

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE HEADQUARTERS

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SECRET

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NOTES OF THE WORK OF THE C. I. B. DIVISION
FOR THE WEEK ENDING 21ST OCTOBER

Table of Contents

- Para. 1. General Characteristics of the Period.
- " 2. BRITISH COLUMBIA: The Federated Labour Party.
- " 3. In the Loggers' Union.
- " 4. The Vancouver Labour Church.
Name changed to "People's Sunday Evenings"
Mrs. Rose Henderson's address.
- " 5. Individual Agitators.
J. Edward Bird
J. S. Woodsworth
J. Stack
J. A. Greider.
J. Kavanaugh.
- " 6. Miscellaneous Notes.
The Shipyard Strike
O. B. U. enrolling Indians.
The Chinese Labour Association
The Pile drivers and the O. B. U.
- " 7. ALBERTA: The Strike in the Coalfields
The Drumheller situation.
Situation at Fernie.
Picketing at Michel.
Situation at Coalhurst.
Blairmore and Hillcrest.
- " 8. The Closed-shop Order.
- " 9. The Edmonton Labour Church
- " 10. Edmonton Notes.
S. P. of C. dead.
Building Trades Unit and the C. L. C., O. B. U.
- " 11. SASKATCHEWAN: The O. B. U. in the North.
- " 12. MANITOBA: O. B. U. losing Ground in Winnipeg.
- " 13. Cross-Currents in the O. B. U.
Conversations with Willcocks
Ivens losing ground.
O. B. U. declining.
- " 14. Dominion Labour Party.
- " 15. O. B. U. dissensions in the Press.
- " 16. Miscellaneous Notes.

- Ben Legere at Lawrence, Mass.**
Winnipeg Labour Church.
- " 17. **ONTARIO: J. R. Knight**
- " 18. **The Labour College.**
At Toronto
At Hamilton
- " 19. **The Jewish Socialist League**
- " 20. **Almazoff's Activities**
- " 21. **Foreigners in Hamilton.**
- " 22. **QUEBEC: More News of the O. B. U. Convention.**
The resolutions passed.
The quarrel with the L. W. I. U.
- " 23. **General Workers' Unit in Low Water.**
- " 24. **"The Worker".**
- " 25. **Miscellaneous Notes.**
Hvat on the Third International
A. S. E. join the O. B. U.
Guson
Anna Buller
- " 26. **MARITIME PROVINCES: Coal Strike possible.**
1. General Characteristics of the Period

The strike in the Alberta coalfields drags on. In the Drumheller area our latest reports describe a general drift back to the miners, though it is noted that news of sympathetic strikes elsewhere would give the spirits of the men a fillip. In Fernie and Michel the strike also persists, but it had not spread down the Pass. Press reports state that the strike in the Pass has come to an end.

The quarrel in the O. B. U. is not so much in evidence in this week's reports, though some additional particulars have come to light. It appears, however, that the decision to move the headquarters to Winnipeg was definite; whether the change is to be immediate, or is to depend upon a referendum, has not been made clear. Further, the "Class" system was definitely adopted.

Recent reports suggest very strongly that the O. B. U. is a declining force. Its quarrel with the Loggers' Union puts it into a position of antagonism with a body which so far has been considered the heart of the whole movement; the Lumber Workers have the largest membership of any constituent body, they have spent more money in missionary work than any others, and on the whole they have more influence with the revolutionary press than Midgley and his associates have. Simultaneously, in Winnipeg its fight with the Internationals is going badly; in the third quarter of the year its membership there declined from 12,500 to 9,200, and its meetings now wear an air of discouragement.[4]

I. BRITISH COLUMBIA

2. The Federated Labour Party

Contradictory reports have been rendered to us lately upon the Federated Labour Party. The more favourable one says in part:-

"This body was organized about 2 years ago, and is composed of those members of the International Trade Unions who desire participation in politics as a labour organization. While the Trades and Labour Council adopts an attitude of indifference towards parliamentary etc. campaigns, the F. L. P. seeks acquisition of influence through representation in the Legislative Assembly."

It is added that many O. B. U. and S. P. of C. members belong. The present secretary, one MacInnes, who succeeded W. R. Trotter a couple of months ago, gives the membership as 3,000, and says that in the coming Provincial election the party will contest about 20 seats, including 4 in Vancouver.

The other report says:-

"It appears that through disorganization and opposition the Federated Labour Party is not at the present active, nor in good standing in Victoria.

