we shall do as much and more again. Freedom for our class, freedom to live

its own life, to guide its own action, to mould and speak its own thought is all we ask. We ask it for our class, for our nation, for our people, and for every individual amongst us. For others we ask no less than for ourselves; for ourselves no more than for others, and no less.

Labour, therefore, ranges itself in the ranks of those who are opposed to the suppression of liberty here as elsewhere. To that suppression we shall never assent, against it we shall never cease to strive. It is vain and idle, therefore, for those who have set themselves, against our will, as governors over us, to issue their proclamations and ukases. You may deny the right of association, you may deny the liberty of the press, you may proclaim all meetings, processions and assemblies, you may prevent freedom of speech. But you have not conquered, and you shall not conquer, gentlemen of Empire, for your material force is poor and puny compared with the strength of soul that is in this people. Names of organisations are nothing; it is the ideal, the idea, the will and passion behind the name, and these are all things, and because freedom in all things is the burning desire of Labour, because freedom in all things and for all people is the grand passion and stern purpose of Labour, Labour in Ireland will hold up the banner of freedom and claim comradeship with all those who are struck at by tyranny, because of this Labour proclaims anew its old allegiance to the greatest of all causes, and its undiminished and undiminishing resistance to all and every instrument and manifestation of oppression. For liberty must be subserved whatever occurs.

The Connolly Ideal.

SOME NOTES BY MAUD EDEN.
II.

Co-operative Work and Play.

James Connolly interested himself in the smallest details of the Co-operative shop and workrooms. I do not think we realise enough how keen he was on co-operation. He wished to see the workers build up a Co-operative Commonwealth, and by degrees to take possession of all industry. We have in Liberty Hall a flourishing shirt factory now called by his name. But no better memorial to him could be devised than the establishment of similar enterprises all over Ireland. Let us have little industries, little enterprises springing up all over Ireland. Why not, for example, have co-operative tea-shops and cafes connected with the trade unions in towns and villages all over Ireland?

Connolly especially believed in the social side of the Labour movement. He saw that comrades must not only work together, but play together. He had no use for the middle-class Socialist or social reformer who insists upon being treated with "proper respect," and sneers at our social entertainments.

It is not enough to read Connolly or quote Connolly, it is necessary to be like Connolly.

He himself would have thought far more of a shirt bought from a co-op. than of the most thrilling speech delivered in his memory.

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

Wage Slavery.

"The only effective remedy for our present disabilities," says the Transport and General Workers' Union, "is the control of industry in the interest of the community by the organised working class." Not more wages only, not shorter hours only, not better housing and better conditions only, not mere improvements only, but, mark you, "the only effective remedy for our present disabilities." It was ever the same with a class or people striving for its emancipation from slavery, ever it was seeking the only effective remedy from its present disabilities. This effective remedy Labour will find only in the control of industry by the organised working class. This it is that distinguishes the reformist from the revolutionist; the former seeks only palliatives, the latter seeks not palliatives but a complete and absolute change of system, a revolution, and Labour seeks it by the path indicated by the Transport and General Workers.

This democratic control of industry is impossible without the abolition of the present system of capitalist control. The present system is founded upon the basis of wage-slavery, the most galling of all the chains that have ever bound a class, for the wages system is the very source and root of capitalism and all the evils, slavery of mind and body, poverty, destitution, and misery, that flow from capitalism. The wages system has nothing to redeem it. Evil as they were, serfdom and slavery had each some features to lighten and make tolerable its burden if they did not excuse or justify it. But wavery has no such virtues to commend it to men of thought and feeling. Under wavery the worker is bound both in soul and body, for he cannot call the one his own while his employer commands the other. Under the wages system labour is simply a commodity like cattle, corn or coal, to be bought and sold at what is frankly and unashamedly called the market price. It is just this bondage of body and soul that distinguishes labour from every other commodity.

The Labour Market.

