





CANADIAN KNIGHTS OF LABOR

WITH SPECIAL

REFERENCE TO THE 1880's.

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Victor O. Chan

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## PREFACE

The nature of the thesis made it necessary for the student to examine mainly contemporary newspaper accounts. The greatest difficulty had been encountered here: the political partisanship of many of the newspapers necessarily led them to give exaggerated accounts of what actually occurred. The Montreal Daily Star seems to be, however, a notable exception.

The thesis was written under the direction of Professor John Irwin Cooper. I gratefully acknowledge his interest and encouragement.

Thanks for assistance must also be extended to the staffs of the Public Archives of Canada at Ottawa, and of the Library of the Department of Labor of the same city; and in Montreal to those of the Peter Redpath Library of McGill University, the St. Sulpice, Municipal and the Fraser Institute Libraries. In particular, I wish to thank Miss Marie D. Mitchell of the Fraser Institute Library for her generous interest in the writing of the thesis.



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"We have an organization that includes all trades. These people are all told that the interest of the one is the interest of all. That is the motto of our organization; not for strikes or discharges, but when great and mighty things are concerned and the interest of all classes are affected. That is the most perfect government wherein an injury to one is the concern of all."

General Master Workman T.V.Powderly.

## CHAPTER I

### CANADIAN KNIGHTS OF LABOR: GENERAL REMARKS.

The Knights of Labor had their beginning in the United States in 1869. KNOWN originally as the "Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor", they were at first a secret body. This secret nature was due in part at least, to the founder of the Order, Uriah Smith Stephens, who, being himself a Freemason, naturally tended towards secrecy. Mr. Stephens argued: "I don't know of any great good that has been accomplished except ~~through~~ the agency of secret societies. I believe that all legitimate occupations have their secrets. Ministers and medical men have their associations, merchants their exchanges, lawyers their bar associations, and so on, and they all have their secrets, and I see no reason why those upon whom the commerce of the world rests should not have theirs." <sup>1</sup> Closely associated with this secrecy, was the ritual of the Order. When a candidate was invited to join the Order, he attended a secret meeting where he was first asked three questions: 'Do you believe in God, the creator and Father of all? Do you obey the Universal Ordinance of God, in gaining your bread by the sweat of your brow? Are you willing to take a solemn vow binding you to secrecy, obedience and mutual assistance?' If the applicant said yes, he was asked to obey all laws, regulations of the Order, and promise to 'defend the life, interest, reputation and family of all true members of this Order, help and assist all employed, unfortunate and distressed Brothers to procure employment, secure just remuneration, relieve their distress and counsel others to aid them, so that they and theirs may receive and enjoy the just fruits of their labor and exercise of their art.' <sup>2</sup> Furniture was arranged in the meeting room

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1. The Montreal Daily Star, 31 July, 1886.

2. Philip S. Foner: History of the Labor Movement in the United States, (p.434)

according to an established form, officers occupying certain fixed positions during the meeting, and the whole proceedings being marked at intervals by the making of various signs and the repetition of assorted formulae. For example, the handshake was given with the thumb extended along the forefinger, and the hands were clasped without locking the thumbs. This grip was supposed to signify humanity, 'as the thumb distinguishes man from all other orders of creatures, and by it alone man is able to achieve wonders of art and perform labor.'<sup>1</sup>

This secrecy and ritual were not without advantages. Secrecy protected the Order from anti-labor employers, and prevented them from discovering the plans of the workers.<sup>2</sup> It was reported, for example, that Perrie, the manager of a cotton mill at Dundas, refused to engage anyone belonging to a labor organization.<sup>3</sup> In Toronto, Mr. Thomas Moor was a victim. He and others had stated that it was an absolute impossibility for him to find work at his trade as a carpenter owing to the prominent part he had taken in connection with the labor movement: the employers had given him to understand that he would not be given any work. The Toronto Trades and Labor Council had to come to Moor's aid : it gave him a temporary position of official organizer at a weekly salary, and intimated that in recognition of his services an endeavor would be made to give him a permanent

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1. D.R.Kennedy: The Knights Of Labor in Canada, (p.23)

2. Foner: op. cit., (p.436)

3., The Palladium of Labor, Hamilton, 29 May, 1886.

position as organizer. This policy of blacklisting the leaders of the Labor Movement, the Hamilton Labor Union considers as "one of the principal reasons", why combinations among working men, whether for purely trade purposes, or with a political object, had not been more effective: the paper complained that the capitalists at first tried to bribe the leaders and if this was unavailing, they retaliated by blacklisting them.<sup>1</sup> It was also related how a number of engineers on the Intercolonial Railway were dismissed for the offence of belonging to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. The trade unions, however, took up the matter, and representations were made to the Government: the discharged men as a result were all reinstated and allowed back pay for the time during which they were out of employment.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand secret rituals, not only instilled in the new member the importance of the organization he had just joined,<sup>3</sup> but in Canada, actually attracted new members: "The 'lodge' aspects of the Order," wrote Kennedy, "attracted especially many Roman Catholics who were prevented by their Church from belonging to the Protestant fraternal societies, but the same characteristics of the Order intrigued Protestants too. The theatrical ritual, the humanitarian emotionalis [sic], and the awareness that one was indulging in secret rites known only to the initiated built up the self-esteem of men who, quite often, were down trodden by the social and economic problems which confronted them."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Labor Union, Hamilton, 10 March, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Hamilton, 20 Jan. 1883.

<sup>3</sup> Foner op.cit., (p.436)

<sup>4</sup> Kennedy, op.cit., (p.24)



As late as 1878 or 1879 the name of the Order was never referred to as such.<sup>1</sup> But the veil of secrecy was gradually lifted and religious trappings dropped. The Grand Master Workman, the head of the Order, and the Grand Secretary were authorized by a convention in 1881 to issue a proclamation on January 1st, 1882, to the workingmen of America informing them of the existence and objectives of the Order. The convention also deleted the oath from the initiation pledge substituting for it a simple promise, and voted to remove all spiritual passages and language from the ritual. Powderly did not bother to issue the proclamation because he said everyone knew of the existence and objectives of the Order. The secret ritual was however continued in practice.<sup>2</sup> Prof. Norman J. Ware said on these changes: "This does not mean that the Order gave up secrecy in 1881. What it gave up was the coating of religion. In many places the utmost secrecy was maintained throughout, and in all, the doings of the assemblies remained behind the veil."<sup>3</sup> This secrecy, Prof. Ware reiterated, when he said: "The Knights of Labor never gave up secrecy!"<sup>4</sup>

The Local Assembly was the basic unit in the Order. In a sense it was the most vital body, because in it the rank and file operated. The rules governing it were as follows, in the early eighties.

No local assembly could be organized with less than ten members. Assembling could only be instituted by regularly commissioned organizers. Instructions on the method of formation, said that it was best to form a temporary organization to arrange for the collection of funds, and then to call for an organizer: the temporary organization was to be preserved until

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<sup>1</sup> Foner, op.cit., (p.434)

<sup>2</sup> Foner, op.cit., (p.509)

<sup>3</sup> N.J.Ware, The Labor Movement in the United States, 1860-1895, (p.93)

<sup>4</sup> Ware, op.cit., (footnote p.56)

the founding of the assembly had been accomplished.

Local assemblies might be formed of any particular trade or calling; or might be composed of all trades, in which case, they were called 'mixed' assemblies. Each local was known by a number assigned by the Grand Secretary; and it chose a suitable name upon organization. Under the laws of the Order, the initiation fee was not less than one dollar for men, and fifty cents for women. The average expense for organizing an Assembly, including Charter, supplies, seal and expenses of the organizer, was about twenty dollars. The charter fee, which was ten dollars, was to be paid to the organizer.

After a local assembly was formed, a candidate for membership had to be proposed by a member of an assembly in good standing, who had had an acquaintance with the applicant for not less than three months. Any person, not less than eighteen years of age, without regard to sex, colour, creed or nationality, whether manufacturer, employer of any kind, wage-worker or farmer, was eligible to become a member of the Order, except lawyers, bankers, professional gamblers, stock-brokers, and any person who either made or sold, or derived any part of his support from the sale of intoxicating drink; but at least three-fourths of every local had to be composed of wage-workers or farmers.

Five or more local assemblies in any locality within a reasonable distance of each other, might form a District Assembly, "for the better protection or regulation of trade matters". Local assemblies located at any distance from a district assembly, were attached directly to the General Assembly.

Each local assembly controlled its own funds, and regulated the amount of local dues - which must, however, not be less than ten cents a month. In addition each male member had to pay ten cents a month, into a Co-operative Fund of the Order; women however, paid five cents per month. Local assemblies attached

to districts had to pay an additional per capita tax, fixed by each district assembly for its own support.

It was declared that there was nothing in the laws or working of the Order to interfere with the religious views of any member. Each member was required to take a pledge of honor, upon joining, to obey all the laws of the Order, and not to reveal any of the business or secret work. No oath was taken. There were passwords, signs and grips, for the protection of the meetings against those not members, and against suspended or expelled members.

Women became members of the Order under the same laws and regulations as men, and formed local and district assemblies. The Charter fee for a local assembly wholly composed of women was five dollars.

Each local assembly was required to subscribe for at least one copy each year, of the Journal of United Labor. This paper was published monthly by the Grand Secretary, and was the organ of official communication from the Grand Master Workman and Grand Secretary.<sup>1</sup>

The local assembly being the primary unit, the ordinary essential activities of the Order could therefore best be studied by studying this body. It was a most democratic body. Every member was an equal partner: the officers elected were not expected to 'run it', and the rest of the partners do nothing. Members were to be assisted to better their condition - morally, socially, and financially. Political economy was to be discussed in a fraternal and candid spirit; and public lectures by competent brothers arranged.

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<sup>1</sup> The Labor Union, Hamilton, 27 Jan. 1883.

The local assembly of the Knights was by no means a benefit society. But the beneficial aspects of its local work were quite important. Members who were out of work were assisted.<sup>1</sup> The Order also had a Mutual Benefit Insurance Association on a co-operative plan, which in early 1883 was just going into operation. It was planned, in the event of serving five thousand members, to give one thousand dollars upon the death of a member, or an assessment of only twenty-five cents upon each death.<sup>2</sup> The actual amounts paid, however, varied according to the amount that had been contributed by the deceased and to the resources of the fund at the time of death; but it is unlikely that many benefits of \$1000 were paid.<sup>3</sup> This insurance often stiffened the resistance of workers in times of labor disturbances, for they were reluctant to leave the Order, because by so doing they would forfeit their insurance benefits. This matter also caused a great deal of dissension in the Order as a result of local assemblies becoming quite belligerent in support of the claims of a deceased brother. The scheme never attained the success which it might have achieved.<sup>4</sup> The Knights also made quite a fuss over funerals: in 1887, a demand was made for some sort of regalia for members to be worn on such occasions.<sup>5</sup> What happened to it is not known. To meet emergencies special measures were taken. In late 1886 for example, Powderly issued a secret circular to the various assemblies

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<sup>1</sup> Montreal Star, 18 Dec. 1885

<sup>2</sup> The Labor Union, Hamilton 27 Jan. 1883

<sup>3</sup> Kennedy, op.cit., (p.22)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. (p.57)

<sup>5</sup> Montreal Star, 8 Oct. 1887

of the Order, calling upon them to contribute to the support of Knights who were thrown out of employment simply on account of their refusal to sever their connection with all labor organizations: it was decided to levy a 'special defense assessment' of 25 cents per member upon all local assemblies of the Order.<sup>1</sup> As Uriah Stephens had declared: "We shall use every lawful and honourable means to procure and retain employ for one another, coupled with a just and fair remuneration, and, should accident or misfortune befall one of our ~~number~~, render such aid as lies within our power to give, without inquiring his country or his creed."<sup>2</sup> Writing in 1886 Prof. Richard T. Ely said that the local assemblies in the States aided needy members to the amount of \$100,000 to \$200,000 annually.<sup>3</sup>

The social side of the assemblies gave the members a sense of comradeship. When Bro. R. E. Martell, of Stratford, Ont. visited Montreal with his wife, the K. of L. circles in the city expressed much appreciation. Bro. Martell visited a number of the assemblies, in some instances accompanied by Mrs. Martell. They were made special guests at a gathering of the Knights at Ormestown, and the lady was presented with a loaf of bread baked in a K. of L. bakery. On leaving Montreal, they were presented with a supply of K. of L. cutlery.<sup>4</sup> St. Gabriel's Assembly held their first grand concert and ball in November 1886; all present enjoyed the programme.<sup>5</sup> When Brother Tarte, late Recording Secretary of L.A. 7628, of Montreal,

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<sup>1</sup> Montreal Star, 3 Dec. 1886.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Selig Perlman: A History of Trade Unionism in the United States, (p. 69)

<sup>3</sup> R.T. Ely: The Labor Movement in America, (p. 145)

<sup>4</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 4 Sept. 1886

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 27 Nov. 1886.



was leaving to reside in England, his assembly presented him with a flattering testimonial as an acknowledgement of service rendered and his popularity in the Order. The presentation was in the form of a silver watch, handsomely engraved with the seal of his local and the great seal of the Order, accompanied by a neat address.<sup>1</sup> Notice was also given of the intended marking of the anniversary of the introduction of the Order in Quebec Province by a social entertainment and ball in the Armoury Hall, Cathcart St. Montreal, on Jan. 12, 1891. Mr. Powderly was invited to attend and deliver an address.<sup>2</sup> In about April of the same year about 150 representatives of the K. of L. assemblies in District 19, sat down to dinner at the Richelieu Hotel, Montreal. Mr. J. Lepage, Master Workman of the District, occupied the Chair, and opened the after dinner proceedings by an address. Mr. Powderly was present, and was enthusiastically received. Among those present were His Worship the Mayor, William Keys, a leading organizer among the Knights, and Mr. J. J. Curran, Q.C., M.P. There were numerous toasts and songs.<sup>3</sup>

The Constitution of the Local named and defined the duties of officers: master workman (presiding officer), worthy foreman (vice-president), worthy inspector (door-keeper) almoner (relief officer), financial secretary, recording secretary, worthy treasurer, statistician (to gather information as to the condition of the trade), assistant unknown knight (to gather information about proposed members), judge advocate, judge, and clerk of court (a grievance committee for the settlement of disputes among members or to act as a court, if friendly settlement were impossible).

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<sup>1</sup> The Labor Advocate, Toronto, 27 March, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 9 Jan. 1891.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 10 April, 1891.

In 1884 there were added a venerable sage (past master workman), inside and outside esquires to guarantee secrecy and decorum, an insurance solicitor, and three trustees to act as custodians of the property of the local. In 1882, a committee on candidates had already been established to take the place of the unknown knight.<sup>1</sup>

An estimate of the role of the local assembly in the Order may be obtained from Article XVI, Section 125 of its revised constitution of 1884. This read in part: ' The Local Assembly is not a mere trade union or beneficial society, it is more and higher. It gathers into one fold all branches of honorable toil, without regard to nationality, sex, creed or colour. It is not founded simply to protect one interest or to discharge one duty, be it ever so great. While it retains and fosters all the fraternal characteristics and protection of the single trade union, it also, by the multiplied power of union, protects and assists all... [Any] action that will advance the cause of humanity, lighten the burden of toil or elevate the moral and social condition of mankind, whether incorporated in the Constitution, or not, is the proper scope and field of operation of a Local Assembly.'<sup>2</sup>

In the organization of the Order, the District Assembly was a higher body than the local. The original constitution of the district assembly as laid down by the first General Assembly, held in Reading in 1878, provided that it should be composed of representatives from at least

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<sup>1</sup> Ware: op. cit., (p.381-383)

Further details and changes in the constitution of the local may be obtained from Appendix II of this work.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy: op.cit., (p.19-20)

five locals, that it was the highest tribunal in the district and should decided all controversies among its constituents, assess taxes for its maintenance, and legislate in the interest of the Order. Locals were represented in the district on the basis of one representative for one hundred members or fewer and one for each additional one hundred members or major fraction thereof. The districts had the same officers as the General Assembly and the district master workman had the power to recommend applications for local charters. Later, changes in the basis of representation of the locals to the district were made: in 1882, each local was given one representative to the district, and was permitted to fix further representation as it chose.<sup>1</sup>

In the United States, state assemblies were formed in 1885, and were represented in the General Assembly on the same basis as the districts. But these assemblies were unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup>

The General Assembly of the Order had " full and final" jurisdiction and was the highest tribunal of the Order. It alone possessed " the power and authority to make, amend and repeal the fundamental and general laws of the Order; to finally decide all controversies..... to issue all charters on the recommendation of the district assemblies where such exist, and to issue traveling, transfer and final cards. It can also tax the members of the Order for its maintenance."

The General Assembly had the same offices as the locals and districts with some additions, and used the same titles with the prefix "Grand" later changed to "General". It had a general executive board of five elected offices, which was changed in 1884 to three chosen by

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<sup>1</sup> Ware : op. cit.,(p.385-6)

<sup>2</sup> Ware: op. cit., (P.387)

election, and the general master workman and the general secretary ex officio. In 1886 six "auxiliary" members were added to the general executive board to help carry the excessive burden that numbers and expansion involved. Uriah Stephens was grand master workman in 1878-9 and was followed by Terrence V. Powderly 1879-93. Various boards and departments were set up to deal with specific activities, cooperation, insurance, women's work. The General Assembly elected the officers and members of important boards. The grand master workman appointed the committees, confirmed the appointment of district organizers, and appointed organizers where no district existed.

The General Assembly was composed of representatives from the national trade assemblies, district assemblies, state assemblies, and locals attached to the General Assembly. Originally each district assembly was allowed one representative for the first 1,000 members or less, and one more for each additional 1,000 or major fraction thereof, but no district assembly was allowed more than three representatives. After changes made in 1879 and 1884, in 1886 the Order had grown so large that 3,000 members was made the basis of representation to apply to all state, national, trade, and district assemblies.

The revenue of the General Assembly came from a per capita tax, district and local charter fees, the sale of the Adelphon Kruptos, or secret work, and transfer, traveling and final cards. There were also special funds like the Resistance Fund and the Cooperative Fund and returns from assessments and appeals. The original per capita tax was one and one-half cents per quarter, but it was raised in January 1882, to six cents per quarter. The Order was usually poor, but with the great membership in 1885-87 it had ample, even excessive funds.

Assessments were very hard to collect for any purpose and appeals brought in little. The Resistance and Cooperative Funds were inadequate and badly managed.<sup>1</sup>

The Order was therefore, constitutionally, a highly centralized body.

Among the Knights in the United States, there was a certain amount of racial tolerance. It was estimated that in 1886 there were no less than 60,000 negroes in the Order.<sup>2</sup> This development was in keeping with an announcement of the Grand Master Workman in 1879: "The (outside) color of a candidate shall not debar him from admission; rather let the coloring of his mind and heart be the test".<sup>3</sup>

But this toleration seemed to exist mainly among the northern whites. During the Richmond Convention of 1886 "considerable consternation" occurred among Richmond Society, when a break was made in old established rules, whereby colored men were prohibited the occupancy of reserved seats in theatres, etc. One evening, one of the colored Knights, escorted by about eighty others, secured tickets and marched into one of two Richmond theatres. On the following two evenings, an extra force of police were placed on guard at both theatres to prevent a repetition.<sup>4</sup> It seems, however, that it was the delegates of the New York District Assembly 49 who were mainly responsible for the incident: they retaliated by boycotting Richmond Hotels and seeking accommodation with colored families.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ware: op. cit., (p. 388-9)

<sup>2</sup> Foner: op. cit., (footnote, p. 510)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., (p. 511)

<sup>4</sup> The Hmilton Palladium, 9 Oct. 1886.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 23 Oct. 1886.



The southern whites followed a different line. Once when a parade was planned, about 5,000 Knights marched in the city. But very few white members of the local assemblies responded to the order of the master workmen to participate in the parade, their refusal being based on the presence of colored Knights in the procession.<sup>1</sup>

In championing the cause of the negroes, the leaders of the Knights made it clear that they were preaching not social equality, but merely equality before the law and in the business world. The Hamilton Palladium, quoting the Louisville Labor Record, said: "The K. of L. do not preach social equality even among whites. As Mr. Powderly says no law can enforce that. The K. of L. hold that all men, regardless of race, creed, nationality, or sex, are equal before the law and in the business world, and alike entitled to all legal rights, just treatment, and fair remuneration for their labor. That is the K. of L. platform; no more, no less." This announcement of Powderly was a reply to the efforts of Southern employers to raise the social equality cry to excite the prejudices of the Southern people against the Order.<sup>2</sup> It seems, however, to be an opportunist deviation from the real intent of the 1879 announcement of Stephens.

The interest of the Order in the cause of the negro was real. Powderly once said, "The politicians have kept the white and black men apart while crushing both. Our aims shall be to bring them together, educate and elevate them." The color question was to some extent solved by organizing the colored workers in separate assemblies. They worked under the same laws and enjoyed the same privileges as their white brethren.

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<sup>1</sup> Montreal Star, 12 Oct., 1886.

<sup>2</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 20 Nov., 1886.

Wherever agreement occurred between the two elements, they worked unitedly towards the same end; but matters, upon which disagreement arose, were not discussed. The negroes moved cautiously at first, looking upon the movement as a bait which white men tried, to catch them. But when the initial suspicion was removed, they proved to be excellent members.<sup>1</sup>

In Canada, the colored problem did not arise. But there was a national and a racial problem of another type. First, there was the problem of the French-Canadian. When Ontario Tories, at the end of 1886 resorted to racial and religious bigotry, "Enjolras", a leading theoretician among Canadian Knights, roundly denounced them, and called upon fellow members to follow the worthy example set by their brethren in Richmond: "If the movement," said he, "in which we are engaged is to succeed, men must forget that they are Protestants or Catholics, English, French or Irish, native-born or foreigners, and remember only the brotherhood of humanity."<sup>2</sup>

These were noble sentiments. But the Canadian Knights failed to consider the Chinese immigrants in the same light. They complained that the Chinese labourers worked for too low wages, and therefore put "Caucasian" labor out of employment; this happened on the Intercolonial Railway in British Columbia, to which province Chinese were imported "by the shipload."<sup>3</sup> Another objection was that Chinese women were brought into British Columbia and smuggled across the frontier for the purpose of prostitution.<sup>4</sup> When an "opium joint" was discovered among the twenty or thirty Chinese residents in Toronto

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<sup>1</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 24 Jan., 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 23 Oct., 1886.

<sup>3</sup> The Labor Union, Hamilton, 27 Jan., 1883

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Hamilton, 27, Jan., 1883.

in 1884, they warned Canadians against the eastward spread of the celestials, and against the "moral and physical pestilence in the white communities into which they spread," and demanded of the Dominion Government "the complete exclusion of the Mongolians."<sup>1</sup> They attacked the Church ministers who were chiefly responsible for the existence of such public opinion as there was in favor of Chinese immigration. When the ministers said that in bringing the "heathen Chinese" they were fulfilling the divine comand to spread the gospel, the Knights countered by saying that the apostles were commanded to go forth into all the world and were not told to bring "colonies of heathens", into Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Such action of the Knights was responsible for the anti-Chinese legislation that was passed. A Bill imposed a tax of \$50 on each Chinese labourer landed in Canada, and provided that the number of Chinamen brought by any vessel should not exceed one to every fifty tons burden of the ship. The Knights considered it " a very good bill, as far as it goes, though it would of course have been better to have prohibited Chinese immigration altogether."<sup>3</sup> They stiffened their resistance later: they considered the "Chinese \$50 tax " as "insufficient", and said that it was a little like the action of Sacramento in allowing the gambling hells to remain open if they paid sufficiently for the privilege.<sup>4</sup> The Canadian Labor, Congress also carried a motion that ' much more stringent legislation' was needed in the direction of ' prohibiting the importation

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<sup>1</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 23 Aug., 1884.

<sup>2</sup> The Labor Union, Hamilton, 27 Jan., 1883.

<sup>3</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 25 July, 1885.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 15 Aug., 1885.

of Chinese Labor.' <sup>1</sup> This inconsistency of the Knights in denouncing the "Mongolian pest", while they tolerated other races, more or less, was probably noticed by 'Enjolras': we have noticed only one article in which he very indirectly referred to the Chinese;<sup>2</sup> and in none did he directly and violently attack them.

The Knights in British Columbia were more directly concerned. Once when Sir John Macdonald visited Victoria, the Knights in that city sent a deputation to him, pleading, among other things, for further restriction of Chinese immigration. The complaint was that in spite of the legislation, the influx still continued: "The law is continually violated by the cunning Chinaman, and the government having made a pretence of excluding them, pay very little attention to the need of a rigid enforcement of its provisions."<sup>3</sup> Anti-Chinese measures were taken even earlier: in Nov. 1885 the Knights resolved to wait in a body on the large employers of Chinese labor at Victoria, and request them to discharge their hands on condition that the Knights supply white labor to take the places of the Chinese.<sup>4</sup> In December, they passed a resolution to the effect that the Chinese should be given sixty days to leave the country: they did not explain, however, how the expulsion was to be carried out.<sup>5</sup>

It is not known precisely when the Knights entered Canada; nor at what point. Kennedy wrote that they entered the Canadian labor

<sup>1</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 18 Sept., 1886.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 9 May, 1885.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 14 Aug. 1886.

<sup>4</sup> Montreal Star, 14 Nov., 1885.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 23 Dec., 1885.

scene in the Fall of 1881, when the first local assembly was organized at Hamilton, Ontario.<sup>1</sup> H. A. Logan<sup>2</sup> and R. H. Coats<sup>3</sup> also said the same thing. However, the Montreal Daily Star of the 7th September 1891 carried an article , in which it was stated: "The first attempts to establish branches of the Knights of Labor in Canada, were made in this city as far back as 1882, when the 'Dominion Assembly 2436 ' was founded."<sup>4</sup> But probably our interpretation has been too literal. In any case it may be said that the Knights came to Canada in the early eighties.

Expansion was slow at first. But it quickened later: it was said in July 1885, "The Order is spreading like wildfire throughout Canada." Enquiries were frequently sent to the office of the Hamilton Palladium, for the addresses of organizers. About this time, one application came from Peterboro'; where a large number of workingmen were preparing to organize; at a meeting of one of the Hamilton assemblies, thirty-two applications for membership were made, and steps were taken for the organization of two more assemblies. Early in 1885 the membership at Guelph could be counted on one's fingertips: a few months later it was over five hundred. Brantford, Ingersoll, Woodstock , St.Thomas, London, and other adjoining towns made rapid strides toward perfection in organization.<sup>5</sup> By mid- 1885, a branch of the Knights was also established at Quebec.<sup>6</sup> Ottawa in time became one of the most important centres of activity of the Knights. The Order had some following in the Maritime Provinces; <sup>7</sup> and the Knights were said to be in Manitoba.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, op. cit., (p.40)

<sup>2</sup> H. A. Logan: Trade Unions in Canada, (p.50)

<sup>3</sup> R. H. Coats: The Labor Movement in Canada, in Canada and its Provinces, Vol.9. (p.305)

<sup>4</sup> Montreal Star, 7 Sept., 1891.

<sup>5</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 4 July, 1885.

<sup>6</sup> Montreal Star, 8 July 1885.

<sup>7</sup> Logan, op. cit., (p.50)

<sup>8</sup> Kennedy, op. cit., (p.43)



By 1885 there were two types of assemblies in Montreal. Sometimes the Assembly was composed of the members of one craft, "usually" of different crafts. The first type was called a trade assembly. The assembly was sometimes identified with a definite geographic area. These statements are to be inferred from a news item in the Montreal Star which reported on Mr. Keys: the Star said - "An assembly is sometimes composed of the members of one craft, but usually of the workmen living in one quarter of the city."<sup>1</sup> From this is to be concluded that the latter type of assembly - or "mixed" assembly - was the more common in Montreal. What was the nature of the assemblies, in other parts of the country, is not known.

In Montreal the question of language was solved by the formation of distinct French-speaking and English-speaking assemblies.<sup>2</sup> Whether differentiation had gone further so that the Irish had their own assemblies, is not known. But consciousness among the Knights of nationality seems to have been not negligible: Thus did J. A. Chapleau on 21 May 1887 report to Macdonald that he heard from one, Dansereau, the adviser, in partibus, of the French Knights of Labor, that the French section of the Knights were dividing from the Irish on account of the latter's attitude "on the Governor General's & O'Brien's question"<sup>3</sup>

The Knights first established themselves in Montreal in 1882, when Dominion Assembly 2436 was formed. The original slow progress of the Order was due to the objections of many to the apparent secrecy with which the proceedings were conducted.<sup>4</sup> But by 1885 they were well established in the city. In this year, for example, they were very active on the G.T. R.

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<sup>1</sup> Montreal Star, 17 Dec. 1885.

<sup>2</sup> See account of Knights on G.T.R.

<sup>3</sup> Macdonald Papers, Vol. 205 (p.225)

<sup>4</sup> Montreal Star 7 Sept. 1891.