"No meetings have been held by this Party here since 10th April, 1920".

3. In the Loggers' Union

A report on the L. W. I. U., dated Vancouver 30th September, says:-

"There is a good deal of discussion in the Hall and out of it about the impending split in the affairs of the O. B. U. This refers to the split between Midgley and Winch. Operative found out that Logan, who was chairman of the Convention at Port Arthur, had referred to the Loggers with some contempt and slurred them and their occupation and openly showed his regard for them as being an ignorant and illiterate set of men. This had made quite a deep impression on a lot of members of the Loggers' Union here. Winch is being extensively inquired about now".

Winch, it appears from other sources, was making a somewhat leisurely journey homewards, visiting outlying centres of activity as he went.[5]

4. The Vancouver Labour Church

The Vancouver Labour Church met on Sunday 10th October, Mrs. Rose Henderson being the principal speaker. The title of the organization was changed to "People's Sunday Evenings". Mrs. Henderson's topic was "Criminals in the Making", and was based on her experiences as a member of the Juvenile Court in Montreal. "The deductions made by her were, that the existing order of society, and economic conditions were responsible for ill-bred children and criminals. The ruling class, she said, sins according to the Code, and does not get punished, but the poor people sin against the Code, and are mercilessly being punished".

5. Individual Agitators

J. Edward Bird, who is legal adviser to the O. B. U., and has acted on behalf of the I. W. W., presided at a meeting of the G. A. U. W. which was held in Vancouver on 3rd October.

J. S. Woodsworth addressed the Socialist meeting in Vancouver on 10th October. His address was on "the history of the human race", and was of an academic cast. The audience numbered only 18.

J. Stack, who was made chairman of the future policy committee at the Coast convention of the L. W. I.U., has left that body altogether to do I. W. W. agitation. He denounces all the O. B. U. men Winch, Midgley, etc.

Another report describes this man as too heavy a drinker to be an effective agitator.

J. A. Greider, a very active agitator, is holding meetings in Southern British Columbia, in and near Nelson.

J. Kavanaugh was the speaker at the Socialist meeting in Vancouver on 10th October. He said nothing important.

6. Miscellaneous Notes

The strike in the steel shipyards of Vancouver is among the [6] plumbers, sheet metal workers and steamfitters. It affects from 75 to 100 men.

The annual fair at Prince Rupert attracted a considerable number of Indians, and the local O. B. U. signed up about 100 of them. Special concessions were made to them in the matter of dues.

Inquiries at Prince Rupert, Prince George, Hazelton, Ocean Falls, Nelson, Midway, Grand Forks, Trail, fail to show any activity in these places on the part of the Chinese Labour Association.

The Pile Drivers and Wooden Bridgemen of Vancouver have abandoned the Internationals and joined the O. B. U. This affects about 150 men.

II. ALBERTA

7. The Strike in the Coalfields

A review of the Drumheller situation dated 12th October dealt with 16 mines. On 30th September before the strike began, these mines had 1,582 men at work, this number being not quite sufficient; on 6th October they had 562; on 12th 858. On the 6th six mines were completely shut down; on the 12th only one, and it a mine which is in financial difficulties. The strike was at its height on the 4th, when fewer than 500 men were on duty; on 5th October the men began to drift back. On the date of the survey the general opinion was that the men would gradually return to work unless sympathetic strikes occurred in the South and North; and this was doubtful.

A report from Fernie dated 11th October states that a plan was on foot to procure a secret ballot on the question of returning to work; such a

ballot, it was stated, would result in a decision to return. However, the company was understood to have decided to refuse employment [7] to one or two agitators, more especially to William Sherman, the local leader who engineered the strike.

On 11th October picketing began at Michel, some men who wished to work being turned back. The pickets all are office-holders of the U. M. W. of A., so completely has the local of that body been captured by the O. B. U.

Reports from Coalhurst on 12th, 13th and 14th October showed a steady increase in the number of men at work. On 11th October 225 men were at work, and by the 14th the number had increased to 285. The strikers were fewer than 100.

A report upon Blairmore and Hillcrest dated 9th October states that at the former place men were returning to work, and that at Hillcrest a vote resulted in 138 for a strike and 150 against it.