That labour is a commodity under capitalism, to be bought and sold at the demand and supply and will and desire of the owners of money and property, is the terrible fact slowly and painfully dawning upon the Labour movement. It ought long ago have become obvious to all whom capitalism and self-interest have not blinded to the naked truth. Capitalism buys and sells labour just as it buys and sells land, machinery, and material for production or distribution, only it buys and sells labour at a lesser price, and cares it less tenderly. Who ever heard, for instance, of a firm that spent £10,000 as its initial outlay on original stock offering half of that £10,000, or any portion of it, as a price for the purchase of the privilege to use labour as it pays for the privilege of using land or machinery or buildings or raw ma-

terial? No, it purchases labour with the promise of mere wages, and the men who have neither land nor machinery nor raw material to sell, rush and sell, for the mere promise, the only thing they have to sell, their labour and their bodies, their physical and mental powers, their strength, ability and skill. That this should not be so, that labour should not be a commodity, that the worker should not be treated as machinery or land or coal or corn, but as a human being, and that the devilish institution of the labour market—not one whit less satanic and degrading than the hellish soul-market of the streets of civilisation's great cities—is the faith of all who have not yet passed beyond the bounds of humanity, and it is the creed of the awakening working class. For the labour market is a soul-market, too, and the wage slave who seeks to act and feel, or think and speak as if his soul were free finds himself immediately in the human chattel-market again. He calls it "out of a job, unemployed, idle"; the employer is not so mealy-mouthed, he and his press speak the blunt and brutal truth, and call it "the labour market." The worker's labour is his only goods, the only thing he has to sell, and when he sells his labour he sells his body, and with it he must needs sell his soul, for in life the two are inseparable. This then is the boasted glory of capitalist civilisation, and its abolition is the first step towards freedom in any real sense. The wage system must go, and with it will go all that is vile and inhuman in the property and all other relations between man and man. Then will succeed the democratic and human control of industry by the workers, and that will be the dawn of the Workers' Republic.

It is this Labour at Waterford is asked to recognise and emblazon on its banner.

Delegates for Congress.

Little less important than the choice of leaders and officers is the choice of the delegates to the annual Congress. The Unions, therefore, must see to it that the men and women they send to Waterford next month are the best in quality their respective organisations can send forward. Choose no delegate for his urbanity and popularity, choose none for sentimental reasons of any kind, choose none because he deserves the trip and is worthy of honour. Choose each and every one of them because he is best fitted for the responsibility of representing his union, his class, and his movement. We are not asking for delegates of any particular school of thought, whether of economic or political thought. Give us, rather than an incapable block who believes in the Republic and the Workers' Republic, the capable delegate who believes in the Empire and the wage system. That, perhaps, is an exaggerated way of putting what we want, but at worst it makes it clear that we want the ablest, the best, the most capable of forming a sound judgment. These are the delegates Congress needs. The

Unions can give them if they will, and they must give them if the Waterford Congress is to discharge worthily the duties imposed upon it by the importance of the event and the time at which it is to be held. Labour is at the parting of the ways, it is faced with mighty tasks, and it wants its best men and women if it is to undertake these tasks in a manner worthy of Labour's Army of Liberty.

BOOKS FOR THE WORKERS.

The correspondents who have inquired the sources of the quotations from *Æ* used as headlines in our recent issues will find them in "The National Being," of which Messrs. Maunsel have published a cheap edition at one and sixpence. "The National Being" removes the reproach that Socialism is exotic or alien, for these thoughts on an Irish polity are a plea for and an exposition of the co-operative commonwealth set forth by an Irishman for his fellow-countrymen's consideration. It is an attempt to "populate the desert depths of national consciousness," and to generate an intellectual concern about the commonplace bread labour of the mass of the people, out of which the nation's existence springs and is maintained.