This company had made a ten per cent. reduction on the wages of all those who received one dollar per day or upwards. The non-union men began to squeal; and, what was more important, they began to see the necessity of organization - especially when the union men did nothing about the reduction. Indeed they were encouraged to do so, in order to instill in the minds of the unorganized men the necessity for organization. The unorganized men were always a hindrance to the operations of the organized men: while the former refused to pay the ten or fifteen cents monthly dues into the union, or feared to join because of the risk of incurring the hostility of the employer, the latter fought the battles for all hands, the non-unionist reaping the benefit as well as the unionist. Indeed the non-unionist wanted everything for nothing: he believed that if a strike should occur, union men had a duty to pay him his wages if they expected him to quit work. In its infancy, the Order had paid \$1,800 in this way<sup>1</sup> already. The non-unionist on the G.T.R. was however learning his lesson: one G.T.R. man expressed satisfaction with the 10% reduction, because "the grand spread of organization along the line pleased him better than the few dimes which are kept out of his wages would." The men were flocking into the Order more rapidly than the most hopeful had anticipated.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the remainder of the year, organization of the men into the Order proceeded quietly and unobtrusively. Weekly meetings were held at Loma's Hotel in Point St. Charles. There were at least two K. Of L. lodges among the G.T.R. men - one English, the other French. The members in the French lodge were more numerous than those in the English. While exact

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<sup>1</sup>  
The Hamilton Palladium, 30 May, 1885.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 13 June, 1885.

figures are not known, the evidence suggests that there were between 800 -1,000 men from the G.T.R. shops in Montreal who belonged to the Order by the end of 1885.<sup>1</sup>

In 1885 too, one Knight said that the Order had agents who were opening lodges in nearly every large factory in Montreal. Some German cigar-makers, only a few weeks after their arrival in the city, had joined the Order. And, said the same Knight, "the movement is becoming universal."<sup>2</sup>

In 1886 organization proceeded in Montreal at a fast rate. By about March, there were twenty-two assemblies with a membership of from 10,000 to 12,000. There were thirteen French assemblies.<sup>3</sup> The French Canadian Knights in 1885 were increasing about one hundred per cent. faster than their English - speaking brethren.<sup>4</sup> By May 1886, District Assembly No.114 was already formed and in working order; and there were some twenty - six local assemblies - English and French - under its supervision. Organization was extended into the surrounded country districts, and met with great success.<sup>5</sup> It was claimed that even the denunciation of the Order by the Roman Catholic Church did not check its steady growth.<sup>6</sup> The Hamilton Palladium Of Labor, the organ of the Canadian Knights, was eagerly sought after; and, in fact, it was, to a large degree responsible for the rapid increase of the Knights in the city.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Montreal Star, 17 and 18, Dec., 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 18 Dec., 1885.

<sup>3</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 17 March, 1886.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 4 April, 1885.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 8 May, 1886.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 3 July, 1886.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 3 April, 1886.

The entry of the French-Canadians into the Order was particularly welcomed. The character of the population in the eastern portion of Ontario was rapidly changing owing to the great influx of French-Canadians who were to a great extent taking the places of the English-speaking people - especially in manufacturing centres like Cornwall and Gananoque. The complaint was that the French were willing to work for wages considerably below those demanded by English-speaking laborers, and as they were a prolific race, it was feared that in a few years, the workmen of Western Ontario would have had to contend with an influx of cheap native labor from Quebec. Hence the Hamilton Palladium considered it "highly important .... to ourselves no less than to them that they should be imbued with the principles of Labor Reform as inculcated by our Order..... We hope for better things and believe that with the inculcation of the principles of the Knights of Labor, the French Canadians will become just as self-respecting and as prompt to claim their rights as any other class of workingmen."<sup>1</sup> The complaint was not unfounded: but, at least in one case, the French Canadians were not to blame. The management of a cotton mill at Dundas were bringing French Canadians from Quebec and paying a commission merchant a dollar a head for them, to fill the places of local employees who were discharged.<sup>2</sup>

The first city central in Canada was the Toronto Trades Assembly, organized in 1871.<sup>3</sup> Quiescent after a short period of activity, the idea was again realized with the formation of the Toronto Trades and Labor Council in June 1881.<sup>4</sup> It was probably due to the example set in

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<sup>1</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 18 April, 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 29 May, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> Logan, op. cit., ¶ p. 36)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., (p.54)

Toronto, that the Knights in Montreal tried to establish a city central.

The idea of amalgamating the various labor organizations in Montreal into a central body first originated with some members of Dominion Assembly, in the winter of 1884. Their efforts at that time proved futile, but the scheme recommended itself to a majority of the various labor organizations. The next step toward a central organization was taken by Ville Marie and Dominion Assemblies conjointly, when, in response to a call from them, a public meeting was held in the Mechanics' Hall in February 1885 to protest against the Statute Labor Tax,<sup>1</sup> which imposed a fee of one dollar upon each workingman for the privilege of voting for mayor or alderman.<sup>2</sup> In November 1885, another attempt at central organization was made by Ville Marie Assembly. Invitations were sent to the various organized bodies, and such was the hearty response given that, on the 12th. January 1886, after a few preliminary meetings by the delegates chosen, the Central Trades and Labor Council was formed. The first president of the newly-formed Council was Mr. Louis Guyon, of La Concorde Assembly, K. of L. Succeeding presidents were Messrs. Jos. Corbeil, U. Lafontaine, T. Godin, and Joseph Beland. In 1891 the president was Mr. L. Z. Boudreau, who was a prominent member of Typographical Union No. 176, and also of Dominion Assembly.<sup>3</sup>

In Canada the Order was most active in the middle eighties. At the end of the decade they were still considered "strong." Revival occurred in 1893-94, and again in 1899-1902.<sup>4</sup> In July 1902, there were thirteen locals of some importance in Quebec province; some included in

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<sup>1</sup> Montreal Star, 7 Sept., 1891.

<sup>2</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 6 June, 1885.

<sup>3</sup> Montreal Star, 7 Sept., 1891.

<sup>4</sup> N. J. Ware and H. A. Logan: Labor in Canadian-American Relations, (p. 17)

their membership persons of different trades and callings, while others were confined "pretty largely to persons, practically all of whom follow particular trades."<sup>1</sup> In Ontario, three assemblies ,formed during the eighties, were still operating in 1902;<sup>2</sup> while, as the new century began, the Knights added "several new assemblies" to their list.<sup>3</sup>

The Order did not operate only in North America. At least one District Assembly existed in England: when a general assembly was in session at Minneapolis in October 1887, a communication was received from District Assembly 208 of England asking that a man be selected from among the English Knights to be vested with the necessary authority to act in the case of disputes arising between employer and employes.<sup>4</sup> And Mr.R.R.Elliott, chairman of a legislative committee of the Knights of Labor, stated in 1890 that the Order also extended through France, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Scotland and Australia.<sup>5</sup>

The international character of the Order gave rise to certain problems.What if, for example, international frictions occurred to mar the harmony in the Order? It was a sense of Canadian nationalism, or more probably for convenience's sake, that the majority of the Knights in District Assembly 125 of Toronto, favored a Home Rule project. Some, indeed, favored the system of being governed by the American officers of the Order; and others proposed that Canadian Knights have a representative on the General Executive Board; but the majority favored a state assembly for Canada with "enlarged powers," all levies and assessments to pass through

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<sup>1</sup> The Labour Gazette, Vol.111, (p.243)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.,(p.607)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.,(p.608)

<sup>4</sup> Montreal Star, 14 Oct.,1887.

the executive of this assembly, and also a percentage of all moneys received, supplies to be retained by it.<sup>1</sup> A communication was sent to the general assembly meeting in Minneapolis in the Fall of 1887 requesting the appointment of a "legislative committee" for the order in Canada.<sup>2</sup> Before the year was out, the request was granted.<sup>3</sup> Whether this legislative committee realized the expectations held of the state assembly, which the Canadian Knights originally favored, is not known.

But Mr. R. R. Elliott, who was Chairman of the Legislative Committee in 1890, explained that the Committee was appointed by the head of the Order" as a branch of the whole organization," and "our instructions are to seek such legislation as the Canadian members of the organization desire. We have no intention or no instructions that we are to seek anything that may happen to suit the Americans. We are called to follow the instructions of our Canadian organizations. This organization.... is a cosmopolitan one. [But] there is one executive board governing the whole."<sup>4</sup>

The Canadian Knights, however, were still not satisfied with the arrangement. They grumbled again in 1895.<sup>5</sup> But they felt some sense of a working-class brotherhood which ignored international frontiers. Mr. Elliott in 1890 said that the Order in Canada supported Bill No. 8 which aimed 'to prohibit the importation and immigration of foreigners and aliens under contract or agreement to perform labor in Canada.' This Bill was the Canadian answer to the American Alien Labor Law, a measure enforced in such a way as to compel many Canadians to relinquish their employment in the

<sup>1</sup> Montreal Star, 19 Aug., 1887.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 14 Oct., 1887.

<sup>3</sup> R. H. Coats: op.cit., (p.303)

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Select Committee to whom was referred Bill No. 8, (p.3)

<sup>5</sup> Kennedy: op. cit., (p.62)

United States, or to remove with their families, and reside there permanently; while citizens of the United States were permitted to work in Canada everyday, and to return to their homes on the American side of the frontier at night, without interference from the Canadian authorities. Mr. Elliott made it clear that the action of the Canadian Knights was taken "with a full knowledge and approbation of the American branch of our large organization;" and he said that this proved that "it is not in a spirit of retaliation we seek it."<sup>1</sup> He also said: "We do not want to set up a wall between the two countries as far as labor is concerned."<sup>2</sup> The sentiment was however not altogether pure: for he also stated that many Canadians cherished the motto of keeping Canada for the Canadians; "You protect the manufacturers, you protect the goods that may be made in this country; we ask you to protect the workmen that they may make these goods."<sup>3</sup> A certain selfishness, marred Elliott 's idealism. It is no wonder therefore, that 1903 saw the Canadian Knights apparently losing all association with their American headquarters, which was however, by this time, inactive.<sup>4</sup>

In 1886, the Order made the mistake of admitting the membership of too many unsuitable characters. This was true especially in the United States. The new members regarded the Order as "a huge striking and boycotting machine."<sup>5</sup> This resulted in a laxity of discipline, a too free and ready resort to strikes and boycotts on insufficient provocation, and unseemly differences between

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Select Committee to whom was referred Bill No.8, (p.1 - 3)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., (p.6)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., (p.3)

<sup>4</sup> Logan, op. cit., (footnote p.371)

<sup>5</sup> Hamilton Palladium, 3 April, 1886.



the Knights and the Trade Unions.<sup>1</sup> The work of their education in the principles of the Order did not keep pace with initiation.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, not only did the Order suffer in the estimation of the public, but also there arose differences, in the Order itself between the new and the old members. The new members were, for example, totally disgusted with Powderly's pacifism.<sup>3</sup> Things moved to such a crisis, that the Cleveland Convention had to be "specially summoned, and had, among its problems, this one of the too rapid growth of membership and its consequences, to consider."<sup>4</sup> And Powderly had to order the stoppage of initiation into the Order.<sup>5</sup> - for forty days.<sup>6</sup>

The method of paying organizers for their work did not attract good workers. During the week preceding the order to stop initiation of new members, over 400 assemblies were formed in the United States. Organizers received \$3.00 for the forming of an assembly and \$3.00 for the installation of its officers. It began to appear that they were influenced "by the seductive charm of gold rather than by a desire for careful organization." The Cleveland Convention empowered Powderly to call in the commissions of some 600 organizers of the Order, who unmindful of the condition that 'only true and good men should enter the sanctuary' had been guilty of "swelling the order without regard to moral or knightly qualifications of those enrolled," and to fill their places with more careful men.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 29 May, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 3 April, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> See section in Chapter II on strike, policy and action.

<sup>4</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 29 May, 1886.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 3 April, 1886.

<sup>6</sup> Montreal Star, 31 July, 1886.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 31 July, 1886.

The Order was not faced with the same problem in Canada. Here it was faced with a certain lukewarmness, both from the general public and even from members themselves. As 'Enjolras' warned: "There will never be any material advance made towards the settlement of the Labor question until the masses of the people are indoctrinated with the sense of individual responsibility for existing laws, customs and opinion... In preaching organization and associated action there is a danger that individuals may be led to ignore their personal duties and responsibilities - and to shift the whole burden of social and political action upon the order or the union, the newspaper or the representative. No man does his whole duty by simply becoming a member of a union and observing its rules."<sup>1</sup> And one Montreal correspondent complained how the working men were more interested in English political affairs than in Canadian affairs, which they regarded as 'bosh', 'child's play', etc.<sup>2</sup>

This lukewarmness of members was also traceable in the American Knights. The trade locals did not need weekly meetings to manage their affairs, while most of the mixed locals had few affairs to manage. Though the Knights had made a first attempt at adult education in America, the classes were a "heartbreaking business" - according to Prof. Ware.. This author also regarded this lukewarmness as "the basic weakness" of the Knights. <sup>3</sup>

Many members paid lip service to the principles of the Order.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hamilton Palladium, 24 July, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 20 June, 1885.

<sup>3</sup> Ware, op.cit., (p.96)

It was said that a great many who were largely in sympathy with the cause of Labor Reform, who realized the disabilities of the lot of the worker and were prepared to admit that there were many evils in the social system which needed a remedy were still "under the influence of the dogmas of capitalism." They thought it a "perfectly natural and legitimate proceeding " that a man should scrape together by hook or by crook a few thousand dollars, put the money out on mortgage, buy bonds or ' salt it down' in " a savings bank, live on the interest ever afterwards and transmit " a heritage of idleness" to his children and remoter descendants.<sup>1</sup> While the General Assembly at Cleveland condemned the occupation of the bribe-giver and bribe-taker, <sup>2</sup> there were Knights in Canada who did not mind making a little on the side, by using their influence over their comrades in the interests of one or other of the two major political parties, and hoping to get some temporary position at government expense out of the deal.<sup>3</sup> Indeed some Labor Reformers considered it good for the Order if some members obtained influential positions in government service, but "Enjolras" pointed out that appointments made by a party government were simply bribes, rewards for political dirty work, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred. And he argued - " If such an applicant for a government berth be a Labor Reformer, will not the temptation to make capital out of his standing in our ranks be almost irresistible?...Now, is it not obvious that under such conditions the Labor Reformer who seeks office must choose

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<sup>1</sup> The Hamilton Dalladium, 3 Oct. 1885.

<sup>2</sup>, Ibid., 5 June, 1886.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 5 Sept., 1886.

between his personal ambition and his principles - that to have any reasonable hope of success he must consent to act as a decoy-duck - to help entrap his fellows into supporting the government to whom he looks for favors?"<sup>1</sup> In reality, however, the question as to whether the office-seeker was a traitor, depended on the man himself; though in an age when government was conducted on "a system of wholesale bribery,"<sup>2</sup> there was some cogency in the argument.

Many of the assemblies wasted their time in discussing unimportant matter and quibbling over points of order when they should be engaged in studying the principles of Labor Reform. The constitution which provided for the discussion of subjects bearing upon the labor question was not lived up to. There was also a lack of good speakers; but worse yet there was a lack of interest which was responsible for "tame, lifeless and unprofitable" meetings. The visits of men like Powderly, George, Trevellick, Fogg and other American leaders had stimulated immensely the progress of the cause in Canada; but they were few and far between, so that the enthusiasm aroused was apt to die down before the next occasion, instead of being kept alive by a steady local agitation.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the educational meetings were also conducted on the level of amateurs. For instance, only one half hour was devoted to the discussion of 'labor in all its interests,' or upon the enlargement of the 'declaration of principles' by one designated for that purpose.<sup>4</sup>

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 3 Oct., 1885.

2. The Labor Advocate, Toronto, 5 June, 1891

3. The Hamilton Palladium, 20 Nov., 1886.

4. Montreal Star, 31 July, 1886.

The indifference on the part of the workers to their own interests continued into the early nineties. The Labor Advocate of Toronto, under the inspiring and enthusiastic editorship of Mr. Phillips Thompson, made a determined attempt to instill into the minds of the workmen that "Socialism" alone was the solution of the labor problem. This paper started as a weekly publication on the 5th. of December 1890. But the 2nd. October 1891 marked its last issue. The editor found that the paper could not pay its expenses, and that there was no prospect that, if publication continued, it was likely to do so. The more active and progressive men gave the paper their full support and tried their best to increase subscription; but the great mass of the workmen, even though they were organized, were "utterly apathetic and indifferent." The subscribers numbered only hundreds, and probably more than half were outside the ranks of organized labor. One reason for this was that workingmen from the sheer force of habit kept to their "old worn-out and discredited trade union policy of strikes and petty restrictions." Editorial lament was almost heartrending: "It is much to be regretted that the wage-earners are so stupidly blind to their own interests that they cannot see the advantage of having a live out-spoken journal to plead their cause.....The more intelligent and progressive workmen....see that every change for the better must come from organization for radical political reforms and public action against monopoly. But the masses are blind to this truth. Stupid, prejudiced and selfish, they cling to their fetiches of partyism, sectarianism and loyalty, and resent any attempt to present broader views. They can see no further than their noses, and their ideas of labor reforms are limited to some petty advance of pay in their particular trade . They do not know, and do not wish to know, anything of the underlying causes which depress labor."<sup>1</sup>

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1. The Labor Advocate, Toronto, 2 Oct., 1891.

Discord in the Order came from another quarter. In Montreal, for example, the election of officers was marred by prejudices of religion, political leanings and social standing. To what extent the evil existed is not known; but the Montreal correspondent noted that efforts were made to overcome it: on the whole, he was inclined to believe that there was "honesty of purpose and true merit to be found in the leaders, and moreover a determined feeling among them to have nothing undone to secure the cause of which they are the flag-bearers."<sup>1</sup>

The decisive weakness of the Order was the heterogeneity of its aims from the viewpoint of social classes. Lewis L. Lorwin, writing of the Order in the United States, said that well into the eighties, the Order remained primarily a wage earners' organization; but that after 1886, it spread into rural areas, and its membership became diluted with farmers, shopkeepers, and small employers. The author then rightly stated that these elements had little interest in the problems which agitated the wage earners. The resulting friction accelerated the desertion of the industrial membership from the Order.<sup>2</sup>

In Canada it was the same thing. William Keys, a leading Knight, was himself an employer of labor. A letter from one of Montreal's "best known and most influential merchants," dated 4 March 1885, and addressed to Mr. Keys, said, "I think I would like to become a member" of the Order.<sup>3</sup> And, as we have seen, it was declared that any person, with a few exceptions, could become a member of the Order. The Hamilton also carried editorials and articles in favor of farmers and farm laborers. It considered as a "just and humane law" the Manitoba Exemption Act, passed by the Manitoba legislature, which exempted from seizure for debt any farm not more than 160 acres in extent, all houses

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 8 May, 1886.

2. L. L. Lorwin: The American Federation of Labor, (p. 24)

3. The Hamilton Palladium, 4 April, 1885.

worth less than \$2,500 as well as a large amount of personal property; and<sup>1</sup> the condition of the farm laborer was publicized.<sup>2</sup> Farmers were reminded that 'the pick, loom and anvil are the natural allies of the sickle and scythe!'<sup>3</sup> And finally, 'Enjolras' wrote a lengthy article on "The Farmers."

This writer supported the alliance of the workers and the farmers. He felt that the critics were "wrong in supposing that the true interests of the workingmen of the cities are so far apart that they cannot in future act together." And the basis of his argument lay in the agricultural conditions of the time. For, he explained, the great majority of the farmers were "in every sense of the word workingmen:" there were few of the 'gentleman farmer' type, who was merely "a capitalist", who put his money into his farm as he would into a factory, leaving the work to be done by others. It was only by hard steady work that a living was to be got out of the soil. 'Enjolras' therefore argued: "As a self-employed workingman, the ordinary farmer has every reason to sympathise with the wage-earner of the cities rather than with the capitalist class." Other reasons for this alliance were the robbery perpetrated by the railroads, the money monopoly which sucked interest from the farmers, and the depredations of the land-grabbers.<sup>4</sup>

On the industrial side, the explanation for the heterogeneity in the membership and aims of the Order lies also in the economic conditions of the time. The majority of the industrial establishments were small. The

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 13 June, 1885.

2. Ibid., 22 and 29, May, 1886; and the Labor Advocate, Toronto, 31 July, 1891.

3. The Hamilton Palladium, 16 Oct., 1886.

4. The Toronto Palladium, 13 Feb., 1886.

For the alliance in the United States between the Knights and the farmers, see Frank M. Drew's article "The Present Farmers' Movement" in the Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 6, June 1891.

employer himself worked with his own hands, and was in more or less constant contact with his men. There thus grew up a bond of sympathy in many cases between the employer and his "hands".<sup>1</sup> This accounts for the

1. These statements may be deduced from a study of the census of Canada of 1890-91. The very definition of an "industrial establishment" as "any place where one or several persons are engaged in manufacturing, altering, making up or changing from one shape into another, materials for sale, use or consumption," shows the importance of the small employers - or at least their relative importance. This definition guided the enumerators in the census of 1891, and also in that of 1881. In 1891 they reported that the "chief characteristic" of the country's development during the decade 1881-90 was the "upspringing of numerous small industries." This was particularly true of the country's growth in 1881, but was not so marked in 1891. In 1891, too, there were many small industries which were adjuncts to the regular occupation, rather than the occupations by which livelihoods were obtained. These were excluded from the census returns of 1891. The amounts of home made woollen and linen cloth, butter and cheese, furniture, boots and shoes, etc. were not negligible. These features of Canadian economic life indicate the importance of small scale industry. The census of 1891 made it a special point to say: "There is no doubt that the ten years saw a large increase of small industries. These have been established all over the country. They have taken root....As a feature in the industrial life of the people this revelation of the census deserves to be recorded. It is a great fact and should not be ignored. It is registered in the census returns so that in after years, when there shall come development of large establishments, the people of Canada may be able to look back upon the period of 'small and feeble things,' and show from what humble beginnings the industrial life of the country sprang". (Census of Canada, 1890-91, Vol.III, p.iv-vi)

The following figures were also given:

Industrial Establishments compared by groups for the years 1881 and 1891.

Groups of	Years	No. of Establish- ments.	Total Value of Articles Produced.
1. Under \$2,000	1881	32,072	\$ 20,734,080
	1891	50,777	32,195,192
2. \$2,000 to \$12,000	1881	13,514	64,939,604
	1891	19,629	93,260,957
3. \$12,001 to \$25,000	1881	2,061	36,808,242
	1891	2,679	47,709,005
4. \$25,001 to \$49,999	1881	967	33,482,170
	1891	1,208	42,238,542
5. \$50,000 and over	1881	1,108	153,767,771
	1891	1,675	260,795,190

(Census of Canada, 1890-91, Vol. IV, p.252)



sympathetic letter of the prominent Montreal merchant. 'Enjolras' himself admitted "instances [of] the kindly feeling which sometimes prevail, even under the competitive system, between employers and employed." But he felt constrained to add that the competitive system tended to destroy the bond of sympathy: "There are some employers," he said, "who would willingly pay high wages to their workmen, but for the necessity they are under of competing with extortioners and slave-drivers, and the tribute they have to pay to usurers and landlords."<sup>1</sup> And one instance is known where the employer actually encouraged his men to combine to better their condition, saying that he would 'willingly grant them the reforms they need' if they did so; this Hamilton merchant<sup>2</sup> promised them shorter hours, and a half-holiday every week through the summer months. And strangely enough the store clerks refused to combine!<sup>2</sup>

The most striking thing about these figures is the growth of large-scale industry. The magnitude of the value of the products produced by it is simply inescapable.

But the figures also show the numerical predominance of small-scale industry. The rate of increase of the five groups taken in order, during the decade, was as follows:- 58%, 45%, 30%, 25%, 51%. The group of smallest industries therefore increased faster than any other group: this was an indication of its persistence.

Another indication of the economic conditions of the time is given when George Brown, the editor of the Toronto Globe, exclaimed in 1872- with some exaggeration however - 'The whole people are the capitalists of Canada.....We have no Rothschilds in Canada, no Jacob Astors, no Vanderbilts, no Tweeds, no Goulds, no Jim Fisks..... We all work. We all began with nothing. We have all got by hard work all we own - and the richest among us work on still and like to do it.'

(Quoted by D.G.Creighton, in the Canadian Historical Review, Vol.24, 1943, p.367)

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 2 May, 1885.

2. Ibid., 17 March, 1886.

The Order might very well take up the cause of the farm laborers, especially if their income were only, or mainly in the form of wages. But to include as members of the Order such people as farmers, shopkeepers and small employers, and others of what is usually called the petit-bourgeoisie, and more particularly to hope to satisfy their interests as well as those of the industrial wage earners, was to serve two gods, mutually hostile, at the same time.

The idea of serving two mutually hostile masters simultaneously, was, in those days, believed practicable. The Montreal Daily Star professed to have a "deep interest" in the laboring classes;<sup>1</sup> yet it preached the virtues of capital,<sup>2</sup> and said that labor was the "partner" of capital.<sup>3</sup> The labor candidates in the Quebec Provincial Elections of October 1886 held the same views. Mr. W.W. Robertson, the candidate for Montreal West, in announcing his programme, said that his candidature "does not mean any antagonism between labor and wealth honestly acquired, or interference with its administration." William Keys, the candidate for Montreal Centre, in a pre-election advertisement, began: "As the labor candidate, I want it to be distinctly understood that a conflict between capital and labor has no place in my platform." And an electoral manifesto signed by both Keys and Adelard Gravel, the labor candidate for Montreal East, declared: "Notre principal but est, sans aucune doute, de travailler à l'avancement des intérêts de la classe ouvrière, à laquelle nous sommes fiers d'appartenir; et nous croyons que ce but ne sera que plus sûrement atteint en proposant des mesures qui seront en harmonie avec les intérêts de toutes

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1. Montreal Star, 22 Nov., 1884.

2. Ibid., 10 April, 1886.

3. Ibid., 19 March and 8 Oct., 1886.

les classes de la société et qui seront calculées pour protéger les droits des patrons tout autant que ceux des ouvriers."<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Foley, district master workman in Chicago, and treasurer of the Trade and Labor Assembly, said to a reporter of the New York Herald, according to Le Monde, "Les ouvriers représentés par les différentes unions et par les Chevaliers du Travail ne sont pas hostiles au capital. La tendance des organisations ouvrières est de mettre d'accord le capital et le travail."<sup>2</sup> Mr. A.A. Carlton, the representative of the General Executive Board of the Order at Philadelphia, when on a visit to Montreal in August 1887, said - "One of the most serious difficulties to be faced was the prejudices of the people who had been taught that the relationship between employer and employe must be antagonistic. Such a subject must be touched tenderly, and they must be taught that there was no difference between the employer and his employes."<sup>3</sup> And in 1893 Powderly wrote to John Hayes: "I contend that the majority of employers can be approached much easier through a tender of good will than with a club .... You can easily see that many employers, those who read and think, will recognise in me a friend who can honestly entertain for them a kindly feeling without violating my pledge to the workers who look to me for counsel. It will be the aim of this work we are now doing to bring the employer and the employee into closer relations."<sup>4</sup> Earlier yet, Stephens had said: "we mean no conflict

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1. Robert W. Cox: The Quebec Provincial General Election of 1886, (footnote, p. 207). Unpublished M.A. thesis; McGill University, April 1948.

2. Le Monde, 6 March, 1886.

3. Montreal Star, 22 Aug., 1887.

4. Ware, op. cit., ( p.170)

with legitimate enterprise, no antagonism to necessary capital."<sup>1</sup> It is clear that when such theoretical views are held, a vacillating leadership must be the result. The nature of a leader reflects the theories to which he subscribes; and conversely, theories can only attract such leaders whose beliefs and actions can correspond to them; weak, compromising theories can only attract weak and compromising leaders. It was therefore idle for Prof. Ware to be as critical as he was of Powderly; Prof. Ware suggests that the Knights "should have thrown him out," and he upbraided them for their "stupid loyalty" for clinging to him.<sup>2</sup> The point is: with such theories who could have done better than Powderly?

In the United States of the eighties, according to Prof. C.R.Daugherty, the use of machinery and the integration of huge enterprises "had not proceeded far enough for single crafts to lose most of their skill or feel their weakness."<sup>3</sup> The prevalence of such economic conditions at the time bred inevitably a petit-bourgeois method of thinking among the masses of the people, and in particular among the workers. "Each laborer," wrote Prof. E.E. Cummins, "was anxious to better his economic lot but as yet was not vitally interested in the welfare of his fellow-workmen. The skilled laborers could not work up much enthusiasm over a program calling for the 'uplift' of the mass of unskilled laborers. They were primarily selfish. If they seemed to develop a group spirit, this was merely the extension of the individual attitude and the spirit was still a selfish one. Assuredly the craftsman was interested in the welfare of his fellow-craftsmen - in so far as he could see that his own welfare was bound up with theirs."<sup>4</sup>

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1. John R. Commons and Associates: History of Labor in the United States, Vol. 2, (p.198)

2. Ware, op. cit., (p.xvi)

3. C.R.Daugherty: Labor Problems in American Industry, (p.440)

4. E.E.Cummins: The Labor Problem in the United States, (p.133)

In agriculture, the same small-scale features were noticeable in the breaking up of the large southern plantations after the Civil War and the leasing of these smaller lots to freeholders and freed slaves; and also in the pioneer farmers of the West who had got their land freely as provided in the Homestead Act of 1862. By the end of the nineteenth century this small-scale, and largely self-sufficing, rural economy was, however, already vanishing, and a large scale agriculture, capitalistic in nature, was taking its place. This movement was stimulated by the exhaustion of free land by the century's end, and by other factors such as the development of transportation. The result, for the small independent farmer, was his gradual extinction, or at best a difficult existence.<sup>1</sup> It was because of such agricultural conditions in America that the Knights of Labor took up the cause of the farmers.