8. The Closed Shop Order

Last April the O. B. U. took action against Fuel Commissioner Armstrong's closed-shop order, on the ground that it was a violation of the Lemieux Act. This action was dismissed by the Police Magistrate and an appeal was taken. On 7th October the appeal was dismissed by the Appellate Court of Alberta. The ground for the dismissal was that Mr. Armstrong's approval and the Order in Council under which it was issued, had been violated by an Act of Parliament passed last session. However, any subsequent order of the sort by Mr. Armstrong will be open to legal proceedings.

9. The Edmonton Labour Church

The Edmonton Labour Church on 10th October was addressed by Rev. Geo. L. Ritchie, the subject being "Why a new Social Order". He referred to Mr. Mackenzie King's speech at Edmonton, saying that if he [8] (Ritchie) had said as much six months ago he would have been sent to jail. He said that the Militia and the R. C. M. P. were being trained in Edmonton and every other city in street fighting. Capitalism was supported by bayonets. "Laws were made for the protection of property, not life, there was no protection to life, i.e. to the life of the children against disease and hunger".

10. Edmonton Notes

The Edmonton local of the Socialist Party of Canada is practically dead, its place having been more or less taken by the Labour Church.

At Edmonton the Building Trades Unit O. B. U. has withdrawn from the Central Labour Council, O. B. U.

III. SASKATCHEWAN

11. The O. B. U. in Northern Saskatchewan

A survey of the O. B. U. situation in Northern Saskatchewan as of 30th

September shows 560 men who belong or are friendly to the O. B. U., and 2,300 who belong to unions hostile or indifferent to it.

The two centres of O. B. U. influence are the lumber industry and Saskatoon. In the former conditions are changing owing to the closing of some mills and camps and the shifting operations to other places. In the neighbourhood of the Pas about 1,500 men will be employed in the bush during the winter. Until some time in September the O. B. U. were very quiet, but lately a new secretary, John R. Leith, who has succeeded Tether, has been active, and the membership in this region has increased by about 40 per cent.

Elsewhere, outside of Saskatoon, the O. B. U. is practically dead. In Saskatoon it has about 160 members, or half of what it formerly had; these are of an inferior class of labour. The English-speaking members dislike the manner in which the dues are used up in ineffective attempts to increase the membership.[9]

Except at the Pas a reaction is in progress against the O. B. U. Even there it is doubted whether all of the nominal members of the L.W.I.U. would follow the organization if a strike were called. The leaders are planning to organize the men in the winter and hold up the drive in the spring.

It may be worth noting that the O. B. U. membership at the Pas all belong to the L.W.I.U.

IV. MANITOBA

12. O. B. U. losing ground in Winnipeg

A survey of the trade union field in Winnipeg as of 30th September confirms the view that the O. B. U. are losing ground. Their numbers have dropped from 12,505 on 30th June to 9,200; those of unions hostile to the O. B. U. have grown from 12,521 on 30th June to 13,935. Unions sympathetic to the O. B. U. have dropped from 3,000 to 2,600; unions in dispute between the two elements have increased from 1,078 to 1,500. The Street Railway Union, 1,945 strong, is counted neutral; it has failed to go over to the O. B. U. as was expected.

13. Cross Currents in the O. B. U.

Indications multiply of heart-searching among the Winnipeg radicals. For instance, two conversations with Mr. Willcocks, secretary of the Labour Church have been reported to us. This man's son is business manager of the O. B. U. Bulletin. The elder Willcocks has become highly critical of William Ivens; he disputes Iven's title to be the founder of the Labour Church, claiming that distinction for himself, and he calls Ivens an adventurer and opportunist. One passage is:-

"He (Ivens) is not the recognized Pastor of the Labour Church. He was appointed official speaker, but that was only in recognition of his work. He is not in good standing with the Executive of the Church or the male members of the Church. He is still much in

favour with the women members. He will not have the standing in the church when released that he had before his trial. Willcocks was a hero-worshipper of his before his trial, but not now. He signs [10] his letters 'Your Loving Pastor' that is all rot, and all for effect".

Willcocks also describes Iven's illness, which caused his removal from the Jail Farm to the Jail as a trick.

After allowing for personal jealousy, and a possible business rivalry (for the Western Labour News and the O. B. U. Bulletin are bitter opponents) this remains an interesting suggestion that Iven's influence is waning.

However, Mr. Willcocks' regard for the O. B. U. also is on the decline. In another conversation he is quoted thus:-

"He also said he had very little use for the O. B. U. organization and felt that an organization such as the Dominion Labour Party was of more benefit to the workers, claiming that the O. B. U. members would soon be realizing this and coming over to the Dominion Labour Party.