In the summer days our workers should take "The National Being" with them when they escape to the shore, for it treats economics and sociology with a grace unexcelled since Oscar Wilde's "Soul of Man Under Socialism." In the winter drawing too swiftly on, our trade union branches should make the study of this book the object of reading circles. "If we are to build a body for the soul of Ireland it ought not to be a matter of reckless estimates or jerrybuilding."

Those who are building that body will not neglect to make Patrick H. Pearse a head corner-stone of the structure. In the Heaven of Gerontius there is nothing material, but frieze and column and cornice and paving are living spirits. So in the new Ireland will be framed the eternal spirit of Pearse, which speaks to us in "The Story of a Success." St. Enda's was a seed-plot for a few fortunate plants. We are envious of those happy boys who nourish precious memories and cherish its enkindling ideal. But its lesson to us is that when we free the teacher, not entirely from financial danger or the risks incident to life, but from the harassment of dictatorial management, then and only then can we have education. The recent meeting of clerical managers is depressing in its sole outcome, a demand for the submission of text-books to their censorship, and an attempt to tighten up the diocesan machinery of management. Management, not education, is their chosen function. Would we had power to doom every manager to read a paragraph of Pearse's "Success" every day for a year!

Transport Union News.

THE MIGRATORY LABOURERS.

Ald. J. Lynch, of Sligo, and Michael Masterson, of Achill, representing the Irish Transport Union, Connaught and Donegal branches have had a meeting in Glasgow and Mr. Jams Strang, secretary, and the directors of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Potato Merchants' Association. Although the meeting lasted six hours, no settlement was made. The merchants, indeed, are trying a new game which, however, is bound to fail. They are advertising in the local press:

THE POTATO CROP.

Labourers Urgently Needed for the Harvest

appealing for parents and teachers to supply child labour to replace the Irish workers who, it is suggested, are afraid to come over because of conscription. To secure their aid in recruiting child labour, a meeting of school teachers was called, but the response was not great. The Transport Union representatives are placing their case before the Glasgow Trades Council, and are making it plain that the Irish workers are not coming until a trade union agreement is made guaranteeing the rate of pay and decent housing conditions.

Better the Scotch potatoes should rot in the ground than that boys and girls from Ireland should be herded without separation of sexes in leaky outhouses and barns, with no sanitary accommodation, and forced to consort with syphilitic tramps and prostitutes, the only kind of Scotch labour that will accept the miserable wages and vile conditions on most of the farms.

Evidence has come into our hands that some of the gaffers in Achill maintain secret communication with the potato merchants, while pretending to stand by the workers. More will be heard of them.

The child labour stunt will certainly fail, and time is on the side of the Irish worker. Every day makes it more necessary that labour should be obtained, and the workers have only to remain steady to get all they want.

A special train has been sent by the Railway Executive Committee to Achill Sound to take away the migratory labourers. They are not going, but it would be interesting to learn who has paid and is paying for the special. We should not be surprised to hear of kidnapping.

J. R. Clynes had not (by Monday) acknowledged the telegram sent by the Union, but, presumably, he is responsible for the special train and for the R.I.C. and Glasgow C.I.D. men who are dogging Alderman Lynch and Michael Masterson's footsteps around Glasgow.

Kilkenny.—Mr. Wm. O'Brien, President of the Trade Union Congress, and P. Coates, organiser I.T. and G.W.U., had a successful meeting on 7th inst. A branch of the Union will begin working here at once. Mr. Coates has just established a branch at New Ross, with local sections in surrounding district.

Kilrossenty.

A Wages Board Inspector here has been interviewing some hard cases. One farmers' lady, learning that the Inspector came from the North, said: "I'm surprised that you should trouble about the trash. I'm a Southern Unionist, you know. We expect you to back us up." "Oh," said the inspector, "I might be a Northern Nationalist!" We don't know the gentleman's politics, but he did not permit the lady's politics to influence his actions.

A Union delegate and Farmer Hobbs, the evictor, have been engaged in fist-cuffs.

How Strikes are Caused.