Prof. Cummins wrote, "The organizers of the American Federation of Labor interpreted aright, as the leaders of the Knights had failed to do, the economic and individual forces at work at the time."<sup>2</sup> But, indeed, the leaders of the Knights did recognize the force of this petit-bourgeois ideology. Then Prof. Cummins suggested that "the fundamental reason" of the collapse of the Order, lay in the "inappropriateness of its structure and its philosophy." The statement was correct; but Prof. Cummins' explanation was

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. C.A. and M.R. Beard: The Rise of American Civilization, Vol. II, Ch. 22. Also, Lenin on United States agriculture: Selected Works, Vol. XII.

In their telling of the "triumph of business enterprise" in Ch. XX of Vol. II, the authors of The Rise of American Civilization had grasped the leading features of American industry but they ignored the persistence of small-scale enterprise.

<sup>2</sup> Cummins op.cit., (p. 133)

one-sided. For, he explained: "These postulated one or other of two assumptions: either that the points of view and the interests of all wage earners are identical; or that, though having different interests, each is vitally concerned about the welfare of every other."<sup>1</sup> Prof. Daugherty was more correct when he said that the membership and organizational structure were based on "two erroneous principles, namely, that the interests of employees are identical with those of employers [the Knights had in mind mainly small employers, in agriculture and especially in industry] and that the interests of all groups and classes of employees are the same."<sup>2</sup> The second part of Prof. Daugherty's explanation did reflect economic reality at the time. Single crafts still retained their individuality. The better paid workers very probably cherished hopes of becoming at least small employers: for, as Selig Perlman wrote, "the class lines were not tightly drawn."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the bringing together of workmen of different income groups did not make for harmony: for instance, Peter M. Arthur, chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, said, "The order will go just as the Coopers' Union, the Miners' and the Machinists' and others did. The Knights strike, and strike means assessment; assessment means death. I do not believe in putting a \$3 a day man in the same organization with a \$1.50 a day man, and to our isolation from other organizations we owe our success. We have not had one strike in eight years."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cummins, op.cit., (p.134)

<sup>2</sup> Daugherty, op.cit., (p.440)

<sup>3</sup> Selig Perlman: History of Trade Unionism in the United States. (p.121)

<sup>4</sup> Montreal Star, 31 July, 1886.

The preaching of social peace by the Order cannot but remind one of the same tactics employed by the Second International which had grown up in the late eighties in Europe . But there was one essential difference. Whereas the policy of the Knights was determined by the great diffusion of small scale industry and farming, and by class fluidity especially between the wage-earners and the small employers, the policy of the Second International arose from the ability of the imperialists in the European countries to bribe sections of the working class in those countries by high wages paid from profits obtained from foreign trade, and more especially from foreign investments.<sup>1</sup>

The Knights will probably be remembered less for what they did than for what they hoped to achieve. Union of all trades, 'education', and producers' cooperation were cardinal points in their philosophy, and were steadily referred to as 'First Principles'. This producers' cooperation was the method by which they hoped to circumvent the wage-system.<sup>2</sup> These goals were included in the preamble and platform of the Order.

The first platform, adopted in 1878, was that of the Industrial Brotherhood - with amendments.<sup>3</sup> New additions and amendments were made in 1884,<sup>4</sup> and later yet up to at least 1893.<sup>5</sup> We will deal here with a platform published in the Hamilton Palladium of 24 Jan. 1885.<sup>6</sup>

This platform was drawn up for the use of the Order in the United States, in particular. Its preamble, called attention to "alarming development and aggressiveness of great capitalists and corporations," and said that

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<sup>1</sup> Lenin: Selected Works, Vol.V. (p.92)

<sup>2</sup> Perlman, op.cit., (p.70-72)

<sup>3</sup> Ware , op.cit., (p.49)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., (p.379)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., (p.380)

<sup>6</sup> Prof. Ware has given a comparison of the 1878 platform with that of the Industrial Brotherhood: op.cit., Appendix I.

unless checked they would "inevitably lead to the pauperization and hopeless degradation of the toiling masses." "Hence it said," if we desire to enjoy the full blessings of life," a check must be placed upon "unjust accumulation, and the power for evil of aggregated wealth." This object could be achieved "only by the united efforts of those who obey the divine injunction, ' In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread'." The Order was formed "for the purpose of organizing and directing the power of the industrial masses;" but the preamble added - "not as a political party, for it is more - in it are crystallized sentiments and measures for the benefit of the whole people, but it should be borne in mind, when exercising the right of suffrage, that most of the objects herein set forth can only be obtained through legislation, and that it is the duty of all to assist in nominating and supporting with their votes only such candidates as will pledge their support to those measures regardless of party. But no one shall however be compelled to vote with the majority."

The preamble showed that the Knights, as an Order repudiated politics in the United States, and was there prepared to tag along behind either of the two dominant parties. In Canada, however, they followed a different policy; here they formed the Labor Reform party, and actively engaged politics, although some of them wished to cover up their political activities with some untenable distinctions.

The platform was a mixture of concrete aims and idealism. The first clause declared that one aim of the Order was - "To make industrial and moral worth not wealth, the true standard of individual and national greatness." The second read: "To secure to the workers the full enjoyment of the wealth they create, sufficient leisure in which to develop their intellectual,



moral and social faculties: all the benefits, recreation and pleasures of association; in a word, to enable them to share in the gains and honors of advancing civilization." This generalization may be regarded as the aim to which all the activities of the Knights, were directed. The other clauses of the platform were more specific. They demanded at the hands of the State, the establishment of bureaus of labor statistics: the reservation of public lands for actual settlers; no grants to railroads or speculators; and all lands held for speculative purposes to be taxed to their full value: the abrogation of all laws that did not bear equally upon capital and labor, and the removal of unjust technicalities, delays, and discriminations in the administration of justice: health and safety measures for those in the mining, manufacturing and building industries, and indemnification for those engaged therein for injuries received through lack of necessary safeguards: the recognition by incorporation of trades' unions and other associations as might be organized by the working classes to improve their condition and protect their rights: the enactment of laws to compel the corporations to pay their employees weekly, in lawful money, for the labor of the preceding week, and giving mechanics and laborers a first lien upon the product of their labor to the extent of their full wages: the abolition of the contract system on National, State and Municipal works: laws providing for arbitration, and the enforcement of the decision: the legal prohibition of the employment of children under 15 years of age in workshops, mines and factories: the prohibition of hire of convict labor: and a graduated income tax.

At the hands of Congress, the Order demanded the establishment of a national monetary system which would provide a circulating medium in necessary

quantity direct to the people, without the interference of banks; the national issue should be full legal tender in payment of all debts, public and private; Government should not guarantee or recognize any private banks, or create any banking corporations: emergencies to be met with the issue of non-interest-bearing money by the government instead of by interest-bearing bonds: prohibition of importation of foreign labor under contract: the organization of postal savings by the Government: Government purchase of all telegraphs, telephones and railroads, and no charter or license to be issued to any corporation for the construction or operation of any means of transporting intelligence, passenger or freight.

The Order then promised to labor for the establishment of co-operative institutions "such as will tend to supersede the wage system, by the introduction of a co-operative industrial system;" "equal pay for equal work" for both sexes; the general adoption of an eight-hour working day; and for persuading employers to agree to arbitrate all differences between them and their employees so that "the bonds of sympathy between them may be strengthened," and strikes rendered "unnecessary".

The platform drew the sympathetic attention of writers and social subjects, and of university teachers like Dr. Richard T. Ely and President John Bascom of Wisconsin. Prof. Ely even advised some of his pupils at the John Hopkins University to join the Order in order to gain a better understanding of the labor movement.<sup>1</sup> His enthusiasm for the Order was great: in

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<sup>1</sup> Perlman, op.cit., (p.72)

1886 he wrote that it was established "on truly scientific principles, which involved either an intuitive perception of the nature of industrial progress, or a wonderful acquaintance with the laws of economic society."<sup>1</sup>

Prof. Ely's enthusiasm was, however, misdirected. The Knights in the mid-eighties had no wonderful acquaintance with the laws of social growth. Instead they failed to look reality in the face, and looked back to a vanished or vanishing society as their ideal. We have already discussed this problem. Paul Crosser, speaking from the viewpoint of the industrial working class, was correct in asserting that the Knights "cultivated the spirit of master artisanship and made the journeymen believe that his former social position could be restored."<sup>2</sup> It was only in the early nineties that the Knights - in Toronto - were advancing towards a truer knowledge of economic laws; and instead of fighting against, or hiding from, the inexorable, they were now adapting their policies to these laws.- though still imperfectly.

There was nothing revolutionary in the platform. It left capitalist society intact on the whole. It played up to bourgeois sentiment when it spoke of individual and national greatness. It was highly idealistic: it placed emphasis on high ideals, and the methods indicated were unrealistic; the decision, carried out in the United States, of not engaging in politics, led to no substantial result, and the hope to replace the wage system by a "co-operative industrial system" proved vain. At best, the platform aimed to correct certain abuses, and to ease the lot of the worker within the framework of capitalism.

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<sup>1</sup> R. T. Ely: The Labor Movement In America, (p.75)

<sup>2</sup> Paul Crosser: Ideologies and American Labor, (p.113)

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ECONOMIC IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE KNIGHTS.

The Knights had no well-considered system of economics to follow. One of their chief economic ideas was theoretically worked out by Henry George. Land reform was one of their chief demands; and this was one of the means by which they hoped to get rid of all the evils of capitalist society. It was all very well to oppose pauper and Chinese immigration and to encourage movements for the raising of wages, said one leading theoretician of the Knights, who signed himself as 'Enjolras':<sup>1</sup> but he added, "after all, these are but trifling matters in comparison with the land question. We must keep it before the people, in season and out of season, - iterate it and reiterate it - ring the changes upon it - that the only way out of the condition of industrial servitude, whether under hard or easy task-masters - is by achieving the freedom of the soil. Free land means free men.... To abolish landlordism is to knock the bottom out of the whole monopoly system."<sup>2</sup> This was a virtual repetition of Henry George: in an address to the Knights at the Crystal Palace in Hamilton on August 4th 1884, George said, "I don't believe that land reform is one thing, and other reforms other things. I am a land reformer.... simply because I wish to do what I can to raise wages and improve the condition

1. Incidentally, the Hamilton K. of L. paper, The Palladium of Labor, considered 'Enjolras'' articles as "cleverly written and convincing." His articles were collected and sold at \$5.00 per 100, a price which merely covered the cost of labor, paper and binding, and yielded no profit. This circumstance was due to the fact that - according to the Palladium - "we merely wish to 'Spread the Light' as far as in our power lieth." It also shows the high estimation in which 'Enjolras' was held.

2. The Hamilton Palladium, 9 May, 1885.

of the people. I believe the Labor question resolves itself ultimately into the land question, and that is why I am a land reformer. To my mind the one great central question of the time - the one question around which all others cluster - is the land question.... [The] premier wrong that robs the laborer of his earnings is the monopoly of land.... Deprive a man of [land], and what have you left of him? He is nothing but a disembodied spirit."<sup>1</sup> Another K. of L. paper, The Labor Union, of Hamilton, opined earlier yet, "The land question underlies the labor question to a much greater extent than is generally realized."<sup>2</sup>

The reasons for putting so much emphasis on the land question were not far to seek. Where land was cheap and accessible, labor commanded good wages. The reason was that land offered a "resource" to the surplus labor of the cities; and that those who resorted to agriculture rather than accept low wages in the cities, kept down the supply of labor there, hence enabling the city laborers to demand higher wages. When land in the rural districts was inaccessible to the people, the cities were overrun with those for whom "there was neither food nor work," and wages were low. Hence the argument ran: "Restore to the people their natural rights in the soil and the mines and the wages would at once bound upwards."<sup>3</sup> This effect of private property in land on wages was also traced by Henry George in his Hamilton lecture. "All wages," he said, "in their gravitation, depend ultimately upon what gives the greatest amount of occupation. Clearly the

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 9 Aug., 1884.

2. The Labor Union, Hamilton, 13 Jan., 1883.

3. Ibid., 13 Jan., 1883.

opportunity there is for employer Labor by obtaining access to land fixes the rate of wages. This is the reason that the country in which the population is sparse, and the land cheap - all other things being equal - is the country of high wages. That is the reason for wages being higher here than in Europe.... When it becomes necessary for Labor to pay for land, necessarily wages must fall. No man will work for another for less than he can obtain by working for himself; and when men can go upon land and work for themselves, then wages cannot fall beyond what they can thus obtain, and in the skilled operations they will rise. Now when he is compelled to purchase land, or compelled to pay part of that Labor as rent, the wages left to him is small. And as the monopoly of land becomes closer, and the workingman is compelled to give up all he can make, save what is needed to barely support life, and even in other occupations men are deprived of the natural opportunities to get land, the masses are supposed to compete and take whatever wages they can get." George therefore held that "an equal right to land is an inalienable right that attaches to every human being that comes into the world."<sup>1</sup>

Another reason for emphasizing the land question was that - it was believed - the growth of cities increased the "value" of land immensely, irrespectively of any improvements made by the owners. The increased "value" resulted in rents so high that workingmen could hardly provide decent, let alone comfortable, accomodation for their families.<sup>2</sup> The general tenor of this argument was repeated by 'Enjolras': he condemned the rising ground rent in the cities - though to him, their rise was due to the increase in "the price of land."

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 9 Aug., 1884.

'Enjolras' gave yet another reason for condemning private property in land. He said that to the landlord all other "interests" paid tribute. Other "exploiters" - he argued - the usurer, the unjust employer, the stock sharper might "assist" in the process of spoliation, but in the long run they had to hand over the larger part of their spoil to the landowner. He was of the opinion: "The real ruler, the despot who has the lives and welfare of the people in his hand is the man who 'owns' the land. Whether he has a title or a voice in legislation or not is a very slight matter."<sup>1</sup>

What was the solution of the land question?

Henry George said that there were two solutions. The first was to divide the income from the land. Those who used the land were to pay the "best price" for it, and the revenue divided among the people. This end could be achieved if society, by means of its governing body, were to sub-rent the soil. But George favored a second solution. He said that "the easiest way is simply to shift the taxation on the land."<sup>2</sup>

The Labor Union, inspired by Henry George's book, Progress and Poverty, had heralded his solution to the land question - or rather, the labor question. It rightly said that this "national tax on land values" would "make the nation a joint-stock company with the land as capital and every citizen a shareholder by birth." It then predicted that such a measure would cause "land values" to drop; speculation in man's gifts from nature would be abolished; land would be utilized for productive purposes; population would no longer be congested in city slums, and the government would have funds at its disposal to pay off the debt and use for every sort of beneficial purpose; for example, pensions and annuities

1. The Labor Union, Hamilton, 9 May, 1885.

2. Ibid., 9 Aug., 1884.

could be paid to every one on reaching an age when he was unfitted to work.<sup>1</sup> Such were the hopes placed on George's scheme.

The Knights felt that public opinion was not yet prepared for land nationalization; the strangeness and novelty had not yet worn off, and many had not even an acquaintance with the subject. This was in 1883.<sup>2</sup> But they made great efforts to popularize the idea. By the end of 1887 Powderly was able to claim this success for the Order; and the result was that "now are seen public officials, legislators, heads of departments, senators and the President himself stretching forth their hands to save the heritage of the people." By that time the land question was being studied by intelligent workingmen and women in every town and hamlet in the United States. The work of the Knights in this field, was however of an educational nature: Powderly still believed that the people were not yet prepared. He said that the theories as to the ownership of all the land by the people 'in common' were very nice. But, he explained, before they could be realized, people must learn to think 'in common'; and, furthermore, it must be demonstrated that the idea was practicable. The idea was yet impracticable, he believed, because people were "not good enough yet to discard the native selfishness which was born in them"; they were still too "selfish and grasping."<sup>3</sup>

The Canadian Knights were not behind their kin in the United States. In early 1883, they took steps "to ripen public opinion and prepare the way" for land nationalization. First they instructed the public to insist by their votes that not another acre of the public domain should

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1. The Labor Union, Hamilton, 13 Jan., 1883.

2. Ibid., 20 Jan., 1883.

3. Montreal Star, 25 Nov., 1887.



be "granted or sold, or leased, or mortgaged to any railroad colonizing company, ring, clique, syndicate, or individual speculator - to anybody in short, except actual settlers." Unless a candidate for office pledged himself to take this stand, they should not vote for him, but stay away from the polls altogether, or better still, cast a blank ballot. Secondly, they urged the people to advocate a law "prohibiting the government from granting outright, any more land to any one, even bona fide settlers, and substituting long term leases for absolute deeds." The Knights believed that this plan would make the adoption of the land nationalization scheme easier than was likely to be. Thirdly, the people should insist that the harsh and unjust law of landlord and tenant be abolished, and the landlord put on precisely the same footing as the butcher, grocer, tailor or any other creditor. Fourthly, they should digest Henry George's book, discuss it, and pass it among friends.<sup>1</sup>

The agrarian demands of the Knights were also put more formally . The Canadian Labor Congress assembled in Toronto in September 1886, was inspired to adopt a resolution condemning "as inimical to the best interests of the country" the monopolization of public lands by corporate companies and individual speculators.<sup>2</sup>

In the United States the General Assembly of the Knights at Cleveland in June 1886 recommended the reservation of all land for

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1. The Labor Union, Hamilton, 20 Jan., 1883.

2., The Hamilton Palladium, 18 Sept., 1886.

actual settlers, the taxation at the full value of cultivated land of all land held by individuals or corporations not under cultivation, and that all land held by "aliens" should be purchased at an appraised valuation and aliens prevented from acquiring more land in future.<sup>1</sup> At the Hamilton General Assembly on November 5th 1885, Powderly had already called on Congress for a law forbidding "aliens" to own land in the United States. At that time, too, he wanted to prevent any one man holding more land than he could cultivate - the limit being put at 100 acres.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that this land nationalization, had it matured, would have dealt a powerful blow to the principle of private ownership. Great benefit might have accrued to the working class, and to others of the 'lower' strata of society - at least for a certain time. But, as Marx said, in reference to George's plan, it would have left wage labor and therefore capitalist production untouched, and the evils of the capitalist system would not have disappeared. Indeed, Marx went further: he said that the whole thing was simply an attempt "to save capitalist domination and indeed to establish it afresh on an even wider basis than its present one."<sup>3</sup>

At this time, 1886, the Knights failed to see that their scheme of land nationalization could not have been the remedy for all social ills. It was not until the early 1890's that they began to have a truer perspective.

The hatred of the Knights was therefore, at first, concentrated against the landlords. On the other hand, the capitalist was

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 5 June, 1886.

2. Ibid., 10 Oct., 1885.

3. Selected Correspondence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, (p.395-6) Marx' emphasis.

even shown some sympathy. For, said the Hamilton Palladium, "A capitalist may also be a laborer. Frequently he is and a very useful and necessary laborer too. For all the work he performs he is entitled to a fair and just remuneration." The trouble with him was that when the time came for distribution, " he claims as capitalist and not as worker, and claims an exorbitant and unjust share."<sup>1</sup>

Such a statement could only reflect the fact that at the time the great majority of the capitalists were men employing only small capitals, that they superintended and worked themselves in their businesses.

This idea of land reform was not obtained from Henry George. "The reserving of the public lands, the heritage of the people, for the actual settler - not another acre for railroads or speculators"<sup>2</sup> - was the fifth plank in the platform of the Industrial Congress, which preceded in point of time the publication of George's book in 1879. What the Knights took from him - apparently<sup>3</sup> - was the idea that "all land now held for speculative purposes be taxed to their full value"<sup>4</sup>, a demand which they incorporated in their platform. The Knights differed in that they confined their assault on land held for "speculative purposes". The Knights later broke with George on political<sup>5</sup> and religious<sup>6</sup> grounds.

The Knights supported their demand for an eight-hour day with theory.

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 4 Sept., 1886.

2. Ware., op. cit., (p.378)

3. For a brief history of the idea of paying groundrent to the State in the form of taxes, see Sel. Corresp. of Marx and Engels.

4. The Hamilton Palladium, 24 Jan., 1885.

5. Ware, op. cit., (p.363)

6. Ibid., (p.100 - 1)

They held that 'over-production' was "caused by the working classes laboring more than is requisite to employ the immediate demand." The working classes had literally, during the short period of prosperity, "worked themselves out of employment," into beggary and starvation.

Long hours and overtime labor, while the workshops and factories were competing as to which should turn out goods quickest and supply most orders had laid "the foundation" for want of employment, closed factories and half-time when the spasmodic demand was followed by an over supply. They therefore called on the moneyed and ruling classes "to confront the situation and by statesmanlike legislation so to regulate production, that ...the equilibrium shall be maintained and work be more evenly distributed." Hence they regarded the eight-hour movement as "the practical method of equalizing production and consumption."<sup>1</sup>

It was sanguine to imagine that an eight-hour working day would remove "over production"; but the argument only illustrates the high hopes that the Knights placed on this demand. It is however to the credit of the Knights that they recognized the necessity for some state regulation in production.

But the Knights had other arguments in favor of the eight-hour working day. Henry George claimed that it would bring to workers much-needed leisure. Said he - "That a creature so wonderfully endowed as man, placed in a world so well stored with all the material his needs require, should spend the greater part of his conscious life in the effort to maintain existency is a thing so monstrous that only long habit blinds us to its

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<sup>1</sup> 'Enjolras' in the Hamilton Palladium, 21 Feb., 1885.

folly and wrong. The highest qualities of humanity can only develop when the material wants are satisfied, the most precious flower of existence can only blossom in leisure, and yet to the great majority of men in our highest civilization, real leisure is a thing unknown, for the few hours of the working day which remain to the man whose faculties have been on the strain for ten or twelve hours are not leisure; nor yet is there leisure in the days and weeks and months of involuntary idleness which the vicissitudes of our industrial organization force upon hundreds of thousands - idleness, accompanied by wearing uncertainty and racking anxiety more exhausting than toil. For true leisure the faculties must be fresh, and care must be absent."<sup>1</sup>

Henry George also argued that under the existing industrial conditions the worker in spite of the increased productive powers due to inventions and improvements, lived in conditions worse than those of his forefathers six centuries previously. The tendency towards the minute sub-division of labor made work monotonous, and did not require the exercise of those higher qualities of judgment and skill which was necessary to his intellectual health and development. He considered that even if the reduction in the working day involved a temporary decrease in the production of wealth, it would still be a measure of "wisdom and prudence". But, indeed, it did nothing of the sort: instead of reducing the efficiency of labor, it increased it; for, he held, the "great agent" in production was not muscle, but mind. Again, the reduction of the working hours to eight per day, involved no reduction of wages. For he held that under existing conditions

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 15 May., 1886.

"wages must be governed by what the laboring masses must be content to live on." Lastly, the longer the working day the less the ability of the of the workers to discover and remedy the wrongs of which all were conscious. George therefore decided, "The movement for the reduction of the working day to eight hours deserves earnest support. It is a step towards securing to the masses something of the benefits which advancing civilization ought to bring, and make human life fuller and higher..... [In this movement] the Labor Associations are taking the most hopeful step they have yet attempted."<sup>1</sup>

There were other reasons yet for the eight-hour working day. By it, the Knights hoped to bring work to hundreds of thousands of unemployed, and to get rid of the 'reserve force' - "the gaunt, ragged, hungry horde of unemployed ready to work for anything they can get [and] whose idleness is the result of the overwork of their more fortunate comrades" - which capital always had at its command in the event of a strike or lockout. The decrease in the competition among workers would increase, rather than decrease, wages: they proclaimed therefore - "Take care of the hours and the wages will take care of themselves."<sup>2</sup> Some objected to the shorter hours because it involved a temporary loss of pay. But to this objection, the Knights answered that, taking the working class as a whole, there would not even be a temporary loss - and even supposing wages were not raised above the present hour rate, there would not even be a permanent loss. For if consideration were taken of the number of those always out of work, and those who worked short time, or were laid off for weeks together, an average would probably show that eight hours were fully as much as the toilers could get. Also the

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 15 May, 1886.

2. Ibid., 21 Feb., 1885. The argument was 'Enjolras'.

eight-hour system would bring about a more even distribution of what work there was. For already there was a lessening of the quantity of labor demanded from the "average man", with a proportionate lessening of his pay. It was for Labor Reformers to insist that the decrease should be in "equal ratio all around", and that there should not be the consequent fierce competition between employed and unemployed, which pulled down wages: "It is not less Labor in the aggregate that is the object, but an even and regular distribution of the amount of work over good times and bad times alike, so that all may be employed who are willing to work, instead of its being either a feast or a famine." Even if, as some said, that 'the working man could not obtain as much for eight hours work as he now gets for ten' - that would be desirable: for, - "Who would not rather have steady and certain work for eight hours daily, rather than ten hours for a year or two with a shut-down for several weeks or months sprung on him unexpectedly?"<sup>1</sup>

The eight-hour working day was therefore demanded both on economic and moral grounds. Workers were encouraged to let eight-hours be the "watchword"; they were not to accept "overtime Labor" - not even for double pay.<sup>2</sup> "In every case where workingmen have the option between an increase of pay or a shortening of the hours of work, they will, if they were wise, choose the latter." When, in the middle of 1886, financial authorities in Ontario predicted an industrial revival in the province, the Hamilton Palladium warned the workers that as soon as it set in, the manufacturers would want them to work overtime, and that they would hold out inducements to the workers to keep on working late into the evening.

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1. 'Enjolras' in the Hamilton Palladium, 12 Dec., 1885.

2. Ibid., 21 Feb., 1885.

Workers were therefore warned to refuse over-time work, and to tell the employer to hire more men if he wanted more work. Workers were also told that as shorter hours meant employment for all, the capitalist would not be able to get men to fill the places of those on strike; and that, as a result, in a great majority of cases there would be no strike at all; for in nine cases out of ten it is the knowledge that others are anxious to step into the positions of their workingmen that induces capitalists to resist the demands of Labor."<sup>1</sup>

The campaign for the eight-hour working day had begun earlier. The demand had been incorporated in the declaration of the principles of the Order. On December 15th 1884, the Grand Master Workman issued a circular to the Order in which he said: "I ask that every Assembly take up this question at once. Let each one have its members write short essays on the eight-hour question. From the number let the assembly select the best for publication in the public press of the land, in the local papers. Do not publish them indiscriminately and at different times. When they are written withhold them until a day when they can all be published together. Washington's birthday, the 22nd of February, will be a day of public interest. The eyes of the nation will be turned towards the papers. I therefore name that day as the one upon which to have all these articles appear. If in your locality no paper appears on that day, then endeavor to have it in the one next issued after that date."<sup>2</sup> But Mr. Powderly never went beyond the stage of educational propaganda. The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada, which became in November 1886 the American Federation of Labor, issued

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 19 June, 1886.

2. Knights of Labor and the Federation, (p.7)



one call, on the 7th July 1885, fixing May 1st., 1886 'for the general adoption of 8 hours as a day's work'<sup>1</sup>; and later, yet another one. This latter was more forceful, because it was a call to action, and because it indicated the concrete measures to be taken. Workers were encouraged to lay by a certain sum, say \$3 per week, and to invest the same in the necessities of life before the dawn of May 1st., and "be in a position to defeat the enemy." Each of the Trades and Labor Unions in Canada and the United States was instructed to select a strong committee to make a thorough canvass in their respective employments of all workmen, union or non-union, pledging as many as possible to support the adoption of the eight-hour workday. It was believed: 'With unity of action and twenty-five dollars saved for provisions by each workman, we can hold our own and win the struggle.'<sup>2</sup> Yet for all that, Powderly vacillated: at the Hamilton General Assembly on 5th October 1885 he expressed his opposition to the proposition for a general strike for a reduction of hours, because he did not think the people as yet sufficiently educated, and because he disapproved of the method. He, however, at the time suggested that the Assembly adopt some other plan to bring about the desired result.<sup>3</sup> His opposition he reiterated in a circular in March, 1886: he said that the Knights "must not strike for the eight-hour system on May first, under the impression that they are obeying orders from headquarters, for such an order is not, and will not be given. Out of sixty millions of people in the United States and Canada, our Order has possibly three millions. Can we mould the sentiment of millions in favor of a short hour before May 1 ? It is nonsense to think of it. An injury to

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1. The full text is given by the Hamilton Palladium, 18 July, 1885.
  2. The full text is given by the Hamilton Palladium, 3 Oct., 1885.
  3. Ibid., 10 Oct., 1885.

one is the concern of all; but it is not wise to injure all for the sake of one. It would have been far better to continue at work and properly investigate the matter, bringing it before every known tribunal, than to have struck. I warn members against hasty ill-considered action."<sup>1</sup>

But in spite of timid leadership, the movement spread rapidly. In Chicago, it took "des proportions formidable....et promet de devenir très général parmi les travailleurs organisés en associations ouvrières."<sup>2</sup> The bricklayers union, which had 40,000 members, supported the strike movement for May 1st. The Plasterers' union of 1500 members followed suit; and likewise the lathesmen, carpenters and all construction workers, the cigar-makers' union and the printers' union. The general opinion among the workers of the city was in favor of it, and the employers in general did not appear to oppose it strongly.<sup>3</sup> And 'Enjolras' wrote: "It is encouraging to observe the hold which the idea of shortening the hours of Labor is taking on the minds of the working people everywhere."<sup>4</sup> The practical activity of the masses had outrun the leadership which the officers of the Knights could give to them. This was one reason for the decline of the Order.