"He acknowledged, however, that his ideas used to run along with the O. B. U. until lately, when the organization seemed to have lost all interest, and was going down hill, while the Dominion Labour party was going up.

14. The Dominion Labour Party

Currently, the affairs of the Dominion Labour Party are stirring. The new activity for the moment assumes the form of an internal quarrel, which may result in a dissipation of its energies at the coming, municipal election. The secretary, Robert Ringland resigned at a meeting held on 13th October; this was accepted, but a vote of confidence was passed in him, in circumstances which constituted a censure on the extremist party, who attacked him; and Ringland will carry on. The quarrel is based on the conflict between the Internationals and the O. B. U. The former have made an effort to capture the organization; they had added over 100 to the membership and now have a majority of the Executive Committee. A counter effort by the O. B. U. element may now be expected.[11]

15. O. B. U. Dissensions in the Press

The two Winnipeg papers contain some signs of the internal quarrel which is troubling the O. B. U. The O. B. U. Bulletin of 16th October makes no editorial references to the matter, but prints an angry onslaught upon Carl Berg with reference to the dissensions in Edmonton. The Western Labour News of 15th October publishes particulars of an editorially exults in the rift. It describes the peculiar position of the loggers' union, and the accompanying personal jealousies, and says:-

"For practical purposes the foundation of the One Big Union is inherently unsound. The only merit it possesses is as a platform from which the tenets of the Socialist Party of Canada could be preached,

and that this is a merit is by no means admitted by its own members. This peculiar attitude towards their own organization of most of the leaders, and nearly all the literature of the O. B. U., has not been calculated to retain in a condition of efficiency as an industrial organization, and has caused its constitutional weakness to declare itself sooner than might otherwise have been the case".

16. Miscellaneous Notes

Ben Legere now appears as the General Secretary of the Lawrence local of the Amalgamated Textile Workers of America. In that capacity he is sending out circulars asking for aid to the strikers at Lawrence Mass. One paragraph reads:-

"It is important that the workers no longer be taught the false doctrine that the way to power lies in organizing 'along the line of the industry'. Winnipeg demonstrated that organization as a class in the strategic centres of capitalism is the real need".

The O. B. U. and kindred unions are attacked as offering "no more hope for the workers than does the A. F. of L."

Apparently these circulars are a move in an internal fight, for he speaks of "the gang of sky-pilots that control this union" i.e. the A. T. W. of A.

The Winnipeg Labour Church meeting at the Strand Theatre on 10th October was addressed by F. J. Dixon, M.L.A. on "The Old Order and [12] the New". The attendance was 1,000. Mr. Dixon attacked the existing order and demanded the release of the strike leaders.

V. ONTARIO

17. J. R. Knight

Joe Knight in conversation on 10th October explained his being dropped from the Executive Committee of the O. B. U. by stating that he had been kicking all the year that an organizer should be sent to Eastern Canada, whereas the others wanted to keep him in the West. Also he and "Secretary Mitchell" (presumably Midgley) "have not got along very well".

"The present plans of Joe Knight are to tour the Eastern part of the country and he proposes to tour between Winnipeg and Niagara Falls and take a percentage of the collections received at each meeting also half the initiation fee of each new member".

The foregoing gives a new view of the personal relations of the O. B. U. leaders. Knight sides with Midgley against Winch, but none the less there is bad blood between him and Midgley.

Knight on 11th October addressed 60 people in Occident Hall, Toronto. His speech, while an advocacy of the O. B. U., was purely revolutionary; he dwelt on the revolutions in France, and apparently made some remarkably inaccurate statements about them. Revolution was sure to come, he said. Asked if the capitalistic Government of Canada would collapse as had happened in Russia, he said that he did not know its exact

end, but if peaceable overthrow would not be possible, force was likely.

18. The Labour College

In conversation on 10th October Mrs. Custance gave an account of the affairs of the Ontario Labour College. Last year, "although they did not have a success financially yet they had about \$43 left over at the end of the term". This year they should do better, as certain initial expenses would not recur. So far 30 pupils have registered for [13] the new term.

The leading spirits of the college are Mrs. Custance, Spector and Bell. They impress upon their students the difference between the two classes of society, "and that the only way they will or can get justice is by might". She criticised the O. B. U. for first taking in workers and then trying to teach them.

A project is mooted to establish a Labour College in Hamilton. Kristoff is interested in it.

Mrs. Custance, Knowles, and Roberts of Toronto have promised to help with this scheme.