An instance of the farmers' disregard of law and the obligations of honour and religion turns up at Hazelhatch, County Dublin, where a Belfast settler has three labourers. One of them, the foreman, who takes charge when the Boss is away, is a married man with a wife and six children. He receives the wage of 14s. per week in cash, with perquisites, which do not exceed the value of 5s. 10d. Another man receives 8s. a week, and the third man has 6s. The latter have no perquisites. And for these wages have to work ten hours on six days, and take a hand in all the Sunday's work. Mr. Woodburn, when approached to pay the Union and Farmers' Association wage to these men consigned the Union to Hell. Now, Sir T. W. Russell, do we desire to reap a harvest when we tolerate such conditions?

Arklow Wanglers.

At last the Kynoch's. clique has been compelled to inform the Ministry of Labour that they decline to recognise the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The Ministry has called on the Union to furnish proof that it represents the unskilled workers of Arklow.

Bonus Conceded.

After months of pressure this firm has at last agreed to pay the twelve and a half bonus, which would never have been extended to the unskilled men but for the Union.

Back Pay Wanted.

However, the bonus is only to be paid as from May. It became due in November, 1917, so this bunch of English exploiters of the mere Irish want to keep back six months' bonus. Arklow will fight this cunning selfishness to the last.

Nenagh.

A great Labour demonstration has been arranged for 14th July, the anniversary of the seizure of the Bastille and the beginning of the French Revolution.

British Casualties.

For week ending June 30th, 1918, 27,830. According to the "Labour Leader" the total British casualties from the beginning of the war amount to 2,645,221, including 600,348 killed.

Not Jack Tanner.

Chairman of Tribunal, to elderly gent, appealing for his last man—"Could you not carry on with a girl?"

Elderly Gent.—"I am not a man of that kind, sir!"—"Forward."

THE FRENCH RAMP.

Representatives of the French Government are in Dublin attempting to recruit agricultural labour for service in France. In other times such a delegation might be welcomed, but it is doubtful if there is sufficient labour in Ireland to meet the demands of the coming harvest.

If there is any surplus labour to "export" there are some dangers against which Irish workers should secure themselves before pledging their services in France. Under the military service conventions all male British subjects in France are liable to military service either in the French or English Army. Looking to the record of English ministers' broken pledges, it is doubtful if any certificates of immunity they grant would be honoured in the future.

Another danger arises from the mixture of populations. Are Irish men and women workers to consort with Senegalese and Chinese labourers? Further, what facilities exist for the practice of religion? The secularisation of ecclesiastical buildings and the suppression of the religious orders have very much reduced the facilities for worship. Apart from these questions there must be full guarantees that all workers sent will be under civil control, that union delegates will be free to travel among them, and that negotiations take place directly between the French Department and the Unions, without any English intervention.

SCOTTISH FARM SERVANTS' UNION.

The annual general meeting was held at Perth on June 22nd, under the presidency of Dr. G. B. Clark, ex-M.P., and was attended by delegates from 15 District Councils. Resolutions demanding better houses and water supply, weekly payment of cash wages, the weekly half-holiday, 50 hour working week, abolition of hiring terms, monthly engagements, stoppage of Sunday compulsory volunteer drills, etc., were adopted. Arrangements have been made to facilitate the transfer of member to and from the N.U.R. and other Unions. A woman member, Mrs. Laing (Mid-Lothian) was elected to the Executive Committee.

IRISH TAILORS' UNION

The project of an Irish Union for tailors and tailoresses was advanced by the meeting in the Ardee Hall, Dublin, on July 1st. Mr. E. Murphy presided. Mr. Dermot Stewart, the acting secretary, intimated that promises of support had been received from all quarters. Past experience had shown them that the Amalgamated Society, with its headquarters outside Ireland, with an Executive ignorant of Irish conditions, could not serve the interests of the Irish clothing trade employees. Recently they had been badly let down by their executive, and the time had come to fashion a better weapon.