While they were at it, the Knights however helped to mould public opinion. On Sunday, March 21st 1886 Mr. Frank M. Fogg of Lansing, Mich., a member of the Order, gave a lecture on the subject at the Grand Opera House at Hamilton, under the auspices of the Iron Moulders Union of the same city. The meeting was very well attended.<sup>5</sup> On Sunday, April 25,

1. Montreal Star, 27 March, 1886.

2. La Presse, Montreal, 8 March, 1886.

3. Ibid., 8 March, 1886.

4. The Hamilton Palladium, 12 Dec., 1885.

5. Ibid., 27 March, 1886.

Mr. Victor Drury of New York, gave a lecture on the same subject at the same place, under the auspices of District Assembly 61. This time however, a few seats were empty. Drury maintained that the only way for men to obtain the eight-hour workday, was to take it.<sup>1</sup>

- Months earlier, "eight-hour squibs" were published by J.H.W.<sup>2</sup>

They ran:

The dawning of the Eight Hour day  
Is light of hope for better pay.

If working hours per day were less,  
All would appear in better dress.

When shorter hours become the rule  
The children will be kept at school.

If getting gold by man is pleasure  
'T is prompted by desire for leisure.

Forcing the man to work too late  
Is detrimental to the state.

Decrease the hour of work per day;  
'T is certain to increase your pay.

If those who could would print a tract  
We soon would make eight hours a fact.

When men work less and children play,  
And those who work receive the pay,  
When drones are shunned and made to feel  
That they must toil; or, if they steal,  
Swift retribution will o'ertake  
Him who consumes what others make,  
Then fewer millionaires we'll find  
Will live to drive and cheat mankind.

The cigarmakers of Hamilton adopted the 8-hour workday on May 1st. The Cigarmakers' International Union decided that eight hours

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 1 May, 1886.

2. Ibid., 2 May, 1885.

was long enough to work and acted up to their decision: this decision was enforced in every locality under their jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup> In Montreal, the union cigar factories of Messrs George Tragheim & Co. and H. Jacobs adopted the 8-hour system. The non-union factories had as yet made no move on the matter.<sup>2</sup> The favorable result was due to the work of the Montreal Cigarmakers' Union. It had appointed a committee to see the proprietors of cigar factories and question them as to their views on the matter. The manager of Messrs J.M. Fortier & Co. was interviewed by Messrs Fraser and Warren, and he assured them that thereafter the members of the union at work in their shops would be allowed to arrive at eight in the morning and leave at five in the afternoon. On the following week the system was to be adopted also by S. Davis & Sons., H. Swain, Tassé and Woods, T. Larue, Hay and Larue, C. Chartrand, J. Clough, and Samuel Roman.<sup>3</sup>

There were other tangible results. The Canadian Labor Congress, assembled at Toronto in September 1886, carried, on the motion of D.J. O'Donoghue, a recommendation to all labor organizations of the agitation of the eight-hour system "as the only means by which the large amount of surplus Labor at present on the market of the Dominion can be employed, and a fair amount of remuneration for such Labor be received." The Congress also carried a proposition that "every contract as between any of the governments of Canada and contractors for public works, should contain a clause declaring that no employe of any contractor while employed upon the work so contracted for, shall be asked or compelled to work more than eight hours per day, under penalty of forfeiture of contract."<sup>4</sup>

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 22 May, 1886.
  2. Montreal Star, 11 May, 1886.
  3. Ibid, 15 May, 1886.
  4. The Hamilton Palladium, 18 Sept., 1886.

In 1886 a wave of strikes swept the United States. So allarming were the proportions that Henry George was obliged to comment: "It is idle to cry peace when there is no peace, and to imagine that the preaching of moderation can only avail when the strongest of passions are aroused. These strikes mean war, and that civil war..... It is the 'House of Have' and the 'House of Want' that are coming into collision, and they every-where jostle each other. To be sure, this is as yet only a negative war, which resorts to blockade and not to bombshell; but it is still war in spirit. And when passions are roused and men are marshalled the negative may flash into the positive and a struggle of physical force, with an accident."<sup>1</sup> The New York Times branded them as "un-American".<sup>2</sup> Together with the strikes came lockouts, boycotts and other disturbances. And while the Knights of Labor were not as an organization concerned in one-fourth of these troubles, their name was used in all of them. Men in an effort to redress wrongs they had endured for years reached out for a sustaining hand to the Knights of Labor, and invariably gave out the impression that the Order stood back of them. The newspapers made no effort to set the public right; and, in fact, the press was largely responsible in causing the public to believe that the Knights were "at the top, bottom, and middle of all the trouble."<sup>3</sup> In fairness to the Knights however, the Montreal Daily Star commented: "It is only fair to the Order to point out that the outrages which at first sight seem to discredit the society have been perpetrated in defiance of the authorities of the association."<sup>4</sup>

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 8 May, 1886.
  2. Reported in the Montreal Star, 1 May, 1886.
  3. T.V. Powderly: The Path I Trod, (p.347)
  4. Montreal Star, 8 April, 1886.

In Canada the Knights were involved in some important strikes.

In Toronto, on March 9th, 1886<sup>m</sup> the Street Railway employees met and formed themselves into a branch of the Knights Of Labor.<sup>1</sup> They had complained for some time against long hours and small pay, and had several times discussed the advisability of forming a union. They were, however, each time frustrated by the Company, who made the employees sign, on pain of dismissal, a document binding themselves not to join a secret organization while in the Company's service. The officials got wind of the meeting of March 9, and hinted to the men that the Company would not permit them to continue work if they took the action contemplated. When three hundred of the men presented themselves for duty on the morning of the 10th., their names were rubbed off the duty board. Great excitement resulted in the streets, and the whole of the night duty police were sent for to preserve order; but nothing disorderly occurred. The men went to the headquarters of the Knights of Labor. The Hon. Frank Smith, president of the Company, said that no union men could be employed by the Company, and he would prefer to die first than to allow such an event to occur.<sup>2</sup>

About 3.00 p.m. on the 10th., the Company were compelled to stop running any cars. About this time a couple of cars were stopped by "ill-advised sympathers" on Yonge Street, the horses unhitched, and the cars turned sideways on the track. Several coal carters backed their carts on the track and aided the strikers in their work. A huge crowd

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1. Our account of this strike differs in some respects from that given by Kennedy, op. cit., (p. 79 et. seq.)
  2. Montreal Star, 10 March, 1886.  
It was later reported that only sixty names were erased from the blackboard; but when the other men saw this, they determined to quit work also. Montreal Star, 11 March, 1886

gathered, and a lone policeman tried in vain to stop the operations of the strikers. Two cars on King Street were served in the same way; and one on Market Street was sent down the grade at a rattling speed, colliding with another car and shattering the windows and smashing the platforms. No violence was offered to the drivers or conductors, except in one instance when some young hoodlums pelted the driver and conductor with mud. Other complications also arose. The citizens, especially those residing in the outskirts of the city, began to complain of the lack of transportation facilities, and apparently blamed the Company. The Company decided, too, to hold the city responsible for any loss they might sustain to their property, and for loss of time due to insufficient police protection.<sup>1</sup>

On the 11th., a deputation of the locked-out men stated their grievances to Mayor Howland, who sympathized with them, and expressed the hope that they would keep within the strict limits of the law. The Mayor in a letter to the Hon. Frank Smith, denied responsibility on behalf of the city in regard to property damages or time losses; notified him that he would call the Company to account for their violation of their agreement with the city in regard to the running of the cars, and for any injury to any citizen or policeman inflicted on account of the disturbances, and for any injury to property belonging to the city or to citizens arising from the same cause. The Mayor put the blame for the disturbances on the Company.<sup>2</sup>

On the 12th a settlement was reached; but not before a royal battle between the police and the crowds congregated in Yonge Street, between Adelaide and Queen. The police charged repeatedly and used their batons effectively; while the crowd retaliated by throwing bricks, sticks and stones. Mayor Howland had to issue a proclamation calling upon the

1. Montreal Star, 11 March, 1886.

2. Ibid., 12 March, 1886.

citizens to preserve the peace, and not to congregate in the streets.

Mr. Smith agreed, after preliminary negotiations were conducted, to accept the strikers the next day upon the same conditions that existed before the lock-out. He would not ask them to sign another agreement and would ask no questions.; but if he found any of the men belonged to the Knights of Labor, he felt himself free to discharge them summarily. The strikers decided to accept Mr. Smith's terms.<sup>1</sup>

One interesting feature of the strike lay in the fact that when Mr. Smith tried to replace the strikers with new men, he failed. He could not find men with "sufficient courage" in Toronto, to fill the places. And when 200 men were engaged in Montreal by the Company, these men were prevented from going to Toronto by the Montreal Knights.<sup>2</sup>

The settlement seems to have been inconclusive. For, about two months later, another strike occurred. The street car employees demanded shorter hours, better pay, and the withdrawal of the 'ironclad' document which compelled them to agree not to join any labor organization.<sup>3</sup> The distinctive feature of this strike was that the strikers started a bus service of their own. They also received the support, moral and material, of other labor organizations. The Laborers' and Carpenters' unions passed resolutions to fine any member riding on a street-car \$2.00; the carters and teamsters' union resolved to provide the men with 200 horses and busses free of charge until the strike ended, and to grant them assistance: several busses were sent to them from Hamilton also: the plasterers' union granted them \$500. They got even the support of the general

1. Montreal Star, 13 March, 1886.

2. Ibid., 11 March, 1886.

3. Ibid., 10 May, 1886.



public, which patronized their busses well.<sup>1</sup> New employees of the Company had to quit work owing to their inability to procure board and lodging, the boardinghouse keepers refusing to have anything to do with them. Throughout the strikers acted with reserve; and even the grand jury said that it was a matter of congratulation that no case of violence or obstruction by them had been brought to Court.<sup>2</sup>

Another strike, in which the Knights played a prominent part, occurred in Ottawa in the Fall of 1891. About 2000 men and boys employed at the saw mills and yards at the Chaudiere mills went out on strike on the 14th September. They demanded that their pay be increased all round fifty cents per week, and a reduction of the working hours by one and a half hours per day. They were earning from six to eight dollars per week, worked eleven and a half hours per day, and were allowed only three quarters of an hour for dinner. Several Knights of Labor employed as platform men at Perley & Patte's mill were the first to make the bold move. They stopped work shortly after six o'clock in the morning and soon persuaded their fellow laborers to do likewise. Soon a noisy but orderly crowd was moving in a solid mass on the other mills compelling all hands to stop work and join the ranks of the strikers, now numbering fifteen hundred. The greatest difficulty was experienced at Bronson's mill. The strikers in several instances used force and only succeeded when they had turned off the water supply. The strikers were nearly all French-Canadians. Public opinion was on their side, because their pay gave them a bare subsistence; and no matter what the state of the lumber market, the laborers did not share in any advantage. The employers, in-

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1. Montreal Star, 13 May, 1886.

2. Ibid., 17 May, 1886.

cluding J.R.Booth and the Hon. E.W.Bronson, M.P.P., refused to yield.<sup>1</sup>

On the next day, the strikers crossed over to Hull and visited the lime and cement works of C.B.Wright, where the hands quit work. The strikers also forced 250 operatives of the E.B.Eddy's pail factory to quit work. So serious had the situation become, that upon a requisition signed by two magistrates, including Mayor Eddy, of Hull, three companies of the 43rd Rifles and two of the Governor-General's Foot Guards were called out to preserve the mill owners' property.<sup>2</sup> The volunteers were given each twenty rounds of ball cartridge. Ex-alderman Frank Farrell and Mr. J.W.Patterson, of the Ottawa Trades and Labor Council, visited the House of Commons to represent to the Minister of Militia the inadvisability of having the volunteers called out.<sup>3</sup>

On the 18th Mr. William Keys of Montreal, addressed the strikers. He expressed pleasure at seeing them retain respectability in the movement, encouraged them towards closer association, and harrangued them to stand up for their rights and to keep away scabs. He scornfully referred to the militia as "the blood-hounds of Messrs Eddy, Booth & Co." and complained that the men were living in the "most corrupt city outside of Sodom and Gomorrah."<sup>4</sup>

The strikers had the support of the general public. The unions in the different cities sent telegrams tendering their aid if required.<sup>5</sup> In Ottawa itself, the strike leaders, assisted by prominent citizens, took steps to provide relief to the strikers. A store located on Main street,

1. Montreal Star, 14 Sept., 1891.

2. Ibid., 15 Sept., 1891.

A later report said that the requisition for the troops was signed by three local magistrates; Montreal Star, 16 Sept., 1891.

3. Ibid., 16 Sept., 1891.

4. Ibid., 19 Sept., 1891.

5. Ibid., 16 Sept., 1891.

Hull, was opened and in a short time was filled with articles contributed by generous sympathizers. Another store for a similar purpose was also secured at the Chaudiere.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the owners found themselves in a bad position: they managed to get outside help, but were still shorthanded. At Bronson's and Perley & Pattee's less than a hundred and fifty men began to work on the 9th October, but the mills were nevertheless kept running all day.<sup>2</sup> It was even rumored that several of the insurance companies had cancelled the policies held by some of the mill-owners owing to the strike trouble.<sup>3</sup>

But with all the courage of the strikers, the men could not hold out in the unequal struggle. By the 9th October, there was said to be much distress among many of the strikers' families on account of the action of several bakers and grocery keepers who refused to give them further credit; and nearly forty families were cut off by the bakers alone.<sup>4</sup> On the 10th., after twenty-six days of struggle, the men were forced to yield: they went back to work on the old terms as fast as the mill owners would take them.<sup>5</sup>

But the strike was not altogether in vain. On account of the strike leaving the men without money the Bronson's and Perley & Pattee's paid the men early for the first two or three days that they worked. But the men were paid at a rate of fifty cents per week more. At Bronson's too, while they failed to get the ten hour working day, they were granted a full hour for dinner. About two hundred of the men were still dissatisfied and struck again.<sup>6</sup> But the majority seems to have accepted the new conditions.

1. Montreal Star, 23 Sept., 1891.

. This paper said that the men were working 11 3/4 hours per day.

2. Ibid., 9 Oct., 1891.

3. Ibid., 23 Sept., 1891.

4. Ibid., 9 Oct., 1891.

5. Ibid., 10 Oct., 1891.

6. Ibid., 15 Oct., 1891.

Some Knights accepted worse conditions through a sense of fair play to the employer. When the employees of the Canada Cutlery factory, at St. Henry, were about to strike for increased wages about the end of February 1886, the proprietors of the factory represented to them that their business was in a very bad state and that an increase could not then be granted. The Executive Board of the Knights was then called upon to look into the firm's affairs and find whether they were right in refusing to increase wages. The books were overhauled and it was found that higher wages could not possibly be granted. A meeting of the factory hands was called and the state of the firm's affairs made known to them. It was then decided to reduce wages all round by fifteen per cent. during the next three months; and the men greeted the decision without complaint. The firm's business then began to expand, and it was hoped that in the next few months the wages would be increased not merely fifteen per cent., but probably by twice that amount. Not only was a strike averted in this case, but the business of a firm was placed in a prosperous state. The proprietors of the factory and all the hands had joined the Order.<sup>1</sup>

In this place we may consider boycotts. Boycotts were described as "simply the determination of the working people to use their purchasing power as one of the means of their enfranchisement - to refrain from aiding and building up those who are distinctly hostile to their rights." In 1885, the boycott was a familiar feature of agitation: "One can hardly take up a Labor Reform journal without seeing one or more exhortations to boycott something or somebody or an announcement that the application of the system has brought some haughty and contemptuous capitalist to his knees and compelled him to recognize rights that he formerly treated with

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1. Montreal Star, 25 March, 1886.

contempt" -said 'Enjolras'. He gave the method his full support, saying that it ought to be a good deal more extensively worked than it was.<sup>1</sup> He was later, however, to express his opinion that arbitration offered better advantages.<sup>2</sup>

One notable instance of the use of the boycott occurred in connection with the Toronto Mail. The printers had the sympathy and practical aid of the Knights of Labor and other organized bodies, and as a last resource the boycott was put in operation. Union men everywhere refused to subscribe for or buy the Mail, or to deal with those who advertised in its columns, and the candidates for municipal office whom it supported were marked as foes of the cause of labor and voted down at the polls. The defeat of Alexander Manning, the Mail's candidate in the Toronto Mayoralty contest sounded the note of warning to the politicians and the Tory leaders saw that with the Mail still under boycott their candidates in the next general elections were foredoomed to defeat. Such influence was brought to bear that the Mail was compelled to abandon its hostility to the union. It agreed to make the office a union office throughout. About ten of the employees, young men who had never belonged to labor organizations, were to be taken into the union, and the rest of the men, some sixteen in number, who had taken the places of the striking printers were to be discharged and their positions filled by unionists.<sup>3</sup>

The official policy of the Knights was, however, bent towards moderation, though it did not altogether oppose strikes. It favored arbitration, and counseled reason and patience. At Philadelphia, Powderly

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 15 Aug., 1885.

2. Ibid., 2 Oct., 1886.

3. The Toronto Palladium, 20 March, 1886.

said - "I do not think it wise to inaugurate so many strikes, unless it can be shown that there is a real necessity for them. If many of those who are striking would display a little more common sense and use a little more patience they would get all they are striking for and save time and money in the bargain. If they would exercise proper moderation in their negotiations with their employers, and submit their claims firmly made and properly represented to arbitration, I am sure nine out of ten cases which end in a strike, could be satisfactorily arranged without resorting to such an extreme." When it was necessary to strike, he advised strong action. The official policy he summed up thus: "Arbitration always when it is possible, strike only as a last resort; but when that point is reached strike hard, strike in earnest and never surrender except to just concessions." As an apology for moderation, he argued that the Knights were then "the most powerful organization of workingmen ever known in the history of the world", that its strength was increasing everyday, and its influence felt in every branch of trade. It was therefore "dangerous to abuse this power"; the Order could not afford to "fritter itself away upon every little pretence of wrong, hastily formulated and pig-headedly insisted upon"; workingmen should "be careful to see to it that they do not sap and undermine their strength by extreme demands and an unreasonable assumption of importance and power." The resort to strike, he complained, was taken by "the new and as yet not fully informed organizations" upon "sometimes insufficient and frequently trivial" causes; and not by the older assemblies, which were "familiar with our plans and purposes." Powderly's attitude towards the boycott was similar: said he - "A strike is a bad thing, but a boycott is worse in its results. A strike stops production merely; a boycott kills it. A strike for a week is only the loss of a week's business, trade and wages. A boycott for a week can

be the utter ruin of business itself.....Its effectiveness is undoubted, but it is an extreme power which we use with caution."<sup>1</sup>

When in spite of these official pronouncements, members of the Order still engaged in strikes and boycotts, Powderly threw up his hands in despair. He complained that he could not tell the Church and the world that the Order was composed of "law-abiding intelligent men", while the very next despatch brought news of some petty strike or boycott: he could not bear his false position any longer. Hence, daid he, either the local and district assemblies of the Order must obey its laws, or he must be permitted to resign from a vocation which obliged him to "play one part before the public and another to our members."<sup>2</sup>

Powderly was, very probably, sincere in his convictions with reference to his strike policy. As early as 1883 he had condemned strikes; he said "I fail to see any lasting good in strikes."<sup>3</sup> His offer of resignation from the leadership, and his policy of concession to the Catholic Church<sup>4</sup> also support this opinion. Another supporting factor was his policy regarding the admission of new members into the Order - until the relations between capital and labor became less strained:<sup>5</sup> this was in March 1886, when "[to] all appearance, the continent was on the verge of an industrial revolution."<sup>6</sup> This was done for two reasons: firstly because - "To attempt to win concessions or gains with our present raw, undisciplined membership, would be like hurling an unorganized mob against a well drilled regular army"; but secondly, because it was not fair, he believed,

1. Montreal Star, 9 March, 1886.

2. Ibid., 27 March, 1886.

3. The Labor Union, Hamilton, 13 Jan., 1883.

4. See chapter IV.

5. Montreal Star, 27 March, 1886.

6. The Hamilton Palladium, 3 April, 1886.

to the older assemblies to bring in new members, pick up their quarrels as soon as organized, and have them expect pecuniary aid from those who helped to build up the Order for a noble purpose; for he reiterated - "We must not fritter away our strength, and miss the opportunity of present success in the struggle against capital, by rushing into, useless strikes. To the cardinal principles of the Order, we must add another - patience. Your scale of prices must stand as they are for the present, if you cannot raise them by any other process than a strike. Find out how much you are justly entitled to, and then the tribunal of arbitration will settle the rest." But perhaps Powderly's policy of moderation might have been inspired also by a jealousy of the rival Federation of Trades, which, as noted above, had called for the strike on May 1st for the eight hours workday: "Obedience to the laws of the knighthood," said Powderly, "must have preference over those of any other order."<sup>1</sup> Yet another, and probably stronger reason for his policy was the bitter experience of the seventies: for in the United States, in this period of depression, strikes were failures.<sup>2</sup>

Once again, as with the eight-hour movement, the official leadership of the Knights was behind the revolutionary activity of the masses - however rudimentary that activity was. Indeed Powderly made the astonishing statement that there was no significance in the fact that there were so many strikes then in progress. To him the strikes were "chiefly owing to the fact that it is the beginning of the spring trade and the opening of a period of prosperity in business;" and it was "coincidence merely" that there were so many.<sup>3</sup> But indeed, the strikes gave American

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1. Montreal Star, 27 March, 1886.

2. Ware: op. cit., (p.117)

3. Montreal Star, 9 March, 1886.



workers practical experience in struggle, while they made them conscious of their power: for as Henry George said - "No defeat, and no series of defeats can now deprive labor of the consciousness of power"; and the strikes were "like affairs of outposts at the beginning of a life and death struggle between great nations." George was probably referring to the Knights in the rank and file when he said that what they meant was "the application to industrial warfare of the principle of the massing of forces on the point of attack."<sup>1</sup> Of course, if he had in mind the leadership of the Knights, he was incorrect.

Many Knights were dissatisfied with Powderly's vacillating leadership. The Travailleur of Worcester - according to Le Monde - reported that the Knights in Chicago wished to depose Powderly, because his views were "trop conciliantes, pas assez radicales"; and because he was not "l'homme de la situation". The Travailleur itself, however, favored Powderly's policy.<sup>2</sup>

The official circles of the Knights practised what they preached. According to Powderly, the central authorities of the Order, had, from 1st January 1886 to early March, three hundred and fifty cases which they settled by arbitration, and which would otherwise have resulted in strikes without the workers gaining a single point.<sup>3</sup>

In Canada the spokesmen of the Knights followed the lead of Powderly. 'Enjolras' considered strikes as "profitless conflicts".<sup>4</sup> The Canadian Labor Congress approved the principle of compulsory arbitration: it carried a resolution that "this Congress affirm the arbitration in all cases in which difficulties arise between employers and employees that

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 8 May, 1886.
2. Le Monde, Montreal, 14 Aug., 1886.
3. Montreal Star, 9 March, 1886.
4. The Hamilton Palladium, 14 Aug., 1886.

cannot otherwise be settled, and that this Congress further requests that a law be passed making it binding that, in cases where disputes arise each party must proceed to arbitrate, and making the decision in all cases binding." This principle of compulsory arbitration was supported by D.J.O'Donoghue and A.F.Jury.<sup>1</sup> 'Enjolras' also supported it: he held that boycotts or strikes involved "untold loss and suffering, and demoralization, whichever party is in the end successful"; while the advantages of compulsory arbitration were sufficiently obvious to commend it to all reasonable minded and thoughtful men.<sup>2</sup> The Knights must also have been pleased when President Cleveland gave his blessing to the principle of voluntary arbitration under the auspices of federal authority.<sup>3</sup>

In the practical field, in Canada, Powderly's anti-strike policy was not without effect. When two men from the G.T.R. shops in Montreal were convicted in the Recorder's Court of assaulting a fellow-workman, and were discharged as a result, the moulders in the shops went out on strike on this pretence. They were also dissatisfied with the piece work system in the shops. However, the Knights did not give the strike their approval.<sup>4</sup>

Cooperation was one of the leading principles of the Knights. Powderly had preferred it to strikes as early as 1883. "If the men", said he, "who willingly lose one, two, three or six months' time in a strike, would continue to work and set apart the money thus spent for the purpose of creating a co-operative fund, and if the men who contribute their support would set apart the money the advance for the purpose of adding

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 18 Sept., 1886.

2. Ibid., 2 Oct., 1886.

3. Montreal Star, 24 April, 1886.

4. Ibid., 29 April, 1886.

it to that fund, they would soon amass a sum sufficient to erect factories or shops large enough to give employment to their idle brethren."<sup>1</sup> It had already proved itself successful in England, and great things were expected from it by men like Professors Cairnes, Fawcett, Lord Derby, Mr. Thomas Brassey and John Stuart Mill. In Canada, it was supported by 'Argus' who wrote in the Canadian Baptist.<sup>2</sup> Goldwin Smith also supported it.<sup>3</sup>

The Knights did not, however, believe that cooperation struck at the root of all industrial difficulties. For, they held, so long as the land and money monopolies existed, and a class of idlers were able to exact as rent and usury a very large share of the earnings of labor, even productive co-operation, were it universally established, would only be a partial remedy. They, however, felt that they should have done more in this direction. Their failure was due to "the indifference, carelessness and illiberality" of those who supported the co-operative ventures. Men were therefore encouraged to turn the millions spent on strikes and other "profitless conflicts", to the establishment of co-operative factories and stores which would "make Labor independent of the control of employers and strengthen its hands against monopoly."<sup>4</sup>

A few co-operative enterprises had been started as a result of propaganda favorable to it.<sup>5</sup> In Toronto there was a flourishing co-operative store and bakery. The 12th. half-yearly report for the term ending June 30th. 1886 showed a total membership

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1. T. V. Powderly in The Labor Union, 13 Jan. 1883
  2. The Hamilton Palladium, 25 April, 1885
  3. Ibid., 30 Oct., 1886
  4. 'Enjolras' Ibid., 14 Aug., 1886
  5. Ibid., 30 Oct. 1886

of 347, an increase of 7. The sales for the half-year amounted to \$16,340. or \$628. a week. For the previous half-year, they were \$14,596. or \$561. a week. The sales in the bakery branch showed an increase of \$272. over the previous half-year. The net profits of the business in both branches was \$964, which admitted of a 5% dividend to purchasers after paying 8% on share capital. The total receipts for the half-year were \$18,092.<sup>1</sup>

In Stratford, a co-operative cigar manufacturing company was set up in January, 1886. No one was allowed to own any stock in the business who was not a member of the Order, and all employees had to be members of both the Knights of Labor and the International Cigarmakers' Union. The product bore the Blue Label of the International Union, and was gaining in popularity to such an extent that the company had been compelled to move into much larger quarters; and in April and May of the same year the staff of operatives had to be increased threefold. The management was in the hands of Mr. T. A. Woods, who had many years of practical experience in the trade, and<sup>2</sup> was a strict adherent to the rules of the International Union.

The principle of cooperation was also approved by the Canadian Labor Congress, and its application was recommended to "the production and distribution of the results of Labor wherever<sup>3</sup> practicable." The cooperative ventures of the Knights were in the hands of the local assemblies. Preference for employment was to be given to victimized or blacklisted members of the Order in good standing; and in all cases employees were to be members of the Order

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 14 Aug., 1886
2. Ibid., 10 July 1886, 29 May, 1886.
3. Ibid., 18 Sept. 1886

in good standing. Profits were to be equally divided among the General Assembly, the General Fund of the Cooperative Board, and the employees of the enterprise. This latter portion was divided among the employees according to the amount each received<sup>1</sup> for labor done.