19. The Jewish Socialist League

The Jewish Socialist League of Toronto is making progress. At a meeting held on 8th October about 60 were present and it was decided to rent a hall which would accommodate more people. This hall is to be the Provincial headquarters, and the distributing office for revolutionary reading matter.

After comparing the constitutions of the Third International and the British Communist Party the meeting decided to adopt the former.

A local agitator named Essor said that as the British Communist Party can work openly he could not see why they should not follow suit. He would try to ascertain the legality of such a course; if it should prove illegal they could work under cover. All members of the League who belonged to trade unions must propagate communism in their union meetings. They also should organize small communist units.

20. Almazoff's Activities

Mention has been made in earlier issues of Almazoff's arrival in Toronto; he is a very seditious person, who at the time of the Winnipeg strike had a narrow escape from deportation. He now has begun to stir about in Toronto, and his first steps seem to be to make things [14] uncomfortable for Dodokin, or Dadokin, the organizer of the Russian Workers' School and the keeper of the foreign bookshop at 111 Dundas street; hitherto Dodokin seems to have been the leader of the foreign revolutionists in Toronto, but Almazoff has an air of challenging this leadership.

Dodokin not long ago organized "social evenings" at his premises; Almazoff speaks frequently at them. On Saturday evening one of these took place, and there was a breeze between the two. Dodokin, as an Anarchist-Communist, criticised the Bolshevik government and Al-

mazoff defended it on opportunist grounds. Almazoff gave an address embodying the communist interpretation of the development of society. The attendance was 65.

Next day, on 10th October, there was another affair, at the same place. Almazoff spoke on "Freedom", and we have two reports of what took place. According to one of these accounts, after Almazoff had finished his disquisition Dodokin "said that he did not see any freedom in Russia. He said that the Communist Party is in authority and that any party who has the authority will preserve it at any cost. Literature and letters are censored more than in any other country, etc. In answer to that Almazoff said that Russia is in such a condition that no other country has ever experienced". Apparently he represented present evils as accompaniments of the period of transition. Dodokin stuck to what Bolshevist rule was arbitrary.

The other account, which describes the occasion as a meeting of the Jewish Socialist League, and says that about 160 persons were present, dwells rather upon Almazoff's utterances. He made a considerable impression. He declared that the workers in Canada were not free, and said: "Let us organize a strong proletariat army with a [15] dictatorship and discipline". They should use the paper guns and bullets which the Bolsheviki had found so effective. "The Jews in Canada should firmly hold together, form a strong organization and in such way there is a secure and bloodless victory". This victory Almazoff expected would come "very soon perhaps six months or a year". "Do not be afraid if the newspapers call us foreigners or aliens. We are at home everywhere".

Almazoff, also spoke on the same day at a Russian meeting called by the Russian Progressive Library; his subject was "Life and Science", and was not of a revolutionary cast. The presiding officer, Mrs. Maria Nekolayeva, urged all the Russians to form one big radical society, so as not to dissipate their energies. However, she dislikes Dodokin because he is a Anarchist-Communist, while she and her husband are orthodox Bolshevists. The Nekolayevas are new-comers in Toronto, having formerly lived in Western Canada.

21. Foreigners in Hamilton

Mention has been made of a know of foreigners who hold meetings in Hamilton. This group is discussing the question of organization; proposals which are mooted are joining the Socialist Party of Canada in a body, forming a Russian local of the S. P. C., and joining the O. B. U. as a separate unit. One of them, Kristoff, told our informant that what they really would like to do was to form a local of the Communist Party, but that they were afraid to do so because of the law; he proposes to ask the Department of Justice what the legal position is.

VI. QUEBEC

22. More News of the O. B. U. Convention

Rebecca Buhay reported on the Port Arthur Convention to the Metal Trades Unit, O. B. U., Montreal on 7th October. Her account of [16] the resolutions passed was as follows:-

1. That the O. B. U. headquarters be moved from Vancouver to Winnipeg. A referendum to decide.
2. That the Central Executive be empowered to demand the disbandment of the L. W. I. U. i.e. the closing of their general office, and the abolition of their separate organization and membership; all per capita and supply fund to be handed to the General Financial Secretary.
3. That the O. B. U. adopt the "Class" form of organization.
4. That a general organizer be sent to Quebec to organize all railway workers.
5. That the effort to release the Winnipeg strike leaders be continued.
6. That membership and receipt cards be in French and English, and a French paper be published in Montreal as soon as possible.
7. That the Central Executive be empowered to appoint a "Council of Action" on the plan followed in England.
8. That the "Council of Action" be empowered, in the event of a general strike in England, to "use their economic power" to convey food to the workers in England.