A provisional committee was appointed and instructed to get in touch with the trade centres throughout Ireland. All interested and every Irish garment worker ought to be, should communicate with Mr. Dermot Stewart, 3 Eastmoreland Place, Haddington Road, Dublin.

The Food problem will be solved, not by the profiteers, but by Co-operative Societies—A.E.

THE INTERNATIONAL.

Norway.

The Socialist Party now has, in a population of two and a quarter millions, a dues-paying membership of 80,000. The annual conference has declared itself opposed to conscription and in favour of strikes against war.

Russia.

The Petrograd Soviet elections up to June 21st show a Bolshevik victory—212 Bolsheviks, 21 Socialist Revolutionaries of the Left (who work with the Bolsheviks), 3 Socialist Revolutionaries of the Right, and 1 Menshevik have been elected.

Germany.

Thus the Independent Social Democratic Party:—"The proletariat must defend its interests as a class against the avowed reactionary interest of the capitalist and landowning classes. The struggle against reaction at home is at the same time a struggle for a durable peace of the peoples. For the internal enemies of the people are also the prophets of a foreign policy based on force."

Italy.

The manifesto of the Socialist Parliamentary Group expresses its "irreducible opposition to the war, which explains the repudiation of any 'sacred union' having the aim of extracting from this war a new incentive to war, an addition to the oppression of peoples, and the consolidation of the capitalistic system, against which there will rise to-morrow—owing to the terrible lesson of facts—the true Revolutionary International of the Workers.

"The Italian Parliamentary Socialist Group expresses once again its profound sense of solidarity with all the victims of all countries and its indissoluble fraternity with all who suffer from the internal reaction that is born of war."

Holland.

As a result of the recent elections the Catholic and Socialist Parties are now the largest groups in the Chamber. The latter have improved their position by 46 per cent. and the former by 20 per cent. The Socialist Labour Party now holds 22 seats, the Catholic Party 30.

BRITISH SOCIALIST OPINION.

"The Call" (London), the organ of the B.S.P., declares the Cabinet is "still fiddling" with Ireland, and sums up the position in relation to "Federalism," and Asquith's suggested reference to the Imperial Conference in these terms:—"The time has gone for 'schemes' or patched-up settlements, either on the basis of the defunct Home Rule Act or the abortive recommendations of the Convention. There is but one solution: to concede to the Irish people the full right of self-determination and to leave them to determine whether they will enter any scheme of Federal Home Rule that may ultimately be devised."

"SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY."
NOT HALF!

The Mooney Case.

Tom Mooney, who was found guilty of murder on the bought, false evidence of a policeman's pal, and in face of photographic proof that he was a mile and a quarter away from the scene of the alleged murder at the time libelled, has at length been sentenced to death. The execution is due to happen between 28th July and 28th August. The President has intervened but ineffectively. Mooney's life has been saved by the Bolsheviks and may yet be saved by a continuance of world-wide trade union pressure on the Ambassadors of the Sweet Land of Liberty.

Black Hundreds.

Anyone in California suspected of lukewarmness in the Allies' cause is liable to be tarred and feathered by the "Knights of Loyalty," a Masonic patriotic order.

Murder Unrebuked.

Robert Prager, a German, who held a certificate of loyalty to U.S., was hanged by a mob at Collinsville, Ill. The leaders of the mob were indicted for murder but found not guilty by a jury.

The Black Death.

Jim McSheron, a negro, was seized by a mob on Feb. 21, tortured with red-hot irons and burned at the stake.

Rose Stokes.

A Socialist woman has been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for the following sentence in a letter:—"I am not for the Government. . . . No Government which is for the profiteers can also be for the people, and I am for the people, while the government is for the profiteers."

They should stamp on every form of rebel as they would on a poisonous insect.
—Lord French.

TILLET'S NEW TURN.