It is not known precisely to what extent cooperation was practised by the American Knights. Professor Ely said that while they did not entirely neglect distributive cooperation, their achievements in productive cooperation were far more remarkable, and were, by 1886, "to be seen in all parts of the land." He said, at that time, that he could enumerate one hundred cooperative undertakings in progress under the auspices of the Knights. He had great faith in cooperation, as the means by which the wage system could be entirely superseded; his eulogies for the Knights on this aspect of their activity was accordingly high; he said "The only large and powerful organization which has earnestly taken hold of the entire industrial problem, with a view to the final introduction of cooperation into all spheres of production, and the complete overthrow of the present industrial and competitive economic order,<sup>2</sup> is the Knights of Labor." He was more enthusiastic than they themselves, and was probably exaggerating; for Professor Ware said that the Cooperative Fund of the Order was "inadequate and badly managed". Even an article written in mid 1886 by Mariner J. Kent reported that the Cooperative Board of the Order has so far been "distinguished by more failures than successes in its efforts to found cooperative<sup>4</sup> establishments."

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1. D. R. Kennedy: loc. cit. (p.21)
  2. R. T. Ely: loc. cit. (p.185)
  3. Ware: loc. cit. (p.389)
  4. Montreal Star, 31 July 1886.

In the United States the policy of the Trade Union was to protect its members against the encroachments of unjust employers. The central fact of trade unionism was its particularism. Each union sought to regulate affairs pertaining to its particular branch of trade. The principal object was to regulate the number of apprentices, the rate of wages, the number of working hours, and to assist the members in sickness or misfortune.<sup>1</sup> The trade union fought against the immediate employer.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the unions had been successful in regulating the number of apprentices; but the majority of them had failed. This was due to the rapid introduction of labor-saving machinery. The mechanic who had served from three to seven years of an apprenticeship found, in a great many instances, that as soon as he became a journeyman his services were no longer required. Only in rare instances could he find employment where he could put to use his particular skill. Hence it was of little avail to regulate the number of apprentices.

The principal weapon of the trade union was the strike. Arbitration was seldom resorted to; and if the idea of cooperating with, or assisting any other union, was hinted at, the leader of the trade union issued the edict: 'Form no entangling alliances with those of other trades.' This order was once issued by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Unions fought each other. When a strike was inaugurated by the lastmentioned Brotherhood, the executive officer of the Machinists and Blacksmith's Union ordered: 'Man the footboards.' The machinists and blacksmiths acted not through poverty or want, but through revenge for a similar act practised on them by the other organization some time previously.

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1. T. V. Powderly in The Labor Union, Hamilton, 13 Jan. 1883. (p.8)  
 2. 'Enjolras' in The Palladium, 26 June, 1886. (p.1)

Union members, who were skilled men, sometimes enjoyed a substantial, but temporary, superiority over the unskilled non-union laborers. It appears that the former employed and paid the latter. Powderly, speaking of men employed in iron and steel works, said; "The heavy work was done by laborers; while the skilled workmen slept these men were attending to their work for them; and though the skilled mechanics cleared from five to ten dollars a day, they grudgingly paid the laborer a dollar and twenty-five or a dollar and fifty cents a day. The skilled workmen had a union, through the instrumentality of which they regulated the price of their labor; the unskilled workman had no organization, and were forced to content themselves with what the others chose to give them. But while the unskilled laborer toiled he learned the art of managing the metals himself, and soon became as proficient in the business as his employer. He then offered to do the work for less money; a reduction of wages<sup>1</sup> followed; a strike ensued; and that union was disbanded."

The same narrow-minded policy that forbade entangling alliances with those of other trades also discouraged any attempt on the part of workingmen to interfere in politics. The leader of the trade union, honest enough in his convictions, no doubt, looked upon<sup>2</sup> politics as "a trade which rascals alone should learn." The result was that the statute books were dotted with legislation in favor of capital alone.

Such seem to have been the main features of American trade unionism. Canadian trade unionism was marked by the same features of exclusiveness and narrow-mindedness. Mr. D. J. O'Donoghue, a leading

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1. T. V. Powderly, The Labor Union, 13 Jan. 1883 (p.8) Hamilton  
 2. T. V. Powderly, Ibid., 13 Jan., 1886 (p.8)

labor leader in Ontario, related to a Montreal audience in February, 1886, how the members of the union "looked only for themselves without any thought of how their friends and neighbors were ground in the dust." This weakness he called a "vital failing." Another weakness in Canadian trade unionism came from without: the masses of workmen preferred to stay outside the unions: "There was no united action, insufficient cohesion. There were always more men outside the union in the labor market than in it."<sup>1</sup>

The Knights of Labor represented an advance over trade unionism. Its organization and aims were larger. The Order was an alternative to those who found the trade union too narrow and contracted to suit their views. Both the employer and employee were admitted. Members of isolated trade unions were becoming members by 1883; "men of all creeds, all nationalities, all occupations except lawyers, bankers, stock-gamblers and idlers" met in the assemblies. The object was to 'bring within the folds<sup>2</sup> of the organization every department of productive industry.' It was achieved: at the Cleveland Convention of mid 1886, it was stated that the Order then embraced 'all branches of honorable toil and conditions of men, without respect to trade, occupation, breed, color or nationality.'<sup>3</sup> The Knights also offered other advantages. Assemblies could be formed in districts where sufficient men of one trade could not be found to form a union, but where a sufficient number of men and women of different occupations were willing to associate for the common good. The ritual of the Order provided

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1. Montreal Star, 26 Feb., 1886
  2. The Labor Union, 13 Jan. 1883
  3. Montreal Star, 4 June, 1886



for the discussion of subjects of general interest, thus educating the members as to their interests in connection with the body politic, while the trade union, as a rule, confining itself to a particular trade, failed to take into consideration its effect on other trades. While the trade union, with the discipline of its members, could, indeed, concentrate its power in any particular locality, the Knights<sup>1</sup> enjoyed a wider influence.

In the United States, friction arose between the Knights and the trade unions. The trade unions charged that the Order admitted men who had been expelled from their ranks. So strained had relations become that Powderly had to order that no further inroads be made on trades unions. The Hamilton Palladium expressed its satisfaction at seeing the American Knights obeying the order, and hoped that those in Canada would do likewise. This paper also supported the Labor Tribune when it commented on Powderly's order: 'It is the correct idea. There is room enough for us all, and nothing should be done by one union to mar the harmony and retard the progress of the other. The Knights are doing bravely, and in their heroic efforts they have the moral support and sympathy of trades unions. In order that such a desirable state of relations shall be maintained, the Knights of Labor should refuse to take into membership any man or men who work at a trade over which a National or International Trade Union has jurisdiction' unless he was in good<sup>2</sup> standing with the Trade Union.

The enemies of the workers gloated over the divisions within the ranks of the working class, and predicted that the whole labor movement would fizzle out and fall to pieces from its own

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 27 Nov. 1886.

2. Ibid., 22 May, 1886.

want of cohesion. And they did so not without grounds. For the cause of Labor Reform was being 'wounded in the house of its friends' by the slander and suspicion, detraction and recrimination continually indulged in by men who in many cases were "not mere novices and learners, but adherents of long standing and good records." For this reason, conscientious Knights like 'Enjolras' held that the Order was clearly in the wrong if it whitewashed by admission to the Order, men who had betrayed or antagonized the unions of their own trades.' 'Enjolras', however, believed that the unions had gone too far in demanding that the Order should exclude from itself, a body intending to "strike at the underlying causes of the depression of Labor," the<sup>1</sup> members of certain organized trades.

At Hamilton, one instance of the 'scabs' or 'rats' who were expelled from the unions, and who formed independent societies, was<sup>2</sup> the Universal Brotherhood of United Labor. The unions objected to the Knights when such bodies succeeded in gaining admission into the Order. In this city, also, were some who, in malevolence to the Order, worked conspicuously in connecting the 'scab' element with it. Among<sup>3</sup> them were Messrs. George Collis, David R. Gibson and Wm. Veal.

In New York, District Assembly 49 of the Order, appeared to be controlled by a ring of 'scabs'. This Assembly carried the attack on the unions. It happened that the Progressive Union Cigarmakers of the same city had joined the Knights. The Assembly then ordered that the cigarmakers should abandon their open trades union. The Progressive refused to do so and left the Order. To coerce them, the Knights induced the manufacturers to close their shops against all cigarmakers

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 26 June, 1886.

2. Ibid., 22 May, 1886.

3. Ibid., 21 Aug., 1886.

who were not Knights of Labor. Four thousand men were thrown out of work for more than a fortnight. But the cigarmakers eventually won the contest, when the cigar-manufacturers signed a document with the International Union whereby they agreed that they would re-employ their former employees, that it was not necessary for the said employees to be Knights of Labor, and that they would discharge those persons who had taken work as cigarmakers, bunch makers or <sup>1</sup> rollers during the difficulty.

Another cause for the discontent of the trade unions lay in the centralizing policy of the Knights. The unions resented the attempt to abolish their local autonomy. An instance of this was in dissatisfaction with Powderly's pacific policy. The local union leaders would become unable to avoid a strike, because the employers refused to make any concession. Left to themselves many of the strikes would be successful, but in addition to the opposition of the employers and their allies of scabs, police, militia and the law, it became the fashion among the employers to discredit the local leaders by calling on Mr. Powderly to settle the dispute. The result as shown in the Southwestern strike and in a packers' strike in Chicago, was that circumstances arose favorable to the employers, and unfavorable to the strikers: numbers of cases arose where the employers forced their men to extremities, knowing that the chances were against the strikers being <sup>2</sup> supported.

The problem presented here of the relations between the central and local authorities is not a new one. A solution, suggested by the Labor Leaf, seems to be fair enough: "If men are competent to judge of what is necessary to protect their own interest, and which

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 21 Aug. 1886

2. Extracts from the Labor Leaf, printed by the Hamilton Palladium, 27 Nov. 1886.

no one will claim a central authority can understand better, then it is only fair that they should be helped in their endeavors to obtain their demands so far as they are founded on justice. No mere opinions as to advisability or otherwise should be permitted to victimize the local leaders and jeopardize the interests of thousands of men.... Each assembly or district should govern itself in this particular so far as it is able to sustain itself. If it requires general help, then the general board should be authorized to interfere."<sup>1</sup>

Yet another cause for friction between the Order and the unions lay in the clash of personalities.<sup>2</sup> This, however, probably played a greater part in the United States, where Powderly came into conflict with his rivals Gompers and McGuire of the A. F. of L.

The Order, with its high and broad aims and voice for arbitration, had drawn to its ranks the trade unionists in large numbers. It was estimated that over one half of the trade unionists in the United States were also Knights. Trades organizations joined the Order in a body, and in some cases it smothered trade unions, and rehabilitated them as local assemblies. The principle laid down by the Order was solidarity of the labor movement, that all trades unions should be in one body, and that the Knights of Labor was the body which offered the machinery to hand.

The trades unionists became alarmed and entered an active protest against further proselytism from their members, which culminated in the Trades Union Conference held at Philadelphia, May 18, 1886. The Convention was largely attended, and a code of terms was drawn up as a treaty for the consideration and

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 27 Nov., 1886.

2. N. J. Ware, loc. cit. (p.169)

approval of the Special General Assembly of the Knights of Labor to be held at Cleveland. The treaty demanded for national and international trades organizations, that the Knights of Labor should not initiate any person or form an assembly of persons belonging to the trades organizations without the consent of the trades union affected; that the charter of any Knights of Labor Assembly of any trades having a national or international union should be revoked; that the Knights of Labor should not interfere with any strikes or lockouts of the trades unions; and that the Knights of Labor should not issue any trade labels in competition with the unions.

In the resolution preceding the treaty one clause read:

'It is the avowed purpose of a certain element in the Knights of Labor to destroy trades unions, and this element continually urges trades unions to disband and join the Knights of Labor, makes it a point to encroach upon the legitimate mission and prerogatives of trades unions, arousing antagonism and dissensions in the labor movement.' This clause was aimed directly at the Home Club, an organization composed of Knights of Labor with intensely radical views, such as Thomas B. McGuire, alias T. B. Brown, W. A. Horan alias W. A. Brown, James E. Quinn alias  
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James E. Munroe, Harry G. Taylor, and others.

The officials of the Order were sincere in their desire to settle the differences with the unions. The "crowning act" of the Cleveland Convention was the reply to a circular of the trades unions, which it was hoped would restore harmony. It recognized the services "to humanity and the cause of labor" rendered by the trades union organizations, and pledged cooperation with them.

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1. Montreal Star, 31 July, 1886.

But the trade unionists were dissatisfied with the address.<sup>1</sup>

Later in the year, at the Richmond Convention of the Knights, they again waited upon Powderly who gave them "the most positive assurance" that he and the other members of the Board to endeavor "to establish proper and satisfactory relations with the trades unions."<sup>2</sup> They probably were again dissatisfied, for the Assembly seemed to have been entirely antagonistic to the autonomy sought by the unions -- and incidentally by many Knights of Labor assemblies also -- and to have aimed at concentrating the whole power of the Order in a central board composed of a few men.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Ware does not believe that there was anything much in the complaint of the unions that the Order accepted expelled members of the unions -- at least in the United States. He said that even if the unions suffered in this way, the Knights suffered much more: for the Knights expelled by the hundreds and never suggested that any other organization should pay attention to an applicant's past in relation to the Order. Even so, the number of expelled trade unionists was insignificant enough to throw grave doubts upon the sincerity of the complaint.<sup>4</sup> Whether these general remarks as to the relations between the Order and the unions, can be substantiated for Canada is not known.

Professor Ware also discredits the complaint against the centralization in the Order. To him, the centralization was "a myth", in practice.<sup>5</sup> It seems, however, that the statement

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1. Montreal Star, 4 June, 1886.
  2. The Hamilton Palladium, 9 Oct. 1886.
  3. Ibid., 27 Nov. 1886.
  4. N. J. Ware: loc. cit. (p.70)
  5. Ibid., (p.62)

was somewhat bold. For, as we have seen, even though the local assemblies and unions were impatient with Powderly's vacillating leadership, yet they <sup>were</sup> expected to carry out his commands. And when Powderly visited Montreal in the Fall of 1891, the explanation of the Star may be used as a further indication -- however indirect-- of the centralization that occurred in practice: the Star said -- "The master workman does not believe in the head being far from the body, and he likes to keep in touch all along the line, and that is why he is here just now."<sup>1</sup> Lewis L. Lorwin has also referred to the "centralization of authority" in the Order: he said -- "The five members of the General Executive Board were vested with authority to intervene in strikes and to carry on negotiations with employers; and this centralization of authority made them a target for appeals and demands."<sup>2</sup> Lorwin wrote in 1933, that is, four years after Ware. In 1933 also, Professor C. R. Daugherty spoke of the "unusual centralization of power in the hands of the national officers", and said that because of this, the local and district assemblies became "jealous, suspicious and rebellious." This centralization of authority he considered as one of the causes for the downfall of the Order.<sup>3</sup> In 1935 Prof. E. E. Cummins, spoke of the "highly centralized" structure of the Knights, and considered it "a chief cause" of its decline.<sup>4</sup>

Prof. Ware had based his argument upon the fact that there was little of discipline; and he mentioned a few instances of insubordination among the lesser bodies in the hierarchy -- of

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1. Montreal Star, 30 Sept. 1891.
  2. Lewis L. Lorwin: The American Federation of Labor (p.16)
  3. C. R. Daugherty: Labor Problems in American Industry (p.441)
  4. E. E. Cummins: The Labor Problem in the United States (p.130)

which, District Assembly No. 49, of New York was the most notorious. But to make a generalization on the basis of these isolated instances of insubordination seems to be illogical. It seems too that his statement -- "But watching the general officers running hither and yon at the beck and call of every local and district it becomes evident that centralization was a myth"<sup>1</sup>--is quite illogical. For, far from proving that centralization was a myth, the fact that the general officers were always on the move at the prodding of the lesser bodies, proved that centralization did to a great extent exist in practice. For, if not, why did these lesser bodies have to call upon the general officers?

We have encountered no instance of any Canadian assembly, local or district, which came into conflict with the directives issued by Powderly. The Canadian Knights all toed the line. Nor could their Home Rule Project be regarded as insubordination, or rebellion against the parent body. For that project was discussed with the higher officials in the United States; and when a Legislative Committee was set up for Canada, it was done with the blessings of the parent body.

The Canadian Knights conducted a many-sided activity. Many of their activities, which seem to us to be more important, have been dealt with at greater length. We will now deal with the minor ones. They all show how wholesome was the Order in its work of bringing attention to social injustices.

The Knights campaigned against assisted immigration. In this, they very probably voiced the sentiment of all

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1. Ware: op. cit. (p.62)



intelligent Canadian workers. The Trades and Labor Council of Toronto adopted a resolution, based on the records of the charitable societies of Montreal, Toronto and other centres of population. The resolution condemned the "lavish and unjustifiable" expenditure, by the Dominion Government, of large sums of public money, in the granting of 'assisted passages' and the sustenance of an 'establishment' in London. It claimed that the interests of the Canadian Pacific Railway as well as the Allan Line Company were of primary importance in the continuance of the Government's policy, rather than the actual requirements of the labor market in Canada or its effect upon the already low wages of the workers.<sup>1</sup> Mr. John Keys, secretary of the Knights of Labor Association and executive officer of the Workingmen's Mutual Protective Association, called for the prohibition of immigration, and "some of the means used to induce people to come to this country", in a speech before a Montreal audience on 20 Jan. 1885.<sup>2</sup> 'Enjolras' denounced "Tupper's treachery" when Sir Charles made a speech before the London Chamber of Commerce "glorying and gloating" over the fact that the tide of immigration had been in such large measure directed to Canada, and urging a special fiscal agreement between England and the colonies and the devotion of £1,000,000 to state aided immigration to the British colonies.<sup>3</sup> On 18 March, 1886, Unity Assembly, No. 3151, K. of L. of Woodstock, with a membership of 400 workingmen, adopted a resolution in which they "strongly protest against the system of assisting emigrants;" and ordered

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 10 Jan. 1885.

2. Ibid., 7 Feb. 1885.

3. Ibid., 4 July 1885.

that copies of it be sent to the Dominion and Provincial  
<sup>1</sup>  
 Governments. In the United States the Knights were also doing  
 their bit in this direction. At the Hamilton General Assembly,  
 Mr. Powderly censured Minister Phelps, American representative  
 in England, who, like Sir Tupper, was spreading "misleading  
 statements" to intending immigrants about there being room and  
 employment for all who desire it in America. He called on the  
 labor organizations to put European public opinion right on the  
<sup>2</sup>  
 matter. And finally, the Canadian Labor Congress adopted  
 without objection or discussion, the motion of D. J. O'Donoghue:  
 'That the continued and systematic expenditure of large sums of  
 public money in the assisting encouragement to this country of  
 paupers, indigents and orphans from abroad, is a gross injustice  
 to the people of Canada in general, and to the working classes in  
 particular; therefore be it resolved that in the opinion of this  
 Congress it is the imperative duty of the Dominion and Provincial  
 Governments to peremptorily abolish the existing immigration  
 systems, and that due care should be exercised in preventing the  
 introduction of such classes into Canada, whether they be sent  
 under the authority of the Imperial Government or through any other  
<sup>3</sup>  
 channel.'

It appears that the Knights were justified in condemning  
 assisted immigration. In Montreal, for instance, the situation on  
 the labor market was bad enough: a correspondent wrote in mid-1885:  
 "Everywhere I go through the city I meet mechanics of every  
 discription. As was the case some time ago, they never ask one  
 another if there is any show of a job. When a man is laid off

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 20 March, 1886.
  2. Ibid., 10 Oct. 1885.
  3. Ibid., 18 Sept. 1886.

now he does not dream of looking for work because he knows there is none to be had.... The cutters, about sixty in number, in the Canada cutlery works, of this city, were recently reduced 10 per cent. They were not organized. This is the third reduction since they came here, about 15 months ago. These men were induced to come here from England at good wages and steady employment. The fact of it is they are not employed more than forty hours per week, and then there are more men than is necessary for the capacity of the factory. The Company imported about double the number of men they actually required in order to reduce their wages at the Company's pleasure.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, many who came to Canada for the purpose of settling on unoccupied land, were without means and consequently were unable to cultivate the soil; and hence a large number of them were compelled to seek employment in the cities and towns. In this way, wages were reduced, and native workers thrown out of work. The general depression of business activity<sup>2</sup> did not help them either. Even Mr. Mowat, premier of Ontario, admitted that there were more people in Canada than could find<sup>3</sup> employment.

In 1887 the Knights carried on their fight against assisted immigration. The labor congress in Hamilton adopted a resolution to this effect on Sept. 28.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Powderly declared -- "I would shut out every man or woman who would deprive an American citizen (native or naturalized) of his employment."<sup>5</sup> In Feb. 1891, the Executive Board of District Assembly, 125 K. of L., of Toronto protested against

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 30 May, 1885.
  2. From the resolution adopted by Unity Assembly, No. 3151 of Woodstock. The Hamilton Palladium, 20 March 1886.
  3. Ibid., 20 March 1886.
  4. Montreal Star, 29 Sept. 1887.
  5. Ibid., 26 July 1887.

'the large expenditure of public money in importing emigrants from Europe to compete in an already overstocked market', and welcomed the resolution of the Farmers Central Institute pledging the farmers to unite with the labor organizations in fighting against 'this  
<sup>1</sup>  
 unjust expenditure'.

The Knights put a heavy emphasis on education in general as being vital to the success of their cause. One viewpoint was propagandist. 'Enjolras' held that by far the most important duty which the labor organizations had to discharge was that of education: "It is more vital to the success of the cause than political action, or combinations to raise wages or shorten hours, because education must precede all such efforts if they are to be permanently successful. It is only by having a clear idea of the ultimate objects to be attained, and the methods by which they are to be  
<sup>2</sup>  
 reached, that success can be hoped for."

'Enjolras' was right in stressing the importance of education of a propagandist nature. And his remarks were all the more opportune when there was a lack of such an education among the rank and file. This want was one weakness among the Knights. 'Enjolras' complained: "What proportion of our membership have attained this standard of intelligence? How few there are comparatively who have more than a hazy idea on the subject or realize that the movement has any wider scope than to compel employers to give a few cents more for a day's Labor! Men will hurrah and applaud when it is proposed to send Labor Reform candidates to Parliament, who, if you were to ask them why Labor should be represented there, or what special measures its

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1. Montreal Star, 25 Feb. 1891.
  2. The Hamilton Palladium, 20 Nov. 1886.

representatives should advocate, would be unable to give any  
<sup>1</sup>  
 intelligent answer."

'Enjolras' also led in attacking the system of education in general -- "not school education merely, but the teaching of the press and the platform and the whole circle of influences which go towards the formation of opinion."<sup>2</sup>  
 This system encouraged men to wish to become Vanderbilts. It must be done away with: "We have to create a revolution in public opinion before we can hope to revolutionize the system. We have to change not only men's formally expressed beliefs, but their aspirations and desires -- to eradicate the deep-rooted selfishness begotten of competition and instill in its place a love for humanity and a strong sense of justice. It is an education of the heart as much as the head is needed."<sup>3</sup> Similar sentiments he had expressed earlier. He was inspired by a book written by William Lovett and John Collins, entitled Chartism, A New Organization of the People. With the authors he had agreed in the setting up of public halls or schools: 'Such halls to be used during the day as infant, preparatory and high schools, in which the children shall be educated on the most approved plans the association can devise, embracing physical, mental, moral and political instruction -- and used of an evening for public lectures on physical, moral and political science; for readings, discussions, musical entertainments, dancing and such other healthful and rational recreations, as may serve to instruct and cheer the industrious classes after their hours of toil and prevent the <sup>formation of</sup> vicious and intoxicating habits. Such halls to have two commodious playgrounds, and when practicable a pleasure garden

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 20 Nov. 1886.

2. Ibid. 17 Oct. 1885

3. Ibid. 17 Oct. 1885

attached to each, apartments for the teachers, rooms for hot and cold baths, for a small museum, a laboratory and general workshop, where the children may be taught experiments in science as well as the first principles of the most useful trades.' 'Enjolras' criticized the public school system then in operation as one-sided; it merely trained the intellect. Like the authors, he called for circulating libraries, a matter which was then assuming practical shape in Hamilton; in this way he hoped to bring the best literature<sup>1</sup> to the masses at only a nominal cost to them.

It was this importance attached to education that led the Canadian Labor Congress in the Fall of 1886 to adopt Mr. B. Lynch's motion: 'That it be a recommendation from this Congress to the various district assemblies or trades and labor councils represented here to take such steps as they may find necessary towards getting up a course of winter lectures in their respective districts for the purpose of improving the moral and mental condition of the working class, so as to better qualify them for the discharge of their increased and important duties as citizens.' It also adopted a motion by Mr. John Armstrong to ask the provincial legislature of Ontario to transfer the allowance that was then being enjoyed by universities and colleges to the public schools, for the purpose of further promoting their efficiency, and providing the pupils of<sup>2</sup> such schools with books free of charge.

Other abuses pointed out by the Knights, and other demands may be briefly indicated.

They called for a reduction of government expenses. In particular they condemned the "extravagant pension system," especially

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 25 Apr. 1885.  
 2. Ibid., 18 Sept. 1886.

as the "gentlemen of elegant leisure" and other "favorites of fortune", at the government offices at Ottawa, 'worked' only six hours a day, or at best, were supposed to be in their offices<sup>1</sup> during that time. When, in 1885, the Dominion members of Parliament voted themselves each an allowance of \$500. in addition to the regular allowance "in consideration for the extra length<sup>2</sup> of the session", the Knights registered their protest. And in 1886, the Canadian Labor Congress adopted a motion of J. A. Kilroy that the salary of the Governor-General should not exceed \$15,000.<sup>3</sup> per annum: his salary and expenses amounted to \$120,000. per<sup>4</sup> annum.

On the other hand, the Knights called on the government to provide pensions for aged or disabled workingmen -- the money to be raised by a graduated income tax to be levied on the wealthy,<sup>5</sup> or better still, by a "tax on land values."

The Canadian Labor Congress believed that the employers' liability bill of the government of Ontario should have been enacted without any provision depriving any laboring element of the full benefit of the act; and requested that the government will, at the expiration of one year, wipe out the objectionable provision. The Congress demanded the abolition of the contract system in connection with national, provincial and municipal works, and the substitution of a system whereby such public works would be carried on by the direct supervision of the national, provincial or municipal governments: the purpose of this measure being to save the people a large

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 15 May 1886.
  2. Ibid., 25 July 1885.
  3. Ibid., 18 Sept. 1886.
  4. Ibid., 29 Aug. 1885.
  5. Ibid., 15 May 1886.

proportion of the public revenue being then absorbed by "middlemen and non-producers of the capitalist class." On the motion by D. J. O'Donoghue, it resolved that 'any insolvency act should contain a provision giving labor a priority of claim for wages of sixty days at least.<sup>1</sup> It also demanded a law from the Dominion Government for making the establishment of armed and uniformed private police or detective bodies illegal.

This last demand was inspired by the importation of the Pinkerton detective system from the United States into Canada. In Toronto, there was a private detective agency, which had at its command fifty men, all sworn to do its bidding, and at a moment's call. They were dressed so as to resemble the ordinary policeman as much as possible. They were regarded as "simply a ring of Monopoly's standing army;" and were feared, since all that was necessary was "to plank down the boodle and these ruffians will shoot into any crowd you mention."<sup>2</sup> It seems, however, that the "private detective curse" was not as bad in Canada as it was in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

Various other activities of the Knights brought them before public attention. Great social affairs were conducted. On August 21, 1886 a picnic was given by the Workingmen's Union, No. 5178, of Hochelaga to enliven the weekend. It was attended by 4,000 people, and was in every respect a creditable affair. The utmost good order prevailed. During the morning and the early part of the afternoon an excellent programme of sports

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 18 Sept. 1886.

2. Ibid., 31 July 1886.

3. The Labor Advocate, 2 Jan. 1891.



was carried through with success and amusement to those present. In the afternoon, after the arrival of the 'South Eastern' from the city, at three o'clock, speech making was commenced, and lasted until nearly six o'clock. Mr. Geo. Brouillet, of Hochelaga, the elected chairman, opened the meeting with a few introductory remarks in which he lauded the efforts made by the workingmen towards securing their rights. Other speakers were Messrs. L. O. David, Keys, Chas. Champagne, John Rose, Gravel, Warren, and Lepine. In the evening a meeting, attended by not more than 300 persons, was held at the corner of St. Lawrence and St. Catherine Streets, under the presidency of Geo. Reid. Speakers were Robertson,<sup>1</sup> Lepine, Keys, Gravel, Warren and Jehu.

The first annual picnic of the Knights under the auspices of the Maple Leaf Assembly of Ormstown was held on Saturday, Aug. 28, 1886 and was an immense success. It was estimated that over 4,000 were present. Three special trains comprising about 40 cars were used to convey the excursionists to Ormstown and back to Montreal. The people gladly availed themselves of the opportunity of escaping the heat of the city and spending a few hours in a delightful grove in the country. On arrival in the morning, the excursionists were welcomed by Col. McEachren and the Ormstown Brass Band. The gallant commandant of the 50th. Battalion greeted them with a few appropriate remarks, and informed them that apart from having the pleasure of spending a few hours in a shady nook they had an opportunity of tramping on historic ground, as the grove had been used as camping ground by the American army of invasion, a few nights before the celebrated fight of Chateaugay. The conduct of the people was all that could be desired. No liquor was sold on the grounds and no

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1. Montreal Star, 23 Aug. 1886.

disturbance took place. Refreshments were abundantly supplied, and a programme of sports, including 34 events, was gone through. Dancing was also kept up with zest, during the day. Mr. Robertson and Keys acted as judges.<sup>1</sup> These labor picnics certainly helped the cause of the labor candidates in the Quebec provincial elections of Oct. 14.