The foregoing is an approximation, Miss Buhay and our informant both having relied on their memories in the absence of copies of the resolution.

Miss Buhay in her account of the quarrel was antagonistic to the L. W. I. U., saying that they had tried to force their views upon the convention, to capture it or break it up. The L. W. I. U., she said, had been working independently of the Central Executive Council, having their own headquarters, organizers, local offices and a separate membership card. They had sent organizers out of their jurisdiction to "grab off" every member and every dollar they could get.

Walter Cowan objected vigorously to this hostile description of his unit. He defended the "industrial" type of organization, declared that the L. W. I. U. were the only part of the O. B. U. who did any work, and spoke satirically of Joe Knight and his pretensions.[17]

W. E. Long declared that the L. W. I. U. had gone to Port Arthur with 3 objects:-

1. To keep headquarters at Vancouver.
2. To get rid of Joe Knight.
3. To get rid of Midgley.

Miss Buhay gave some information as to membership. The membership cards issued totalled 71,606, but only 19,000 members had paid their dues from 1st January to 1st September.

At the close of the meeting an odd incident showed how poor a creature

the Buhay woman is. Cowan engaged her in conversation, and she admitted that the L. W. I. U. had been right, but had lost because they were not strong enough to force their view on the convention. "Remember, Cowan", she said "under the system we live under everything is decided by power whether right or wrong".

23. General Workers' Unit in Low Water

The General Workers' Unit, O. B. U. of Montreal met on 14th October, 19 members attending. The financial Secretary reported that there were no funds in the treasury, that bills amounting to \$19 were pressing, and that he "was through with the organization", and was resigning. It also developed that the unit was responsible for \$50 for the expenses of the delegate to the Port Arthur convention.

The small attendance at these meetings is stated by our informant to be due to the incessant collections which are made. To attend regularly at the numerous gathering means spaying three or four dollars a week, and this is too severe a drain for most of them.

At this meeting Binette, the retiring organizer, adopted a very sulky and recalcitrant attitude.

24. The Worker

W. Cowan and the French Communist Party have come to terms as to the French portion of The Worker. Articles used are to be translated [18] and shown to Cowan, and the Communists are to buy and distribute a stipulated number of copies. Cowan at the interview expressed himself as anxious to work with the Communists. Our reports says:-

"Cowan stated that the aims and objects of both organizations are identical; both are working towards the emancipation of the workers and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship Government, and although, they might differ in opinion as to the best way to organize the workers with the view to be successful, yet they should be fair enough to leave their opinion open for discussion with the view to reach the best decision, and not to say I'm right and you wrong, and if they agree in opinions they will be able to do good work and avoid corruption in the rank and file of the O. B. U."

A later report states that Cowan has stipulated that the paper must keep neutral as between "class" and "industrial" types of organization until the L. W. I. U. have decided on which course to take. The editorial committee probably will consist of 2 L. W. I. U., 2 French Socialist Communists, 2 General Workers, O. B. U. and 2 Metal Trades O. B. U.

25. Miscellaneous Notes

On 3rd October Hvat, alias Hvatoff lectured at the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia on the Third International. His address was an historical sketch of the three "Internationals", and he strongly advocated Lenin's Third of Moscow International. He attacked the programme of the American Socialist Party, and urged the cause of revolution. Only the

left path would lead the workers to liberty, "we workers cannot gain this liberty and possess all wealth until the last Capitalist is destroyed".

At the conclusion there was one of the debates, now becoming frequent, between the believers in the pure Anarchist doctrine and the defenders of Bolshevism. Revenko finally had to intervene to quiet the discussion.

The Amalgamated Society of Engineers in Montreal, who have about 800 members, have joined the O. B. U. Their object seems to be to [19] force the works where they are employed to allow them to have shop stewards.

A new agitator has begun to speak in Montreal, his name apparently being Guson. He read a two-hour address at the usual Sunday meeting of the French Socialist Communist Party on 10th October.

Investigation shows that Anna Buller was borne in Rumania, probably of Jewish parents.

VII. MARITIME PROVINCES

26. A Coal Strike Possible

The coal mining situation in Cape Breton is described as serious, a strike being nearly inevitable unless the operators grant all the men's demands.