Ben Tillett, M.P., trade union official, music hall turn, and speech-maker, has been in Ireland trying to induce those who left his union for the I. T. and G. W. U., to return to the fold. The extent of his success and the temper in which Ben has left Ireland may be judged from the wire he sent to his old pal, J. D. P. French, on the 14th inst.:—"Viscount French, Dublin.—Wishing you success, courage and energy in your great work. I appreciate the importance of your task by my own experience at meetings in Ireland. Good luck.—Ben Tillett, Ardearn, Co. Cork." Viscount French replied:—"Very many thanks for your encouraging telegram. On my part I appreciate your great effort in the cause of freedom, and have always done so."

French's "great work" includes the suppression of all public meetings in Ireland, of all political parties that do not support the British connection, and of the Gaelic League, the arrest and deportations of those who, were Ireland free, would be the chosen rulers of the people, and the maintenance of a military domination.

Ben Tillett wishes him luck!

IN FUTURE ISSUES.

Mr. W. N. Ewer, the author of that wonderful poem, "Five Souls," which has been circulated the world over, and a prominent member of the National Guilds League, has written for us an article entitled "The Fate of the Peasants," dealing with the application of the Socialist solution to agricultural problems. Our readers in the rural branches of the Transport Workers, the N.A.U.L., and the Workers' Union should make sure of getting this article by ordering "The Voice" in advance.

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What was that point or subject you had a doubt about? You heard something which you consider is not right? I want to know on what you disagree. Come to 29 Eden Quay and see me on the matter, or write. I will give it every attention.

Whoever suggests our sectional system is wrong cannot have investigated the matter. We have only to point to this Union, whose membership is rapidly running to six figures, carrying on their business successfully on this system.

Now, to those who are waiting for me to call, I would suggest: Can none of you call on me to join up? "Come over here" to 29 Eden Quay any morning from 11 a.m. till 1.30 p.m., or 3 o'clock p.m. till 6.30 p.m.

The sub-committee have set to work in a business-like way. If you have a subject you would like considered, or a point or idea in mind, send it in or talk it over with the secretary of your section.

Henceforward such matters shall be announced in this paper, so I trust you shall get it weekly, it being the organ of the Union it shall give you all the up-to-date information on trade union matters and methods.

T. GORDON.

29 Eden Quay.

More Fruits in Cork.

Recent advances secured for Cork workers by the Transport Union include: Butter section, 4s. to 9s., minimum 33s.; mineral water section, scale for girl starting at 9s., rising to 17s. 6d.; boys 9s. to 30s. (advance for women of from 7s. to 9s., and men from 4s. to 7s.); grocers' porters in Allcock's, 6s. 6d.; Cork Cap Factory (girls), 3s. 6d.; cattlemen in Steampacket and Clyde, 7s. 6d.; carters in John Wallis and Sons, 7s. 6d.; coalmen in Whitehaven, Suttons, Col-

Another Fort.

On Sunday D. Houston addressed a large meeting at Cloughroe and established a strong agricultural branch.

Cork City.

In the City Hall CaCthal O'Shannon, supported by Mr. P. Nagle, Executive, and Mr. R. Hawkins, Chairman, addressed a general meeting of several of the city branches on the Congress, the present position of the Union, and the changes in methods and policy of Trade Unionism.

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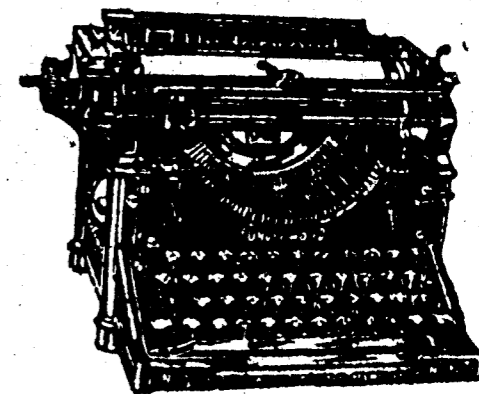
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THE IRISH WOMEN WORKERS' UNION.