The annual picnic of District Assembly 114, K. of L., was held on Saturday, Sept. 17, 1887 on the Exhibition Grounds, and was attended by eight or nine thousand people. There were the usual speeches and games, which included racing, sack race, three-legged race, greasy pig race, high jump, long jump, putting the shot, and running hop step and leap.<sup>2</sup>

A somewhat more serious affair in point of significance was the Labor Day parade. In 1891 the Knights in Montreal joined with other labor organizations of the city for the celebrations. By that time, Labor Day was fast becoming an institution among the Canadian workers; and it seems to have been connected with the founding of the Central Trades and Labor Council in Montreal in 1886. In 1891 it was celebrated by a much greater number of people than formerly. The procession was the chief event in the morning. Many of the stores and houses along the route were tastefully decorated with flags and bunting, and presented a gay appearance. Long streamers were in many cases extended across the street, bearing appropriate labor mottoes. One firm on McGill street had its establishment trimmed with banners and streamers, which stretched across the street with the mottoes, 'A fair day's work for a fair day's pay', 'No child labor', and 'Success to Unionism.' The procession formed on Craig street, opposite Champ de Mar square,

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1. Montreal Star, 30 Aug. 1886.

2. Ibid., 19 Sept. 1887.

where thousands of spectators had gathered, occupying every available spot. At the City Hall steps, too, a large crowd stood. Shortly after 9 o'clock the enormous body was put in motion. Organization was thorough. A squad of twenty-five of the city police marched abreast at the head of the procession to keep the route clear. Mr. John Fisher, the Grand Marshall, led on a prancing charger. A band followed and then came a body of young lads, Sons of Organized Labor, bearing mottoes which read, 'Free Education', 'The Land for the People', 'Abolish Property Qualifications for Aldermen', etc. Following were the United Watch Case Makers in carriages. A splendid turnout was made by the Black Diamond Assembly of Coal Handlers, about 150 of them. The Freight Handlers came next, bearing a picture of Mr. Powderly and the motto 'Knowledge is Power'. Others included the American Flint Glass Workers' Association, the Green Glass Blowers, the Phoenix Assembly of Brass Workers, the Machinery Moulders, Marble Workers Assembly, Maple Leaf Assembly, Progress Assembly, Unity Assembly, Dominion Assembly, Grand Hermine Assembly, Ville Marie Assembly, the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, the local union of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, the Montreal Typographical Union No. 176, Cigarmakers' Unions Nos. 226 and 58. One notable feature of the parade was the presence of the Detroit City Band, colored, which marched at the head of the Pulman Car Porters' Union: they received enthusiastic cheers. The Central Trades and Labor Council, headed by Mr. L. Z. Bourdeau, president of the Council, brought up the end of the procession. Others in the parade were Mr. V. Lafontaine, president of the Dominion Trades and Labor Council, Mr. Lepine, M. P., Mr. Beland, M. P. P., Mr. Cribbon and Mr. Davie of the Toronto Trades and Labor Council,

Mayor McShane, with the official chain of office covering his shoulders, and aldermen Clendinning and Martineau.<sup>1</sup> In the afternoon, about fifteen thousand people gathered on the Exhibition Grounds on the occasion of the great Labor Day picnic. In spite of the orders of the directors of the Exhibition Company prohibiting gambling, roulette tables, paddles and cane racks were in full blast, and many a hard-earned dollar was lost by the hardy sons of toil. Sgt. Proulse and his assistants who undertook to close these traps, were faced with a letter signed by Mayor McShane which permitted 'the Knights of Labor to use roulette and paddle wheels for charitable purposes'. As a result, twelve gambling tables were in full blast inside of the buildings, and the police dispersed other gamblers outside. There were also ten tables inside, from which lager beer and wine flowed incessantly in spite of directions that 'the sale of intoxicating liquors is absolutely prohibited'. The officers of the revenue department said that they had granted permissions to one man to sell beer. The licenced man sublet his contract to the others! They were all notified that they would be sued. Among the notables present<sup>2</sup> were Hon. Mr. Chapleau, Mayor McShane and a number of aldermen.

In the early 1890's, the Knights expressed themselves in the Labor Advocate of Toronto. This weekly, edited by Phillips Thompson, was endorsed by the Toronto Trades and Labor Congress and D. A. 125, K. of L. It is on this short-lived paper that we have to depend on mainly, in our study of the Knights in this period.

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1. Montreal Star, 7 Sept. 1891.

2. Ibid., 8 Sept. 1891.

The 1890's was marked by radicalism that did not exist a few years earlier among the Knights -- at least in their official leadership. For, indeed, there were radical elements among the rank and file, especially in the United States. The Home Club of New York was most notorious. It included men like Fred Turner, the secretary, John Hayes, and Wm. Bailey. James E. Quinn, one of the originators of the Club, lived in Justus Schwab's house in New York, a pupil of Victor Drury, Anarchists and Communists.<sup>1</sup> Under their leadership, the Club led an opposition to Powderly. Other radicals denounced the decision of the Supreme Court of Illinois, which condemned the Chicago anarchists to be hanged: these wanted to carry through a radical programme and to oust Powderly, and threatened that if they were not allowed to rule<sup>2</sup> the Order, they would withdraw and attempt to break it up. Powderly had consistently denounced the Chicago anarchists: in 1886, for example, he forbade several districts to pay over<sup>3</sup> money that had been collected for the defence of the anarchists; in 1887 at the Minneapolis Convention, he again denounced them when James E. Quinn presented a resolution expressing sorrow that<sup>4</sup> the seven men in Chicago were doomed to death. The Canadian Knights were, however, at best undecided. They followed Powderly's leadership in condemning the methods of the anarchists, but at the same time, expressed their sympathy: they said that the Chicago riots were to be deeply deplored: "No sensible Labor Reformer believes in such criminal methods of reorganizing society. But, however strongly we may condemn the Anarchists, it must never be forgotten that it is only the turning of the crushed worm -- the result of

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1. Montreal Star, 4 June 1886.

2. Ibid., 19 Sept. 1886.

3. Ibid., 28 Dec. 1886.

4. Ibid., 11 Oct. 1887.

the ignorant and degraded against intolerable oppression and  
<sup>1</sup>injustice? And 'Enjolras' wielded his pen in their favor.<sup>2</sup>

In the theoretical field, change also occurred. Henry  
 George<sup>1</sup> (was) extolled to the skies. Lassalle, Karl Marx, Louis  
 Blanc, Peter Krapotkine, William Morris and H. M. Hyndman were  
 regarded as "ignorant, illiterate men".<sup>3</sup> In the 1890's there  
 was a movement, at least among the Canadian Knights, more to  
 the left.

Land nationalization was no longer regarded as the  
 panacea for all ills. Landlordism was regarded as "merely one  
 of the most obnoxious of many forms of monopoly". The editor  
 of the Labor Advocate argued that the attack on landlordism  
 must be carried to its "logical conclusion" by a condemnation  
 of "all forms of 'unearned increment'".<sup>4</sup> These were rent,  
<sup>5</sup>interest and profits. The scope of attack was therefore  
 widened considerably. A comparison of the editorials of 5  
 June, 1891 and 11 Sept. 1891 shows that the Labor Advocate,  
 and therefore the Canadian Knights, or at any rate, the Toronto  
 Knights, were "socialist", and that they advocated the "overthrow  
 of the competitive system, the abolition of the private ownership  
 of the means of production, including land, capital and machinery,  
 and the organization of an industrial commonwealth under which the  
 Government will control production."<sup>6</sup> Land nationalization was  
 regarded merely as a step in the right direction, not as an end  
 in itself; for, explained the Labor Advocate, -- "If landlordism

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 8 May 1886.
  2. Ibid., 12 June 1886.
  3. Ibid., 21 Aug. 1886.
  4. Labor Advocate, 27 March, 1891.
  5. Ibid., 19 Dec. 1890.
  6. Ibid., 11 Sept. 1891.

were destroyed at one blow tomorrow, capitalism remaining in possession of the money, the machinery, the whole social mechanism of exchange and production would still be able to dictate terms to the workers and compel them to labor for its profits." <sup>1</sup> The right road was the road towards socialism: "in Socialism alone can be found the solution to the problem." <sup>2</sup>

The Toronto Knights had therefore made a decided turn to the left; they had come to realize the fallacy of Henry George's scheme of land nationalization as the solution to society's problems, and had widened their field of attack. That their views coincided with Phillips Thomson's is proved by the fact that the selection of the editor was "approved by the organizations concerned, as a guarantee that their opinions would be fairly presented and their rights unswervingly maintained." <sup>3</sup>

This turn -- to the left was evidenced in other ways. Articles of a more radical character than those, for example, in the Hamilton Palladium, were published. An article entitled "The Spread of Socialism" by Dr. R. Heber Newton was printed in the issue of 19 Dec. 1890. Great respect was shown to Owen, Lassalle, Karl Marx, Elisee Reclus -- "a famous savant". It was loudly and proudly proclaimed how the leading spirits of "Nihilism" were men and women of rank and wealth -- Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, Carlyle and William Morris. In the issue of 27 March 1891 appeared an article "The Paris Commune", written by R. W. Burnie, English anarchist: the author made such statements as "I fail to understand how the necessary anti-social business of fighting can be carried on without some measure of

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1. Labor Advocate, 27 March 1891.

2. Ibid., 2 Oct. 1891.

3. Ibid., 5 Dec. 1890.

coercison, some kind of government"; he hoped that the time was not far off when "we shall crush forever the robbers who make our lives so grey and bitter." There was nothing but praise for the Commune: it was introduced as "an epoch that the toilers everywhere have a right to be proud of," and as "the workingmen's government -- brave men and women who died<sup>1</sup> for freedom."

It is clear from the foregoing that the Knights of Toronto were still hazy in their ideas; for example it was unpardonable to put men like Owen and Marx in the same category. Though they had advanced towards a larger perspective they were not yet revolutionaries. Their methods were those of idealist reformists: the motto of the Labor Advocate appeared from the very first issue -- 'We demand all the Reform that Justice can ask for, and all the Justice that Reform can give.'<sup>2</sup> They said that the watchword should be: "Organize for political action." But by this they meant nothing more than that workingmen must combine to use their ballots as "a lever to oppose consolidated capitalism and better their condition by changing existing institutions." Their aims were high -- "to secure control of the land, the capital and the machinery, instead of allowing them to remain in the hands of a few monopolists;" but their methods were reformist -- "making Labor Reform the principal question at the polls."<sup>3</sup> They were to use the usual electioneering procedures and parliamentary methods.

It must be said in fairness, that 'Enjolras' was alone

1. Labor Advocate, 27 March 1891.
2. Ibid., 5 Dec. 1890.
3. Ibid., 13 March 1891.



among the Knights in the middle eighties, who had advanced far enough to abandon the idea that land nationalization would solve all social ills -- though he still considered it as being tremendously important. He envisioned a "universal collectivism under which the State organized upon a popular basis, and representing the mass of the people, will organize industry and distribution."<sup>1</sup> He thus wanted a State which represented the people and organized production and distribution. This was a very advanced aim. But 'Enjolras' weakened his position, by his unclear thinking. For it is clear that the "universal collectivism" he envisioned was something far wider than land-nationalization, which would have been only one step towards it. He, however, took the opposite view; he held that this collectivism prepared the government to accept "the yet wider and more important functions to be forced upon it by land nationalization."<sup>2</sup> This view was, however, quite natural for him: because, for all his talk of organization of industry and distribution by a State representing the people, he meant nothing else but "factory acts, national telegraphs, free schools, food inspection measures, etc."<sup>3</sup> in short, social legislation by the State. However, in spite of his unclear thinking, 'Enjolras' must be given credit for having at least formulated the solution for society's problems; and in this way, he was definitely in advance of contemporary Knights.

A certain advance was also made in the field of tactics. In the seventies and eighties, the Order had taken up the cause of the small employers, farmers and others of the petit-bourgeois class.

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 28 March 1885.
  2. Ibid., 6 June 1885.
  3. Ibid., 6 June 1885.

Undoubtedly this was done from a humanitarian standpoint. But humanitarianism cannot always be a correct guide to action. In the nineties the difficulties of this class were viewed with less mercy, and the nature of its position in the conflict of social classes was correctly judged. The K. of L. Journal now declared: "The process of freezing out or squeezing out the small trader, employer, landlord and capitalist by the big trusts and monopolies, which is now going on everywhere, can be regarded by organized labor with a good deal of complacency. It is not our fight. The class who are now being reduced to the level of wage earners by the tendency of capital to concentrate in a few hands have never been our friends or the advocates of industrial reform. As a class, the small capitalists have been tenacious of abuses and always on the side of class privilege and against the rights of the people. Whether originally belonging to the working class or not, they have always identified themselves with monopoly interests and shown themselves fully as arrogant and overbearing in their petty way as the great millionaires and corporations. But 'the whirligig of time brings its revenges,' and notwithstanding that the small capitalists have been the bulwark of the system, always ready to defend the extreme 'rights of property', they are now being remorselessly crushed out by consolidated capital. We have no tears to shed over their wrongs, and regard their extinction as the removal of one of the greatest barriers to social reconstruction. There is no more thorough-going and determined opponent of monopoly aggression than the dispossessed capitalist. They will<sup>1</sup> be with us after they have been ruined." The Order probably

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1. The Labor Advocate, Toronto, 20 Feb. 1891.

learned all this by experience.

To a radical the championship of the petit-bourgeoisie was not only prompted by idealism, but was much worse; it was reactionary. The Order did not know then, how to utilize the economic laws that governed social growth. But by the nineties, they were already learning how. They now recognized that the destruction of the petit-bourgeois was desirable, because such a process increased the strength of the proletariat -- the Knights were now actually using such terms! They said -- "Everywhere the stronger, wealthier, and more cunning capitalists are entrenching themselves more firmly by the process of combination and concentration, and crushing the weaker down to the level of the proletariat. As this sort of thing goes on the power of resistance to the forces of progress will be weakened in proportion as individual chances to rise from the ranks become more vague and shadowy, and fewer people are interested in defending the rule of plutocracy. Capitalism is cutting its own throat in a highly satisfactory manner."<sup>1</sup> The Knights were realizing that the elimination of the petit-bourgeois by the very working of economic laws was hastening the social revolution; and they were taking no steps to retard the process.

On the contrary, they favored the formation of trusts, which they regarded as inevitable. They rightly thought that trusts were "a necessary step in the direction of cooperative production." For, they felt, not only did trusts bring incidental benefits as the systemmatization of industry and the prevention of waste occasioned by cut-throat competition, but they made it easier for the people "to step in and take control; "and as they said rightly elsewhere, "Trusts and combines are fast making the nationalization

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1. The Labor Advocate, 27 March 1891.

of industry possible." <sup>1</sup> And Mr. Clarke Wallace's Combines Act, which had been placed on the statute book, 'whereby trust and combinations among manufacturers and other producers with the object of preventing free competition and keeping up prices are declared to be illegal', was rightly judged to be "a step back-  
<sup>2</sup>wards."

The evils of trusts in increasing prices and lowering wages were fully realized. But these evils were transient, and moreover acted as a spur towards nationalization, if they became unbearable. But the Knights, at that time, had at least one wrong estimate of trusts. They believed that production and distribution would be greatly simplified in consequence "by regulating the supply of products in accordance with the demand." This, they felt, would prevent the periodical crises that rock  
<sup>3</sup>capitalist society. In this belief, they were quite wrong as experience has shown since then.

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1. The Labor Advocate, 30 Jan. 1891.
  2. Ibid., 27 Feb. 1891.
  3. Ibid., 30 Jan. 1891.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE POLITICAL IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE KNIGHTS

We will first deal with the role of the Knights in the Quebec Provincial elections of 1886.

Apart from a meeting held two weeks earlier for the same purpose,<sup>1</sup> the first steps taken by the Knights on this matter occurred on Saturday, July 17. The various labor unions in Montreal held a meeting in Weber Hall to select candidates for Montreal West and Centre for the Local House. Over 100 members of the unions were present and Mr. W. W. Robertson acted as chairman.

Mr. Jehu stated that it would be better before choosing a candidate to decide upon a platform for him. The assembly was of the same opinion. Mr. Jehu said that a meeting of a labor organization held lately at Point St. Charles had agreed upon a platform.

Drs. Guerin and Kannon and Mr. C. J. Doherty were respectively names for the candidature of Montreal Centre. But the three names were rejected, the meeting deciding to nominate<sup>2</sup> "none but a regular laboring man."

The following names were then proposed and accepted: Messrs. Wm. Keys, Jehu, G. Clarke, G. Lawes, W. W. Robertson and E. Butler. Immediately after being proposed as a candidate Mr. W. W. Robertson, from motives of delicacy, left the chair. Messrs. Clarke and Jehu at once asked to be effaced from the list as if nominated, they could not accept the candidature. After a vote

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1. Montreal Star, 8 July 1886.  
2. Ibid., 19 July 1886.

was taken, Mr. William Keys was elected candidate by a majority of 14 votes. This selection was afterwards made unanimous by the meeting. Mr. Keys rose and thanked those present for the choice made, and said that if he had not been unanimously nominated, he would not have accepted the honor conferred upon him.

Mr. Robertson was proposed by Mr. Clarke and unanimously nominated to oppose Messrs. Stephens and Hall in Montreal West.

The selection of the two labor candidates was "widely discussed" in Montreal political circles. The selection was generally approved, and the two candidates were admitted to be "honorable and respected citizens." Mr. C. J. Doherty, who was to oppose Mr. Keys, said, 'My opponent is beyond reproach in every way, and would make an excellent representative. He is thoroughly independent and would be beyond<sup>the power</sup> of rings or parties. The selection of these gentlemen I feel confident has been made<sup>1</sup> entirely without any political or outside influence.'

Mr. William W. Robertson, at the time of his nomination, was a saddler by trade at 2444 Notre Dame St. He was a self-made man, having built up his business "through his industry and hard labor". It was said that "few better read men are found in a day's travel,"<sup>2</sup> than the candidate for the Western Division. In religion he was a Protestant, being the elder and preacher of the Adventist congregation in Montreal. Mr. Robertson was born on 9th. February 1837. He was of small build, but was wiry and active, and he wore a short thick beard. Though known to use anything but mild words when opposing those whom he deemed wrong, he preserved quite a kindly Scotch accent. He was born at Castle Douglas, Kirkeudbrightshire, in the south of Scotland. His father was a

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1. Montreal Star, 19 July 1886.

2. Ibid., 19 July 1886.

tanner. W. W. simply enjoyed the education furnished by a common parish school. At thirteen, he was apprenticed to an uncle, who was in the harness trade; and in 1855, he left home for England where he spent a year at Liverpool. In 1856 he emigrated to Canada and spent several years in Ontario, but in 1863 he came to Montreal where he had been living up to the time of his candidature. He lived beside his saddlery store just beyond Guy street. He had come very prominently before the public on occasions in religious controversies. He was brought up a Presbyterian, but joined the body to which he then belonged, in 1872, after a public discussion between 'Elder' Grant, of Boston, and the Rev. Mr. Caulfield. Mr. Robertson was a consistent temperance man since his youth.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. William Keys of the firm of Kerr & Keys, 623 Lagachetierre St., was born in Montreal in 1855, of Irish parents. After being educated at the St. Ann's Christian Brothers' School in Griffintown, he was apprenticed to the St. Lawrence Engineering Works. He then went on a business tour through the United States in order to acquire a knowledge of the various processes used in the different shops. After spending four years in the States, he returned to Montreal in 1882. He first acted as foreman in the St. Lawrence Works for two years, and then worked at the I. & R. Weir's Engineering Works on Nazareth St. for about a year, when he started in business in partnership with A. Kerr. When a boy at school, he evinced a taste for drawing and mechanics, which had developed into several inventions which had been patented. The last patent was a 'low water alarm, an apparatus which was placed on steam boilers, and when the water was getting dangerously low, a whistle was sounded to call the attention of the engineer.' A

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1. Daily Witness, 7 Aug. 1886.

member of the Stationary Engineers' Association and the Trades and Labor Council, Mr. Keys spared no efforts to improve conditions of the laboring men. He was a strict Catholic, a member of St. Ann's Church, and was married in 1883.<sup>1</sup> During his travels in the United States, Mr. Keys became acquainted with the workings of the Knights of Labor, and feeling that the Canadian workingmen should take a greater interest in bettering their condition, he started the idea on his return to Montreal, and was one of the principal founders of the Knights of Labor in the city, organized in 1883. He was a firm believer in the prohibition movement, and other social agitations which had for their object the welfare of the working class.<sup>2</sup>

The third labor candidate was Mr. Adelard Gravel. He was chosen by the labor unions of Montreal East to represent them. He spoke correct French and English. His candidature apparently was popular: the secretary of one French Canadian Labor Union said -- "Now our object in introducing a candidate of our own is to have a man from our midst who will understand our interests and act according to this knowledge. All the workingmen seem to have recognized this fact, and this is what makes me say that they will vote like one man for Mr. Gravel."<sup>3</sup> Gravel was born in Montreal on 7th. June 1857, at a house which was one of the oldest in the city, it being an old-fashioned wooden building at the corner of St. Antoine and Cathedral streets. His father, Olivier Gravel, an upholsterer by trade, was a powerfully built man, over six feet in height, known among his friends under the name of le grand Gravel, and was possessed of an extremely rich bass voice, which won for him for fifteen years the

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1. Montreal Star, 19 July 1886.
  2. Daily Witness, 7 Aug. 1886.
  3. Montreal Star, 23 July 1886.



leading part in the choir of the Roman Catholic Cathedral. Young Adelard received a sound commercial education, in both languages, at the Bishop's Academy, St. Margaret street, and afterward studied Latin and classics for three years at the Montreal College. At the age of fifteen, he entered the printing establishment of Mr. Louis Perrault, and after serving there a few months he finished his apprenticeship with Messrs. Beauchemin & Valois, in whose service he remained for six years. It was there that he learned stereotyping. He afterwards went to the United States, where he passed three years. Having returned to Montreal, he took charge of the stereotyping department of Le Monde, and he had ever since remained, to the time of his candidature, at the head of the same shop, which became later La Compagnie d'Imprimerie Generale.

Mr. Gravel had been thrice elected President of the French Typographical Union, his terms of office being the years 1882, 1883 and 1884. In 1885 he was sent as a delegate to represent Montreal at the annual convention of the International Typographical Union, held in New York and he was successful in securing the elections of a Canadian, Mr. Thos. Lacey, of the Queen Printer's Office at Ottawa, as First Vice-President of the International Union. He had been Secretary-Treasurer of the Central Trades and Labor Council since the beginning of its existence, and was a most prominent member of the Knights of Labor.

The three candidates had the support of the Trades and Labor Council, composed of all the societies and labor unions of Montreal; for the minutes of a meeting of the Council held on Aug. 3, contained the following passage -- 'That this council approves the nomination of the three Labor candidates at present

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1. Daily Witness, 7 Aug. 1886.

It was also said that he had received a "complete classical education" at the Seminary of St. Hyacinthe. Montreal Star, 23 July 1886.

in the field, chosen by the committee named for that purpose, for the Provincial Legislature.' It was not known, however, until October 12th just before the elections, that the Council resolved to publish its official support.<sup>1</sup> This was probably intended to be some tactical manoeuvre.

Publicity was given to the aims of the labor candidates in July; but the early accounts were somewhat confusing and unfinished. But later Gravel and Keys issued a manifesto to the electors in their divisions; and in it, they stated that their "chief aim" was "to advance the interests of the laboring class." To obtain this result, they advocated measures which, they believed, "far from being inconsistent with the general interests, are, in reality, calculated to promote and secure them most effectively." The measures they advocated were:

1. The improvement of the law relating to the contracts between masters and apprentices, so that the criminal consequences attaching to a breach on the part of the latter only may be removed and a condition of equality secured.

2. The protection of children working in factories and of operatives in the service of railway and steamboat companies and employers of labor generally.

3. The improvement of the administration of justice so that the settlement by way of arbitration of disputes arising between masters and workmen may be encouraged, and litigation generally simplified, and made both more effectual, summary and economical.

4. To secure greater humanity in the execution of judgments, and in particular to enlarge the exemption from seizure both of household effects, and such a portion of the laborer's earnings as are necessary to keep the family together.

5. To obtain the appointment of a public prosecutor so that crimes may be discovered and punished in all cases, whether the victims be rich or poor.

6. To amend the municipal system, so that the public burdens may be more fairly distributed on the one hand, and on the other a portion of the revenue may be applied to the foundation and support of public libraries and special day and night schools for workmen and persons generally employed in connection with the arts and manufactures of the city.

7. To prevent prison labor from unjustly competing with honest labor.

8. To stop the assistance given by Government for the promotion of the immigration of laborers into the province other than farm laborers.

9. To support all legislation that may deal with the suppression of the liquor traffic.

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1. Montreal Star, 13 Oct., 1886.

The two men considered: "That the above and kindred subject have been sadly neglected in the past, while our public men were engaged in bitter struggles over political and too often personal questions no one can deny. The urgent necessity of the moment is to bring the legislation of the Province of Quebec on such questions in a line with that of England , France and the United States, if we are ever to stem the tide which has already driven away millions of our people and made them citizens of the United States, and which is steadily pushing our laboring population in the same direction, to the irreparable injury of our own country and institutions." They also asserted their political independence: "In matters of general legislation, we shall always act independent of parties and support good measures, from whatever quarter they may be presented."<sup>1</sup>

The programme then definitely shows that the working class was dissatisfied with the old party leaders, and that they wanted to be in line with the labor legislation in other countries.

However badly drawn up, the manifesto did represent something valuable for the workers. The first measure of the programme had for a long time become necessary. The act concerning masters and apprentices was an iniquity, as useless for the employer as it was onerous for the worker. Because of it, a workman could not absent himself from his work under any circumstance. That the law gave him the right of voting was of little avail; because he could not exercise it without the permission of the employer. If he became ill, and if a doctor did not declare him incapable of working, he had nevertheless to go to work; if his wife or

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1. Daily Witness, 4 Aug., 1886.  
The full text of the manifesto is given in this issue.

child were sick, he still had to work if his employer wished it. Many abuses resulted. Once the Recorder's Court condemned a man when he refused to work on Sunday so that he could go to Church. The law also meted out different punishment for the same crime: when a worker broke his contract he was liable to go to prison and to pay a fine; if an employer broke his contract he was liable only to one of them. The law was a relic of the old French legislation. It was however rarely applied.<sup>1</sup>

The fourth point meant that the worker asked for greater facilities to pay his debts, and that they wished to protect their homes and fulfil their engagements without endangering the peace of their families. It would have been as profitable to the merchants as to the workmen: for it would have involved a diminution of credit; and if it prolonged the term of payment, it would have put an end to the numerous losses that the merchants underwent in consequence of the legal detours that debtors were able to make.<sup>2</sup>

The other points are quite clear, and need no comment. Some of them have been dealt with in the discussion of the economic activities of the Knights.

Mr. Robertson favored harmony between capital and labor, bureaus of labor statistics, great care of the public lands, no form of assisted immigration, the abolition of competitive convict labor, the better protection of employees, the giving to employees a first lien upon assets, arbitration, the recognition by incorporation of all labor organizations, intelligent health reform, and the suppression of the liquor traffic.<sup>3</sup>

A mass meeting was held on August 12th. The Star reported on this meeting: "Many large and enthusiastic meetings have been held on

1. La Presse, 12 Oct., 1886.

2. Ibid., 12 Oct., 1886.

3. Daily Witness, 7 Aug., 1886.

Chaboillez Square, but that of last evening in response to the invitation of the labor candidates was a public demonstration of sympathy to the cause seldom witnessed. The candidates addressed the meeting from the balcony of Larin's hotel, every inch of the square being occupied by the audience, computed at nearly four thousand." Mr. G.Reid was appointed chairman. Messrs Keys , Gravel and Robertson; Mr. Jules Helbronner of La Presse; Mr. Collins, a delegate from Hamilton, Joseph Fall and others were present. Speeches were made by Messrs. E.Laur, Geo. Warren, Keys, Gravel , Robertson, Alphonse Lepine who was a printer in the employ of L'Imprimerie Generale, Collins and Jehu.

In the course of his speech, Mr. Robertson stressed the independence of his party, called for the conservation of the public domain, and denounced convict labor. He said: "We will have a party of our own, faithful to our country and faithful to the workingmen. Here are the principles we will advocate: Our public domain will no more be squandered for the benefit of railway syndicates or political hacks as a reward for services rendered. We will use it for the advancement of our country. Our young men will settle upon it, and thereby remain in their country. These views will be supported by all the laboring men, irrespective of creed or nationality. Then it devolves upon your representatives to see that a premium is no longer set upon crime. Why, criminals, as it is, receive better treatment than the workingman and compete with him. This must cease, and it is your duty to elect men who will make it cease, and thereby act in your interests, and the interests of your family." Mr. Gravel said: " Our first move in Parliament will be to abolish convict labor.... The other reforms we will advocate will be similar to this one, and they will be in the interests of the workingmen and society in general." Mr. Keys

added his bit: "I would endeavor to remove the fine Parliament buildings from Quebec to Montreal. The reform of the laws, notably the Factory Act, would be my next object." He considered as a "grievance" the fact that one million Canadians were living in the United States. He condemned the law "allowing children of tender years to, ruin themselves in factories and workshops." He wanted reform of the convict labor laws, which kept criminals in prison largely at the expense of workingmen, and at the same time engaged in trades competing with them.<sup>1</sup>

Another mass meeting was held on August 16th at St. James market in the east end. The attendance was estimated at "fully three thousand." Under the chairmanship of Mr. A. Brouillet, speeches were made by Messrs. Gravel, Keys, Geo. Warren, Edward Laur, Alphonse Lepine, Theophile Lavigne, J.A. Rodier, P.E. Tremblay and Ald. Prefontaine. The electors were encouraged to vote for Mr. Gravel.<sup>2</sup>

On August 20th a "dense crowd" attended a meeting in favor of Mr. Robertson, on St. Martin St. Speeches of the usual type were made by Messrs. Robertson, A. Lepine, Joseph Ward who was an employee of the Grand Trunk, and John Rose, a timekeeper employed by Messrs. Pillow, Hersey & Co.<sup>3</sup>

During these days before the election, at least two labor picnics were held. They certainly helped to publicize the candidates.<sup>4</sup>

The Conservative paper Le Monde of 4th September cast doubt as to the utility of the political movement among the working class. It said editorially: "Nous nous faisons un devoir de soutenir les ouvriers quand

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1. Montreal Star, 13 Aug., 1886.

2. Ibid., 16 Aug., 1886.

3. Ibid., 21 AUG., 1886.

4. See Chapter II.

ils ont un progrès à réaliser ou qu'ils travaillent à leur avancement social. Mais devons-nous croire que les ouvriers trouveront ces avantages dans la politique? Quant à nous, nous pouvons peut-être nous tromper, cependant nous exprimerons bien franchement notre pensée et nous dirons qu'il est difficile de croire que le mouvement politique organisé par les ouvriers puissent bénéficier à la classe des travailleurs."<sup>1</sup>

Le Monde gave its reasons.

It held that the workers, more than any other class in society, were interested in the development of the nation's industry, since their labor depended on its progress and prosperity; if they put hindrances "à la bonne entente générale qui doit exister entre les travailleurs et <sup>autres</sup> les classes de la société", they would be the first to suffer. The cause of labor should then be left in the hands of the politicians, and social peace strengthened: "La cause du travail, disons le, n'a pas à se plaindre de la bonne volonté de nos hommes politiques. En faisant des efforts pour promouvoir l'intérêt du pays, ils contribuent par là au bien-être de l'ouvrier, puisque le travail dépend de la multiplication du capital. Et développer les ressources du pays, c'est travailler à l'augmentation du capital, et par conséquent c'est favoriser la cause du travail. Mais qu'est-ce qui produit ce résultat? C'est l'harmonie qui existe entre les différentes classes et le concours de tous les citoyens sans de distinction de section, à promouvoir les intérêts généraux du pays."<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, argued Le Monde, whenever a class becomes aloof, the others are stirred to form a coalition against it. It would then be isolated while the other classes work in common accord for their mutual protection. It was the class which showed the first signs of isolation, which would

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1. Le Monde, 4 Sept., 1886.

2. Ibid., 4 Sept., 1886.

suffer from such a state of affairs. The fact of putting up working-class candidates in all the divisions of Montreal had too much of an air of a systematic opposition not to provoke an hostility which would have as an infallible consequence the rejection by the majority of every project coming from the workers; for if the workers declared themselves openly opposed to the other classes of society by the fact of their sectional organization, they thereby subscribed to the principle that the struggle was based on numbers or force; they would, consequently, be the victim in parliament where the force of numbers would not be on their side.

Even supposing that the candidates were elected, what could they do alone, without friends, in the face of the whole House? Would anyone believe that the other deputies would give the representatives of the workers special privileges which they do not demand themselves for the classes which they represent? "La position ne serait pire, ni meilleure, si les candidats ouvriers ne sont pas élus. L'effet sera le même."

It was therefore best for the workers to rely on those powerful allies who would help them. "Nous sommes profondément convaincus que s'ils ont réellement leurs intérêts à coeur, ils feraient mieux de se faire des alliés puissants plutôt que de s'aliéner des gens qui ont toujours été leurs amis. En prêtant leur aide, ils font dix fois plus pour leur cause que, s'ils les combattaient pour le seul plaisir d'avoir des candidats ouvriers. C'est un plaisir qui leur coûterait leur cher."<sup>1</sup>

On October 9th., Le Monde returned to this matter. It said that the time the workers took to exhibit their strength was ill-chosen, "car les ouvriers se lanceraient dans un mouvement politique contre un parti

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1. Le Monde, 4 Sept., 1886.



qui n'a fait que du bien aux ouvriers, le parti conservateur."<sup>1</sup> Their National Policy was considered best in the interests of the workingman; and Macdonald's promises to the workmen in his Ottawa speech of 8th October were emphasized.<sup>2</sup> On the following day, Conservative merits were re-stated in a more lengthy editorial.<sup>3</sup> The principal points in an Act intituled Acte pour protéger la vie et la santé des personnes employées dans les manufactures, which in the session of 1885, the honorable Mr. Taillon, had caused to pass, (but which was not to come into force until 1st. October 1887, however), were published; and the following moral pointed out:- "Que les ouvriers considèrent bien la situation, et ils verront qu'il n'est pas nécessaire d'être ouvrier pour travailler à améliorer leur position, et ils se convaincront qu'il est et qu'il sera très inutile pour eux d'avoir en chambre des hommes influents qui puissent les favoriser quand l'occasion s'en présente. Dans tous les cas, les ouvriers de Montréal doivent avoir de la reconnaissance à M. Taillon pour la loi bien sage qu'il a fait passer pour leur protection dans les manufactures."<sup>4</sup> In the face of such things, Le Monde considered the Conservatives as the "véritables amis", "l'ami le plus fidèle des ouvriers". It advertised the virtues of Messrs. Hall and Doherty; and as for Messrs. Keys and Robertson "[ils] ne sont pas même ouvriers."<sup>5</sup>

The Star, an independent paper, did not agree with Le Monde in thinking that the running of the labor candidates would alienate the sympathies of other classes, or that they would be isolated in Parliament.

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1. Le Monde, 9 Oct., 1886.
2. Ibid., 11 Oct., 1886.
3. Ibid., 12 Oct., 1886.
4. Ibid., 13 Oct., 1886.
5. Ibid., 9 Oct., 1886.

"Everything," declared the Star, "depends upon the candidates themselves. There is no reason why a labor candidate should putb himself into an attitude antagonistic to all classes but the one he particularly represents. A candidate with even a little knowledge of economics will not fall into the error of assuming that the interests of the working classes are opposed to the interests of all other classes. Nor do we see any reason why the wealthier classes need be thrown into a panic by the appearance of one or two workingmen on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. We maintain that the workingmen ought to have someone in the Legislature who can understand their needs and sympathize with their hopes. As to the labor candidates being isolated between the two parties, isolation need have no terrors for men of ability in Parliament. If the workingmen make the mistake of sending cranks or voting machines to represent them, then, indeed, their influence will be small. About the strongest recommendation of the labor candidates to the more intelligent of the general body of voters, is the fact that they will not be amenable to party discipline. The influence of Independent members is altogether out of proportion to that of party rank and file." <sup>1</sup>

About a month earlier, the Star had given positive support to the labor candidates - and incidentally commented on the reforms demanded. It said that although Messrs. Gravel and Keys "frankly admit that their chief aim is to advance the interests of the class to which they belong, their platform is one that may well command the approval of nearly all classes." It had to say "nearly all", because, for example, their plank calling for the suppression of the liquor traffic, would hardly commend their candidature to the numerous and influential class which dealt in spirituous

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1. Montreal Star, 7 Sept., 1886.

liquors. It continued: "The platform of the labor candidates contains something more than the stereotyped pledges about reform of the civil service; economical administration of the finances, and looking after the corrupt practices of the other fellows. They have a definite programme and if only one or two of the reforms indicated were carried out the Province would be so much the better off." The Star failed to see "any good reason why criminal penalties should follow a breach of contract by the apprentice and not a similar breach by the apprentice's employer." The adequate protection of children working in factories, etc., the appointment of a public prosecutor, and the exemption from seizure of such portion of the laborer's wages as was necessary to keep his family were "most desirable reforms." The latter reform "might involve the abolition of the credit system among the wage earners, and so much the better for [them]."<sup>1</sup> Assisted immigration probably crept into the platform by mistake; it was not a subject for the Provincial Legislature. With regard to the subject of arbitration, the candidates stood on "unexceptionable ground", and no one could "object to the improvement of the administration of justice so that the settlement by way of arbitration of disputes arising between masters and workmen may be encouraged and litigation generally simplified and made more effectual, summary and economical." The Star was careful to emphasize "encouraged", because it felt that the labor candidates "can accomplish more by attempting to encourage than they can by attempting to enforce arbitration." A fair distribution of municipal taxation was "much to be desired". Also it was "gratifying" to see the candidates demanding public libraries and night schools.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Montreal Star, 6 Aug., 1886.

La Presse was favorable to the workingmen. "C'est avec plaisir," it declared, "que nous constatons la sagesse avec laquelle les ouvriers exposent leur programme et les mesures qu'ils ont en vue de présenter à la Législature de Québec, pour faire réformer les lois qui leur sont défavorables.....L'exécution de ce programme ne peut qu'être favorable au développement moral et matériel du pays; les réformes qu'il comporte nous semblent saines, justes et nécessaires et leur réalisation sera d'autant plus prompte et plus facile que ceux qui la poursuivent se montreront plus modérés et plus conciliants."<sup>1</sup>

So was L'Etendard also. This Liberal sheet under the editorial direction of F.X.A.Trudel, held that labor had a right to protect itself against capital; and it gave as the "raison principale":- "Sous une constitution politique et avec une organisation sociale comme les nôtres, toutes facilités ont été données aux capitalistes et aux patrons des grandes industries, de diriger, de contrôler même, dans une grande mesure, notre législation et l'administration des affaires publiques, de façon à mettre tous les avantages des plus forts. Ils en ont évidemment abusé: de là la légitimité et même la nécessité des revendications ouvrières." These first workingmen's candidates were "les pionniers de la cause ouvrière parmi nous; leur travail sera la base des revendications ouvrières futures, le fondement sur lequel on va travailler à édifier les droits des ouvriers. Leur mission est donc de la plus haute importance. Et nous espérons bien qu'ils ne la compromettront pas." While the programme of Gravel and Keys showed a tendency towards too much recrimination and an exaggeration of

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1. La Presse, 16 Aug., 1886.

administrative defects, yet it contained "beaucoup de bons projets, semble respirer un bon esprit, et dénote chez ses auteurs, un désir sincère de faire un travail législatif utile au pays."<sup>1</sup> But this attitude existed only for the time being: it was to be changed later.

La Patrie, the organ of the Nationalists, was at first favorable to the candidates. The editor of this paper was P.M.Sauvalle, This paper regarded that the workingmen's programme contained "des idées nouvelles et fort acceptables." Arbitration and temperance were two points held in common by the workers and the Liberals. But the Liberals could not understand the political independence at which the workingmen aimed: "Cet isolement, dont nous respectons certainement les motifs, nous semblent devoir être dommageable, sinon au succès de la cause, mais bien au résultats à atteindre par la suite. Les ouvriers peuvent avoir de sérieuses raisons pour ne vouloir le succès que par leurs uniques efforts, ils peuvent certainement tenir à revendiquer pour eux seuls le rang et la place qu'ils obtiendront s'ils réussissent, mais encore faut-il admettre qu'ils ne peuvent absolument se prétendre désintéressés de tout le mécanisme politiques du pays." They therefore wanted to capture control of the labor movement: they did not believe that the labor organizations could keep aloof from the "grand mouvement national" of the province: "Vouloir l'ignorer serait de leur part une grande faute, une grande faute de lèse-patriotisme.....La grande cause nationale est celle des Canadiens, c'est donc aussi celle des ouvriers."<sup>2</sup>

1. L'Etendard, 11 Aug., 1886.

L'Etendard, however, thought that the best way of solving "la question ouvrière" was by "les grandes organisations ouvrières catholiques qui veulent rétablir les anciennes corporations chrétiennes."

2. La Patrie, 23 Aug., 1886.

The Montreal Daily Witness, printed by John Dougall & Son, gave the labor candidates its wholehearted support. It complained of the general political inertia of the people of Montreal; and it therefore welcomed the political awakening that was making itself apparent in the mechanics and laborers of the city. In particular it welcomed the nomination of the labor candidates as "a still more encouraging sign."<sup>1</sup> It said : "The Prohibition and Labor parties should set to work earnestly if they intend to make their influence felt. There will have to be thorough organization and steady hard work."<sup>2</sup> It believed that the interest shown in the labor candidates, not only by the working class, but by all classes of the community, should encourage the candidates and their friends in vigorously pushing the campaign: "Certainly all classes of the community should be represented in our Legislatures, and the laborers and mechanics of Montreal form the very largest of all classes in this city, and, therefore are entitled to representation."<sup>3</sup> When the Roman Catholic Church condemned the Knights, this paper editorialized: "The struggle between the spirit of the mediaeval ages and the spirit of the nineteenth century, as embodied in the Society of the Knights of Labor, will be watched with interest..... The Pope's condemnation of the Society is calculated to injure the prospects of the labor candidates in this province. Those who are favorable to these candidates and are independent in thought and action will, however, work harder than ever for them."<sup>4</sup> It gave full publicity to the Knights in its columns - accounts of speeches by the candidates, notices of meetings, etc.

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1. Daily Witness, 9 Aug., 1886.

2. Ibid., 12 Aug., 1886.

3. Ibid., 13 Aug., 1886.

4. Ibid., 13 Aug., 1886.

But things did not always go smoothly for the Knights. Trouble arose with the Parti National in Montreal-East.

On Saturday 25th September, a meeting of the liberals was held in La Patrie building. Le Monde received "d'un bon libéral" an account of it, and published it on the 27th. Meeting ostensibly "de choisir un candidat libéral pour la division Est de Montréal",<sup>1</sup> in the words of Mr. Mercier, the liberal chieftain, the assembly turned out to be one in which - "Le chef libéral veut tout simplement se servir des ouvriers comme d'escabeaux pour arriver à ses fins."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Mercier addressed Mr. Gravel: "Gravel, écoutez mon cher, vous savez que les libéraux vous avaient accepté pour leur candidat, mais maintenant il paraît que vous avez viré votre capot. Un candidat ouvrier c'est bon pourvu qu'il soit libéral..... Si vous êtes élu, voterez-vous toujours non-confiance dans le gouvernement Ross/Taillon sur toutes les questions et voterez-vous toujours en faveur de tout ce que je proposerai. Enfin m'acceptez-vous pour votre chef et promettez-vous de me suivre aveuglement en tout et partout." The advantages of being a liberal were made clear to him, when alderman Dufresne added: "Il faut être libéral. Lorsque quelqu'un vient me demander quelques faveurs de la Corporation, la première chose que je fais, c'est de savoir s'il est libéral. Si c'est un conservateur, rien; mais un libéral, je tâche de lui faire avoir quelque job. Je le recommande fortement, pour un honnête homme, même lorsque je ne le connais pas. C'est comme ça qu'il faut faire pour garder nos amis, les aider avec l'argent public. Il faut être libéral avant tout." As Senator Thibaudeau, a rouge but no admirer of Mercier, said at the same meeting: "Je crois qu'il [Mercier] veut

1. Le Monde, 27 Sept., 1886

2. La Minerve, 28 Sept., 1886.

trop faire la politique payante. Si notre maire Beaugrand était ici, lui vous contera<sup>5</sup> ça." But with cajoling went threat: Rainville said, "Eh bien Gravel, vous saurez à l'avenir que notre chef, M. Mercier, nous permet d'être pour les ouvriers qu'à la seule condition que les ouvriers soient rouges et que vous le supportiez. Les ouvriers bleus, nous n'en voulons pas, nous les combattons de toutes nos forces. Je crois que vous devez vous retirer de la lutte, nous allons choisir un franc libéral." But Gravel stood unmoved: "Je l'ai déjà dit, les ouvriers n'ont pas de parti, et comme leur représentant je supporterai tout gouvernement qui nous rendra justice. Si M.Taillon nous accorde ce que nous demandons pourquoi voter contre lui. Pourquoi suivre M.Mercier qui sera peut-être toujours dans l'opposition. Qu'est ce qu'il pourra nous donner?" In the face of such stubborn commonsense, the meeting ended in uproar: a voice cried out: "Je connais Gravel depuis longtemps, c'est un bleu, son père était bleu, lui doit l'être aussi, qu'il aille au diable."<sup>1</sup> The liberals were unanimous in declaring that they would not support the labor candidates,<sup>2</sup> except on liberal terms.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Mercier put it bluntly: "les ouvriers ne

1. Le Monde, 27 Sept., 1886.

2. Ibid., 29 Sept., 1886.

3. M.Robidoux, a liberal, had however said at the same meeting: "Si les ouvriers étaient sûrs d'enlever la division, nous les aiderions, mais s'il y a doute, c'est à eux de nous aider et de faire triompher un candidat sûr." But he was still of the opinion that: "Aucune classe de la société n'a le droit d'être représentée en Chambre à l'exclusion des autres." Quoted from La Patrie by Le Monde, 29 Sept., 1886.



ne peuvent se croire le seul élément puissant de Montréal. C'est une faute de leur part de prétendre avoir un candidat dans chaque division."<sup>1</sup>

An interesting sidelight on the Knights was cast at this meeting, when Gravel, apparently addressing senator Thibaudeau, said: "Vous m'avez accepté comme votre candidat; l'échevin Beausoleil, l'échevin Prefontaine et vous, n'êtes-vous pas venu me supplier de vous admettre membres honoraires des Chevaliers du Travail et n'est-ce pas moi qui vous ai fait admettre avec beaucoup de misère. L'échevin Beausoleil s'est fait balloter dans nos loges et n'a pu être choisi pour notre candidat."<sup>2</sup>

The liberals were foredoomed to failure. For Gravel had made clear his stand since late August, on his relations with the Parti National, in a letter addressed to the electors of Montreal East. The letter ran:

Gentlemen - Having promised to give my views when the time would arrive on questions foreign to the workingmen's programme, I believe it is now my duty to indicate to you what will be my conduct in Parliament when these questions will be brought up.

Personally, I am heart and soul with the National Party, and if I had been in the Legislature at the time of the presentation of the Garneau motion I would have voted for that motion and against the government which opposed it.

I am National, because, according to my views, the complaints of the half-breeds were just, and because the execution of Riel was not only a political crime, but even an insult to the majority of the citizens of the province of Quebec.

.....

But the fact that I will vote with the National party on national questions does not bind me, and will in nowise bind me to either of the parties which may be represented in the next Legislature.

My principal aim will be the realization of the reforms set forth in my programme; and I will always be with the party which will seek to give effect to them.....

In one word, on the National programme I will vote against the present Government. But outside of this programme I will sustain the party, whatever it may be, which seeks to give effect to the reforms which are set forth in the workingmen's programme, as I will fight those without troubling myself about the party which they represent, who oppose the realization of this programme, which, in my heart and soul, I believe

1. Quoted from Patrie, by Le Monde, 29 Sept., 1886.

2. Le Monde, 27 Sept., 1886.

to be as favorable to the interests of the capitalists as to those of the workingmen.<sup>1</sup>

Before the Liberal meeting of the 25th September was adjourned, Mr. Mercier's motion was adopted, that a committee be nominated "pour s'entendre avec M. Gravel et lui proposer des conditions avantageuses s'il veut se retirer et faire le choix d'un candidat franc libéral pour la division en opposition à M.Taillon." The Liberals therefore met again on the 28th. The committee, under the presidency of R.Thibeaudeau, reported that it had unanimously recommended Mr. L.O.David to oppose Mr. Taillon, after having had "plusieurs entrevues avec M.Gravel et les ouvriers et [ils] sont restés inébranlables à toutes nos bonnes offres."<sup>2</sup>

How the Liberals were the friends of the workingmen, how David was preferable to Gravel - these things the Liberals began to make known. Alderman Beausoleil said: "Lorsque je me suis fait présenter dans la loge.... ce n'était pas seulement pour voir les beaux yeux des ouvriers mais j'avais raison de croire qu'après les services considérables que j'ai rendus aux ouvriers ils me reconnaîtraient pour leur porte-étendard. Mais, non, il m'ont préféré Gravel, un ouvrier qui n'a aucune influence et qui n'a pas la plus petite chance d'être élu. Les ouvriers auraient mieux fait d'accepter nos conditions libérales, de faire retirer Gravel en faveur de mon ami David.....De plus quelle garantie avons-nous que M. Gravel ne se vendra pas à Taillon. Il est à la Presse...." David himself repeated, "M. Gravel est à la Presse, et vous savez que la Presse a viré sa culotte à l'envers. Je crains moi aussi que M.Gravel se vende. Quelle garantie avons-nous de lui." His qualifications he modestly explained: "Un jour viendra où

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1. Montreal Star, 21 Aug., 1886.

2. Le Monde, 1 Oct., 1886.

la force des choses me poussera comme malgré moi à la tête des affaires, non seulement de la province de Québec, mais de toute la Puissance du Canada. Je ne ~~veux~~ pas me dire prophète, ni inspiré du ciel, mais quelque chose me dit que là est ma destinée.....[Moreover] Je sais qu'un ignorant ne peut pas avoir en Chambre autant d'influence qu'un homme instruit comme moi, quelqu'honnête ~~honnête~~ qu'il puisse être.....Si les ouvriers comprennent leurs véritables intérêts ils voteront plutôt pour moi que pour un ignorant comme Gravel." In general support, Mr. Robillard said: "M.Gravel est un petit instrument des bleus dans cette élection, s'il n'avait pas été vendu à Taillon il aurait accepté les offres des libéraux."<sup>1</sup> Thibeaudeau explained: "M.David est appelé à être un grand homme, il est le seul homme capable de sauver la Province de Québec et tout le peuple canadien de la honte, de l'infamie et de la destruction.....Quant à M.Gravel les ouvriers devraient comprendre qu'une division importante ne voudra jamais s'exposer au ridicule de l'élire pour son député."<sup>2</sup>

La Patrie, the Liberal organ, commented that the workingmen "comprennent parfaitement les raisons qui ont guidé le comité national dans la décision qu'il a prise et en reconnaissent la justesse. M.L.O. David est très populaire parmi eux. Son patriotisme sincère leur est bien connu, ainsi que ses idées philanthropiques arrêtées qui font de lui un vrai candidat des ouvriers. C'est en masse qu'ils se prononcent en faveur du candidat national en dépit des efforts d'une coterie qui croyait pouvoir faire primer ses utopies sur les intérêts généraux de la nation."<sup>3</sup>

This volte-face of the Liberals was greeted with a storm of disapproval.

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1. To Robillard, David was the lesser of two evils: Robillard said, "Pour moi, je n'ai pas confiance en M.Gravel, pas trop en M.David, qui n'a pas de consistance politique." Le Monde, 1 Oct., 1886.
  2. Le Monde, 1 Oct., 1886.
  3. This quotation is recorded in Le Monde, 2 Oct., 1886.

Le Monde commented editorially: "Au manque de tact les libéraux joignent maintenant l'audace la plus singulière au sujet du candidat ouvrier dans Montréal Est. Ils ne sont pas contentés de rendre les ouvriers la dupe de leur mauvaise foi, ils veulent de plus, y ajouter l'injure en représentant le candidat ouvrier comme vendu, parce qu'il ne veut pas se retirer pour faire place à M. David..... M. Gravel n'a certainement rien fait pour mériter les soupçons injurieux que les libéraux veulent faire planer [sic] sur lui parce qu'il se conduit d'une manière indépendante." Its stand in favor of Mr. Taillon did not prevent it "de revendiquer l'honneur du candidat ouvrier contre les flétrissures que les libéraux lui jettent à la figure."<sup>1</sup> The Liberals were false when they appeared either as nationalists or as friends of the workingmen: "Nous pouvons affirmer sans crainte de nous tromper que les libéraux sont autant de mauvaise foi en cherchant à créer un mouvement national que lorsqu'ils paraissaient favoriser le mouvement ouvrier. Dans les deux cas les libéraux jouaient à l'hypocrite pour tromper le public et faire des prosélytes au parti libéral, sous de faux prétextes."<sup>2</sup>

Le Monde tried to make capital for its candidate in this conflict. It attempted to win over the workingmen, in saying: "Nous, ce n'est pas le candidat ouvrier que nous combattons, c'est l'adversaire de M. Taillon." If the workingmen supported Gravel, they ran the risk of electing David.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, without the support of the Liberals, they could not elect their own candidate. The way out of the difficulty was for them to support Taillon.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Le Monde, 2 Oct., 1886.

2. Ibid., 4 Oct., 1886.

3. Ibid., 2 Oct., 1886.

4. Ibid., 4 Oct., 1886.

La Presse had entered the fray a few days earlier. It ridiculed the charges of the Liberals. It commented: "Il faut que la politique soit une chose bien cruelle pour qu'on veuille maintenant, dans le simple but d'avoir un partisan de plus, déshonorer un brave homme qui n'est sur les rangs que pour obéir aux vœux de ses camarades. Il est probablement oiseux de déclarer que La Presse ne bronchera pas sur la question ouvrière, avec laquelle elle s'est en quelque sorte identifiée. Elle fera la campagne jusqu'au bout contre MM. Taillon et David et il va sans dire que M. Gravel et ses amis ont carte blanche chez nous aujourd'hui comme hier, comme il y a quinze jours, comme il y a un mois pour faire leur bataille dans les limites de la convenance et de la justice."<sup>1</sup>

La Minerve took up the quarrel in favor of the workingmen. It complained how the Liberals were deceiving them with "un cynisme incomparable." It pointed that Gravel was not employed by La Presse, but by the Imprimerie Generale, a company which printed both La Minerve and La Presse, and in which the proprietors of the latter paper had not "un sou d'intérêt." The Imprimerie Générale never tried to determine what should be the political action of Mr. Gravel or any of its employees. All that it asked of them was that they should work well, for which they were amply rewarded. The paper then defied Messrs. David, Mercier, Thibaudeau, et tutti quanti to prove their accusations, and said: "Quoique nous ne partagions pas la plupart des opinions du candidat ouvrier, nous devons reconnaître que c'est un homme intelligent, honnête, au-dessus de toute soupçon de vénalité. C'est l'insulter gratuitement lui et ses amis que de vouloir faire croire qu'il est susceptible de succomber à des influences

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1. La Presse, 30 Sept., 1886.

illicites."<sup>1</sup>

It is very probable that the Liberals did not intend originally to attack Gravel. For, according to the Montreal Daily Witness, the Liberals appeared to have made an effort to come to an agreement with the labor party, by which, in return for supporting Mr. Gravel in the eastern division, the labor party should withdraw their candidate Mr. Keys in the Centre division, and support Mr. McShane, the Liberal candidate there. In any case the Witness advised the labor candidates to avoid any "compromising coalition" with either of the political parties.<sup>2</sup>

Certain other facts showed that the Liberals did not really have the interests of the workmen as their chief concern. They were interested in the workmen so far as the latter toed the Liberal party line. Thus did Beausoleil, in a letter dated 1st October, write to the editor of La Presse: "Je n'ai jamais déguisé le fait que dès le début je me suis déclaré favorable à une candidature ouvrière dans Montréal-Est, pourvu que le candidat et son programme offrissent des garanties suffisantes à la cause nationale et autres classes de la société."<sup>3</sup>

The whole attack of the Liberals on Gravel's candidature was made to hinge largely on the religious question. They wanted "une soumission entière et complète des Chevaliers du Travail aux injonctions de l'épiscopat en amendant leur constitution de manière à la mettre d'accord avec les vues de l'Ordinaire": for they felt that the religious objection would be "fatale à la candidature de M. Gravel et aux véritables intérêts ouvriers." But, they complained, they only got empty promises that the question would be settled.<sup>4</sup>

1. La Minerve, 30 Sept., 1886.

2. Daily Witness, 29 Sept., 1886.

3. La Patrie, 2 Oct., 1886.

4. Ibid., 2 Oct., 1886. The Liberals later made the religious settlement a condition sine qua non for their acceptance of Gravel's candidature. La Presse, 6 Oct., 1886.

This Liberal insistence on the religious question was but an excuse invented to cover up the reality. The Liberals were clever enough to use the religious issue; because they knew that on such ground, they would be unassailable. It also provided them with a base from which they could launch an anti-Jewish campaign.