Messrs. Hely of Denmark Street failed to adopt the minimum rates for women employees in the Printing and Allied Trades arranged between this Union and the Master Printers' Association, and which are now in operation in all the large houses in the city. They ignored the representations of the I.W.W.U. committee, and ignored the strike notice sent in on behalf of the workers. Instead, they put in the women's bags on Friday evening sums amounting to a 20 per cent. increase. The women employed at Messrs. Hely number 160. Every woman returned the increase offered, and the whole 160 remained out on Saturday. The women have a good case, and their spirit is magnificent. There are no better trade unionists in Ireland than Hely's employees. The best indication of the wages paid them hitherto is in the fact that an increase of 20 per cent. only brings the wages of two of the whole staff to the 14s. minimum!

The subject of extended organisation is engaging the attention of the committee, and efforts will be made to consolidate and strengthen the industries which now form sections of the Union.

Thought Needed.

We venture to suggest that Irish trade unionists have not given sufficient real thinking to this question of the organisation of women. They accept too easily the theory prevailing in England, that to organise men and women in the same unions, based on the principle of "equal pay for equal work," is the ideal to aim at. But a fundamental difficulty in the way of this ideal is the fact that in only a very few industries are women doing equal work with men and under similar conditions as men. Where real equality does exist, obviously the only efficient method is united organisation. But in the great majority of industries and trades, the women, even when working side by side with men, are doing different and more inferior work. In these cases we doubt if it is most to the women's advantage to organise with the men, at any rate, in these days, when the economic position of women is still so weak. That economic weakness re-acts against them even within the trade union, where they are frequently unable to pay equal contributions with the men. It is hard, almost impossible, for the women who are working in an inferior grade of work to obtain equal powers and rights with the men in a trade union. It generally means that their affairs are managed for them by the men, with the result that the women do not gain any real independence of spirit, nor

learn to control

and direct the management of their industries in those minor ways now possible to trade unions. Moreover, in a too large number of cases, working women are subjected to a system of petty exploitation and work under conditions of petty (but none the less injurious) injustices, so that their affairs need the constant, patient attention of an executive committee. It may be said

that a sub-committee of women would meet this difficulty, but it would not do so unless it had the powers of an Executive. The men have no time to spare for the minor, yet fundamentally important, grievances of the women. Here in Ireland industrial conditions for women are almost chaotic, and until the women themselves have got a grip on things, and are well started on a path of reform and regularisation, it would seem as if a women's trade union should prove the most valuable to them.

The Present Needs.

We do not want to lay down laws on this subject. The whole position of women in society is in the melting pot, and it is hard to foresee on what lines their social evolution will proceed. It is quite possible that the present tendency of women to take on men's work may cease, and that there may be a more pronounced separation of sexes into different industries. Once the whole field of professions, trades and industries is open to them, women may fall naturally into those special departments which they feel to be most congenial to them. But in advocating women's unions rather than organisations common to both sexes, we are thinking of the present immediate needs, which seem to be (1) to develop the courage and independence of women workers by giving them the full responsibility of their own organisation, and (2) to raise them gradually to equality with men workers in status and wages. Can these objects be achieved if they are organised as a sort of offshoot of the men's unions?

We should like to see this whole question well ventilated and discussed, as it is of growing importance in the Trade Union movement. "A chain is as strong as its weakest link!"

EMBROIDERERS' WAGES.

The Trade Board established under the Trade Boards Act for the Linen and Cotton Embroidery Trade in Ireland at a meeting held on 2nd July gave effect to their proposals to fix certain minimum rates of wages for piece-work in the finer classes of handkerchief embroidery.

The Board also resolved to give notice of proposal to fix piece-rates similarly for medium and coarse handkerchief embroidery, and for the finer and coarser classes of embroidery on voiles, muslins, underclothing and household linens.

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