Mr. Gravel denied that Beausoleil had ever brought up the religious question with him.<sup>1</sup> Jules Helbronner, an editor of La Presse, wrote that he had examined "tout au long et sous toutes ses faces" the candidature of the eastern division, in the reunion of the National Committee and that of the Council of Trades and Labor of Monday 27th September. "Or", said he, "jamais la question religieuse n'a été soulevée." At that reunion, Beausoleil himself did not even raise the question. And even Thibaudeau, president of the Comité National said then: "Je suis en faveur d'une candidature ouvrière et un candidat ouvrier; je suis d'opinion que la division qui contient le plus d'ouvriers dans la province, a le droit de se faire représenter par un ouvrier, mais donnez-nous un autre candidat, choisissez un homme parmi les Chevaliers du Travail."<sup>2</sup>

The Liberals put the blame for the non-settlement of the religious question on Mr. Helbronner.<sup>3</sup> In doing this, they acted unfairly - as Helbronner had shown in his defence.<sup>4</sup> But when Beausoleil asked the reason for the failure, he suggested: "Est-ce un préjugé Israélite, comme on l'a prétendu?"<sup>5</sup> This cruel attack only reflected a distorted mind - if toleration be our guide. And undoubtedly the cause of the Knights must have suffered to some extent as a consequence.

1. La Presse, 2 Oct., 1886.

2. Ibid., 4 Oct., 1886. The emphasis is Helbronner's.

3. La Patrie, 2 Oct., 1886.

4. La Presse, 4 Oct., 1886.

5. La Patrie, 2 Oct., 1886.

This appeal to anti-Semitism found a sympathetic echo in L'Etendard - a paper which had supported the labor candidates earlier in August. Helbronner - under the nom-de-plume of Jean-Baptiste Gagnepetit - offered a reason: said he, "Au 11 août les Chevaliers étaient considérés comme des alliés politiques, aujourd'hui ils sont devenus gênants, et voilà pourquoi on a soulevé contre eux tous les préjugés religieux, qu'on cherchait alors à apaiser."<sup>1</sup> Saner people were thoroughly disgusted; and the Star denounced both Beausoleil and L'Etendard for their conduct. This paper considered it a "stupide insinuation" - according to an account in La Presse - to imagine that, because a man was a Jew, therefore he could not work for his country's welfare; it said: "De tous les préjugés les plus vils auxquels un partisan politique puisse faire appel, le sentiment anti-semitique, est le plus vil."<sup>2</sup>

L'Etendard of the 4th October published the letter of Beausoleil of 1st October to the editor of La Presse, together with the replies of Gravel and Helbronner. The paper then said that the debate was of no interest to it; but the results were some facts "d'une importance sociale de premier ordre." In its own words, they were:

1. M.Gravel n'est pas, en réalité, ce pourquoi il s'est donné. Il n'est pas le candidat des ouvriers, mais bien le candidat d'une portion des ouvriers en délicatesse, c'est le moins que l'on puisse dire, avec l'épiscopat de cette Province;
2. M.Helbronner, le promoteur probable et l'inspirateur évident de cette candidature n'est pas même chrétien; C'EST UN JUIF.
3. L'on signale un fait non moins déplorable: ce serait celui d'une connivence, d'une entente secrète entre les facteurs de la candidature Gravel et l'un de nos principaux personnages politiques. Nous ne pouvons [sic] y croire; mais s'il en était ainsi, il faudrait réagir contre ce fait avec une énergie proportionnée à la gravité du mal.

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1.La Presse, 9 Oct., 1886.

2.Ibid., 5 Oct., 1886.



4. Il ressort encore de la correspondance ci-dessus que, quelles qu'en soient les causes, il est de fait que les Chevaliers du Travail ne sont pas encore mis en règle avec leur Ordinaire.

Commenting on the second point, L'Etandard said: "Comme tel, nous respectons ses convictions religieuses, et son droit à l'égalité de droits que nos lois lui accordent aussi bien qu'à tous les sujets chrétiens; mais il ne nous est pas permis de ne point voir, au point de vue social chrétien, la gravité du fait de l'influence qu'il exerce sur nos questions ouvrières et nous denonçons ce fait au public comme étant d'une importance capitale." It then generalized: "Tous ceux qui ont étudié les questions sociales de notre siècle, la question ouvrière surtout, savent que, dans presque tous les pays de l'Europe, l'on a toujours trouvé les juifs à la base de toutes les agitations malsaines, de tous les mouvement révolutionnaires et anti-chrétiens. Ce sont eux qui, dans la plus grande mesure, ont été les principaux inspirateurs de toutes les perturbations sociales, les organisateurs des soulèvements, des grèves, etc. Il y a plus: l'on ne peut étudier la franc-maçonnerie et en general toutes les sociétés secrètes, sans constater que ce sont presque partout des juifs qui ont été les créateurs, les organisateurs de l'Eglise de Satan. Dans presque toutes les organisations maçonniques, s'il y a, pour la montre, toute une hiérarchie composée de personnages appartenant aux nations où la secte opère, l'on trouve que ces personnages ne sont en réalité que des marionnettes mises en mouvement par un main occulte, un conseil supérieur secret, qui n'est généralement composé de juifs, où l'élément Israélite domine. Les juifs ont, de fait, été les grands facteurs de la maçonnerie, du carbonarisme, des Hautes-Ventes d'Italie et surtout de la terrible Internationale." From these generalizations, the paper then

turned to particulars. It considered Beausoleil's denunciation as opportune, and continued: "L'on ne peut, sans en frémir, songer que ce qu'il y a de plus haute conséquence, de plus délicat chez un peuple, la direction des classes ouvrières dans leur rapport avec la société, est aux mains d'un juif et que ce juif commence à faire école au milieu de nous; bien plus, qu'il inspire, dirige, contrôle la première candidature ouvrière qui se manifeste chez nous et qu'il est maître de la direction sociale donnée par l'un des journaux les plus importants du pays." It considered that even if the differences between the Catholic Church and the Knights were ironed out, the danger would still remain. Hence it believed it was the duty of every good citizen "de se garer absolument contre le mouvement politique dont M. Helbronner est l'instigateur et M. Gravel, l'instrument peut-être inconscient."

These were brutal assaults on the labor movement, which must have inevitably suffered as a result. But L'Etendard was careful to point out that it did not attack Helbronner the man, but merely his presence in the labor movement. It said: "M. Helbronner peut même être un excellent homme, un philanthrope sincère, un économiste dévoué au bien des ouvriers et ne songeant nullement à exécuter au Canada le sinistre programme que ses coreligionnaires exécutent en Europe. Mais il est impossible de ne pas signaler le danger de sa présance, de ses inspirations surtout, à la base d'un mouvement social important."<sup>1</sup>

It will be noticed that L'Etendard labored on the fact that Helbronner was a Jew. This appeal to prejudice was unfortunate. For even L'Etendard itself had to admit that there were certain admirable qualities in Helbronner. Helbronner was in fact a modest journalist who had studied

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1. L'Etendard, 4 Oct., 1886. L'Etendard's emphasis.

political economy. Every week he discussed social questions from a strictly legal standpoint, without passion, exaggeration or vulgarity. He pointed out grievances where they existed. He was neither an adventurer nor an envoy from the masonic lodges. He belonged to a respectable family in Paris. His brother had acquired a brilliant fortune in "le commerce du banque". In Paris he had lived in "un monde bien élevé", where he left only good remembrances and warm sympathies. Indifferent, as the majority of "hommes de lettres" were to the charms of fortune, he betook himself to "caprices littéraires", and his "imagination d'écrivain" drove him to Canada. He had been in Canada only a few years, and had made a good mark for himself in society.<sup>1</sup> In view of such facts, it was unfortunate that Helbronner was made a scapegoat of an anti-Jewish appeal.

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1. La Presse, 5 Oct., 1886.

It was La Presse which led us to give such a favorable account of Helbronner. And it seems substantially correct, seeing that L'Etendard, his enemy, had a good word for him. But it seems to be a debatable point whether Helbronner's championship of the Knights was due to his own inner convictions or to his personal ambitions. For, in championing the Knights, he was probably acting in the service of the Conservatives. This probability is suggested by a letter which Chapleau wrote to Macdonald on the 9th Oct. 1886. In part the letter ran:

"It is very appropriate to the work we have done here amongst the Knights of Labor whom we have alienated from the rouges. This work of ours has its effect already in Montreal, Hochelaga, St. Johns and St. Hyacinthe; in the first two places as a decisive factor in the present contest; in the two others as a productive germ for the future. I have mentioned to you in Ottawa the name of one Heilbronner as a fit person to act as Secretary or assistant in the Labor Bureau. He is a very clever and good-willing man, whose name you must not forget, unless you are anti-semitic in your feelings, (your resemblance to Disraeli makes me think you are not.) Macdonald Papers, Vol. 205, (p.76.)

Chapleau's mention of Helbronner, coming immediately after his statement referring to the alienation of the Knights from the rouges, and his readiness even to flatter Macdonald in Helbronner's favor, strongly suggests this probability.

The fourth point that L'Etendard made was quite true. But what revealed the bad faith of this paper, was the fact that it ignored the statement made by Helbronner in his reply to Beausoleil: Helbronner had written: "Loin de vouloir empêcher les Chevaliers du Travail de se mettre d'accord avec leur Ordinaire, c'est moi, monsieur, qui ai conseillé l'adoption,.....pure et simple de la constitution de l'une des sociétés de Montréal, la Saint Joseph, la Saint Pierre, ou toute autre. Quand vous le voudrez, je vous le prouverai. C'est moi, monsieur, qui ai remis à M. Blumhart [of La Presse] toutes les constitutions des Chevaliers du Travail, dans le but de les faire réviser par le clergé. Ce que vous ignorez également, c'est que ces constitutions ont révisées par des membres du clergé et que ces constitutions révisées seront présentées et sûrement votées au Congrès des Chevaliers du Travail qui s'ouvre lundi à Richmond."

The editor of La Presse was therefore right in commenting on such conduct: "Dans un procès aussi grave, quand l'une des parties fait une déclaration aussi solennelle, aussi importante, aussi consolante, ne vaut-il la peine <sup>qu'on s'informe ou</sup> qu'on attende quelques jours? Il y a peut-être bien des esprits à sauver en appliquant les règles de la prudence et de la charité à une organisation déjà si puissante. Sommes-nous tombés dans un autre évangile nous enseignant qu'on doit éteindre la mèche qui fume encore?"<sup>1</sup>

The third point raised by L'Etendard was trivial. Even if there were the supposed connection, there was certainly no harm in it from a purely political standpoint.

Our answer to the first point is covered substantially, as far as the religious question is concerned, by our remarks on the fourth point. And

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1. La Presse, 5 Oct., 1886.

it seems to have been folly on the part of L'Etendard to deny that Gravel was a candidate "des ouvriers", and to think that he was only the candidate of a portion of the workers. For Gravel had made it clear to the electors that he would be true to the interests of the workers as a whole. It was evident that in making such a statement, L'Etendard's aim was to distinguish between the Order and the working class, and to drive a wedge between them.

L'Etendard continued its attacks on Helbronner.<sup>1</sup>

When the anti-Jewish agitation had reached a high point, with bold effrontery the Liberals made a complete about-turn! La Patrie said: "Nous regrettons beaucoup que les adversaires du mouvement national aient profité d'un échange de lettres toutes personnelles entre MM. Beausoleil et Helbronner pour accuser le parti national de soulever des questions de race et de religion. Il faut réellement une légèreté inconcevable ou une mauvaise foi déplorable pour trouver dans la lettre écrite, par M. Beausoleil rien qui puisse avoir même l'apparence d'une provocation pour une classe quelconque de nos citoyens."<sup>2</sup>

This was a poor excuse. The harm had already been done. When Beausoleil wrote a letter, dated 8 Oct., to the Herald, denying that he ever intended to raise prejudices of religion and race, he was only continuing his "petite comédie" - as Helbronner correctly said.<sup>3</sup>

As the elections drew near, the labor candidates worked feverishly. Gravel was most active. On the 5th October, he held a meeting at the corner of Fullum and Ontario streets. Five hundred persons were there. Among the speakers were Gravel himself, MM. Lepine, Lafleur and Warren.<sup>4</sup> On the next

1. La Presse, 5 Oct., 1886.

2. La Patrie, 6 Oct., 1886

3. La Presse, 11 Oct., 1886.

4. Ibid., 6 Oct., 1886.

evening, he held a meeting at the corner of Montcalm and Ontario streets. The crowd was estimated at 3,000 to 4,000. The speakers Gravel, Lepine, Warren, Lafleur, O.D.Benoit, Brouillet and others, denounced the conduct of L'Etendard and Beausoleil.<sup>1</sup> In the evening of the 7th., another meeting was held at the corner of St. Catherine and Parthenais. More than a thousand people were present. The speakers were Gravel, Keys, Robertson, Lepine, Brouillet, Lavigne, Lafleur, Warren and others. The meeting ended at about midnight with three rousing hurrahs for the candidates.<sup>2</sup> Notices of several other meetings in favor of the labor candidates appeared in La Presse, one of their most loyal supporters.

This paper asked those who could furnish carriages, on the election day, for Gravel, to report at Gravel's central committee at 532 St. Catherine.<sup>3</sup> It published, and agreed with, certain extracts from the Daily Witness on election details, and said that they applied also to Robertson in Montreal West. These extracts show how every effort was made to elect the labor representatives: they read -

Les ouvriers des divisions Centre et Ouest, doivent travailler avec énergie. S'ils veulent élire leurs candidats en dépit de l'opposition qui leur est faite par les deux partis politiques ils ne le feront qu'en s'organisant parfaitement pour le jour de l'élection. les électeurs ont besoin d'être renseignés sur l'endroit où se trouve leur poll, autrement ils peuvent négliger de voter simplement parce qu'ils ne sauront aller.

Beaucoup d'ouvriers, qui ne peuvent quitter leur ouvrage pour longtemps, devront être amenés au poll. Tous les marchands, les épiciers et les bouchers, ainsi que tous ceux qui ont des express et des voitures légères, et qui supportent MM. Keys et Gravel, devront mettre immédiatement ces voitures à la disposition de leurs comités pour le jour d'élection. On doit savoir que la loi ne permet pas aux candidats ou à leurs partisans de louer des voitures. Les ouvriers sont certainement dans une position désavantageuse sous ce rapport; mais cette difficulté peut être surmontée si les marchands prêtent leurs voitures légères. Ceux qui peuvent remplir les fonctions d'agents des candidats et qui ont déjà agi comme tels, ne devraient pas attendre qu'on leur demande de représenter MM. Keys et Gravel, mais devraient offrir leurs services.<sup>4</sup>

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1. La Presse, 7 Oct., 1886.

2. Ibid., 8 Oct., 1886.

3. Ibid., 9 Oct., 1886. This call was issued on the 13th.

4. Ibid., 11 Oct., 1886.

On the 12th., two days before the election, La Presse published the whole platform of Gravel and Keys to bring it once again to the attention of the workers; it told them, "Les ouvriers tiennent leur sort entre leurs main, et s'ils veulent sérieusement obtenir les mesures économiques qu'ils demandent ils devront sans hésitation voter le 14, pour les candidats ouvriers."<sup>1</sup> On the 13th., it issued a stirring call to the workers to vote for the labor candidates. The moment was solemn: "Demain, 14 octobre, les ouvriers de Montréal décideront du sort qui les attend pendant les 25 années à venir." It even printed copies of the electoral bulletins from each division, showing how the cross must be placed in the centre in each, because there lay the names of the labor candidates.<sup>2</sup>

When election day arrived, Montreal presented a strange spectacle. Everywhere was the greatest activity despite the most unpropitious weather. The carriages streaked through the streets. Here and there at the committee doors stood silent mobs and squads of police to maintain order. Groups wandered around closed refreshment rooms.

Excitement was caused when it was learned towards 9.30 a.m. that two polls had not been opened: one at 42 Amherst St., the other in Logan St. Remarks began to fly: everyone shouted treason, plot, trickery - cooked by his opponent. The three parties accused one another in this way until 10 o'clock.

In fact the poll on Logan street had not been opened because the deputy reporting officer had fallen dangerously ill during the night. Another one was sworn in, and the voting commenced at ten.

1. La Presse, 12 Oct., 1886.

2. Ibid., 13 Oct., 1886.

A certain discontent was also caused by the changing of the locality of two or three polls on Notre Dame Street in Montreal-East.

The previous evening a rumor went about that Gravel was sold. In the morning another rumor started, that Gravel had fled to New York with \$2,600 in his pockets. Before midday another rumor still: the Knights of Labor must vote at the opening of the polls, and then block the doors to prevent the partisans of MM. David and Taillon from voting.

Many of the leaders of the workers denied these rumors.<sup>1</sup> But they<sup>were</sup> probably one more reason for the defeat of Gravel.

The labor candidates were all defeated. Some causes have already been noted. There were others.

The hours of polling were unfavorable. The workers had only their dinner hour during which they could vote: the consequent rush at this time on the polls prevented many from voting. This unfortunate circumstance arose from the fact that the workingmen went to work at 7 o'clock in the morning and quitted at 6 o'clock in the afternoon; while the polls opened at nine in the morning, and closed at five in the afternoon. Many of the workers actually voted at the expense of their dinners.<sup>2</sup> So high was the feeling on this subject that at a meeting of the Trades and Labor Unions held on the morning of the 15th., it was decided to petition the party in power among other things for a legal holiday on voting day.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Keys considered also that he lost many votes through Father Dowd reading the mandement condemning the Knights from the pulpit lately against the Order.<sup>4</sup>

1. La Presse, 14 Oct., 1886. Also Montreal Star, 14 Oct., 1886.

2. La Presse, 16 Oct., 1886.

3. Montreal Star, 15 Oct., 1886.

4. Ibid., 15 Oct., 1886.



Some manufacturers put obstacles in the way of their work people going out to cast their votes. Some were accused of worse than that; namely, enquiring first who it was that wanted them and, on learning that it was the workingmen's committee, refusing them leave of absence, though it was not refused in the case of the employer's candidate. One large company was said to have used all its influence with its men in favor of a certain candidate who was known to use all his powers in favor of that company. Some were said to have gone still further and to have required their men to vote in favor of a certain candidate on pain of dismissal. On these points the Daily Witness rightly commented: "This is too much to believe. Apart of the barefaced exercise of undue influence, it is too daring a piece of feudalism to be borne in the present generation..... If the employing class wish to foment resentment among their employees, to crystalize their class prejudices, to consolidate their organizations and to strengthen the hands of their leaders they are going the right way to work!"<sup>1</sup> These charges against the employers were not exaggerated. For, apart from the remarks made already on the law operating on masters and apprentices, we read in a letter from Chapleau to Macdonald, dated February 4, 1887: "The Grand Trunk are very popular here and command an immense vote, apart from the fact that they alone can control the vote of the Knights of Labor."<sup>2</sup> And it was because of such circumstances that party leaders feared such companies and were always ready to make concessions to them. Thus it was that in the same letter, Chapleau wrote to his chief: " By some way or other the people are impressed with the idea that the

1. Daily Witness, 18 Oct., 1886.

2. Macdonald Papers, Vol. 205, (p. 160.)

G.T.R. have been wronged; that their big rival has had more than its share of the Government's solicitude and tender care, and I am convinced that a declaration of war from the Grand-Trunk would cause a panic amongst our friends.

"In this view, I would strongly advise that some action be at once taken on the demands of the Company which have already submitted to you...."<sup>1</sup>

And, indeed, Chapleau had his eye on the Dominion elections that were due on the 22nd of the same month.

It is not known precisely what part the Grand Trunk Railway played in the provincial elections we have been considering. Mr. Keys, in a letter to the Hamilton Palladium, charged that in the G.T.R. shops some of the foremen tried to force the men to vote for alderman McShane, the G.T.R. alderman. However the men were well organized, and they voted solid for the labor candidates.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, it was reported that the G.T.R. shops were closed down to enable the men to vote<sup>3</sup> - as if no opposition were offered to them.

There were other causes for the defeat of the labor candidates. Mr. Robertson was not a personally popular man, and had defects of manner which made him innumerable enemies.<sup>4</sup> He did not even get the full support of the Daily Witness, which had supported Gravel and Keys; because while he supported the pro-temperance notions of this paper, his anti-vaccination sentiments very seriously jeopardized his chances of being elected.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, that, in spite of these sentiments, he secured over

1. Macdonald Papers, Vol. 205, (p.161.)
2. The Hamilton Palladium, 30 Oct., 1886.
3. Montreal Star, 14 Oct., 1886.
4. Daily Witness, 15 Oct., 1886.
5. Ibid., 30 Oct., 1886.

a thousand votes, was regarded as quite a surprise, and as showing the latent strength of the workingmen as a political force.<sup>1</sup> In the Centre division, Mr. Keys made a splendid fight: his supporters worked with "the industry of beavers." He had a triumphant victory in St. Ann's ward.<sup>2</sup> But he had the whiskey and the business element to struggle against. As he himself said: "I felt that being unknown among the city merchants I had little chance for the city vote and am afraid that I did not pay enough attention towards strengthening my position among them."<sup>3</sup>

The defeat of the labor candidates did not weaken their spirit or the hopes of their supporters. In all, they got 6,054 votes out of 18,051 in the three divisions, that is, more than one third of the total votes. It was the first time that the workingmen had fought a political battle; and when it is remembered that electioneering was entirely new to them, it may be said that they had done well. As Mr. Keys said: "Although defeated I consider my candidature to be a triumph as it has shown the wealthier classes what workingmen can do."<sup>4</sup> The Witness was just as enthusiastic: according to La Presse it said:

"Les ouvriers ont fait tellement sentir leur puissance à Montréal, qu'à l'avenir les deux partis les approcheront chapeaux bas, et que dans une ou deux divisions au moins, ils choisiront probablement des candidats qui seront autant que possible des représentants de la classe ouvrière. Il est juste que cette classe soit représentée dans

1. Montreal Star, 15 Oct., 1886.

2. Daily Witness, 15 Oct., 1886.

3. Montreal Star, 15 Oct., 1886.

4. Ibid., 15 Oct., 1886.

chacune des législatures, et il est surtout désirable qu'elle soit représentée dans le parlement fédéral."<sup>1</sup>

And Helbronner, that champion of the workers, paid his tribute when he spoke of their conduct in the campaign, and reiterated his faith in their cause: he said-

"La campagne électorale a été glorieuse pour les ouvriers de Montréal. Leur organisation a été excellente et purement ouvrière; leurs orateurs ont été admirés même par leurs adversaires; leurs assemblées ont été d'un calme parfait, et eux, gens sans instruction, ils ont conservé, en face des provocations les plus éhontées, leur dignité et le respect d'eux-mêmes, laissant à leurs adversaires l'emploi de toutes ces choses sans nom qui composent l'arsenal des politiciens de bas étage.

"En MM. Lépine, Lafleur, T. Lavigne, Brouillet, Rodier, Warren, Laur, Keys, Robertson, Jehu, etc., M. Gravel a trouvé des défenseurs dont l'éloquence a été souvent gênante pour ses adversaires.

"On se retrouvera."<sup>2</sup>

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1. La Presse, 16 Oct., 1886.

2. Ibid., 16 Oct., 1886.

The Knights took part in the Federal elections of 1887 in Toronto. Their candidates were Alfred F. Jury and Edmund E. Sheppard. For the Ontario legislature they put up candidates from Hamilton, London, Toronto and Lambton.<sup>1</sup> It does not appear that much resulted from these candidatures. In their political activities in the Dominion elections, they however brought attention to "the most unfair and unreasonable provision" in the election law, by which the \$200 deposit of an unsuccessful candidate was forfeited if he failed to poll half as many votes as the successful candidate. At the same time they demanded the abolition of the property qualifications demanded by the municipal law of all candidates for civic offices.<sup>2</sup> These demands were reasonable and democratic: for the restrictions made politics a monopoly of the rich, and hindered the political activity of the poorer workingmen.

There was, at the time, one Labor Reform member in the Ontario legislature, D.J.O'Donoghue, of Toronto. This man was a zealous Knight of Labor, who spent his time and money freely in promoting the cause of the Order, and that of organized labor generally. He was also a prominent member of the Toronto Trades and Labor Council.<sup>3</sup>

So far, the Knights had consistently tried to be independent of the other political parties. By 1891, however, they abandoned this principle, and supported one or other of the other parties. Thus William Keys in 1891 encouraged his listeners to vote for the Liberals;<sup>4</sup> while Mr. Coutlee, who claimed to be a Knight of Labor, followed the lead of the Conservatives.<sup>5</sup> And Mr. J.W.Patterson, who was the labor candidate

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 4 Dec., 1886.

2. Ibid., 6 Nov., 1886.

3. Ibid., 6 Nov., 1886.

4. Montreal Star, 27 Feb., 1891.

5. Ibid., 28 Feb., 1891.

in Ottawa and a Knight of Labor, was said to be a Liberal in his predilections.<sup>1</sup> From the viewpoint of the workingmen, the abandonment of the principle of political independence was to be regretted; for they could never by that means, carry out a policy that was consistently and decidedly in their favor. Hence did the Labor Advocate complain that the workingmen were "not prepared to abandon their party prejudices and use their ballots in their interests. They deliberately prefer to divide upon the issues presented to them by the politicians, which have little or no bearing on the vital questions of labor and wages. They do not wish to carry the Labor Reform agitation into politics." And again it said: "Workingmen will never accomplish anything by their ballots until they carry<sup>into</sup> political organization the same stern discipline they exercise in industrial matters, and treat the 'workingman' party heeler as they do the scab."<sup>2</sup>

If the Knights did not have great political successes independently of the other parties, they were able by their influence to win consideration from them. Macdonald had shown an interest in the workingman as early as 1872.<sup>3</sup> In January 1885, 'Enjolras' said: "A determined effort is now being made by the Grit party to capture the Labor vote."<sup>4</sup> In the days before the general election of 1887, both Macdonald and Blake tried to win the votes of the workingmen. In a speech to the Workingmen's Liberal Conservative Association of Ottawa and Le Cercle Lafontaine on the 8th October 1886, Macdonald said: "I desire to impress upon you that the

1. Montreal Star, 25 Feb., 1891.

2. The Labor Advocate, Toronto, 13 March, 1891.

3. D.G.Creighton: George Brown, Sir John Macdonald, and the 'Workingman'; in the Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 24, 1943.

4. The Hamilton Palladium, 24 Jan., 1885.

policy of the present Government has always been for the advancement of the material resources, the intellectual development, and the social position of the workingmen." He recalled the services he had done for them in matters of legislation on trade unions, convict labor, Chinese immigration, and in securing to them "a reasonable rate of interest" on their savings: he then promised them that he would carry out the principles he professed; establish a bureau of labor statistics; issue a Royal Commission, on which the working classes should be fully represented as commissioners, 'for the purpose of enquiring into and reporting on all questions arising out of the conflict of labour and capital'; and on the matter of assisted immigration, he said that he would "cease granting it such aid altogether, or to confine it to agricultural labourers and domestic servants actually settling in Manitoba and the North-west."<sup>1</sup> Many of the topics touched bore a direct relation to the demands of the Knights.

On the other hand, Blake, in trying to win the labor vote, said at Toronto on the 13 November 1886: "We would be unworthy of our place in the world, if we did not feel the deepest concern in the condition of the masses - the toiling masses, and the inquiry what their condition is, what their troubles are, what remedy may be found, what improvement may be effected, ought to enlist our best energies in the search for its solution." He even welcomed working class candidates to Parliament - provided they were Liberals; and making a direct reference to "labor reformers", he said that while he doubted whether all, or even some, of their plans would be incorporated in the statute book at an early

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1. Macdonald Papers, Vol. 158, [p.38 (p.11-22)]

date, yet "there is much in these proposals with which I have long sympathized."<sup>1</sup> Blake also made speeches, in which the main theme was labor, at Welland, Belleville, Desoronto, and Hamilton. At Welland, his speech was a reply to an address presented to him by the Knights of Labor of that place.<sup>2</sup>

The Knights demanded certain important political reforms.

In early 1883 they demanded universal manhood suffrage. Even the two great political parties felt that something ought to be done in this direction,<sup>3</sup> though party discipline prevented many of their members from saying or doing anything much.<sup>4</sup> It was also demanded by the Canadian Labor Congress.<sup>5</sup> Womanhood suffrage was regarded as "the logical corollary" of manhood suffrage;<sup>6</sup> and 'Enjolras' gave it his full support.<sup>7</sup>

Another demand was the abolition of the Senate. The Knights asked: "What in heaven's name is the sense of having the people to send representatives to legislate for them in one House, and to have another House to obstruct or pull to pieces their work?" They felt that the Senate was an institution "begotten of distrust of the people," and an "asylum for decayed political prostitutes".<sup>8</sup> Its abolition was also demanded by the Canadian Labor Congress.<sup>9</sup>

Judicial reforms were also demanded. The people were asked to use their votes to abolish injustices in the courts of law: the power of a landlord to distrain goods for rent, acting as plaintiff, judge and jury

1. Macdonald Papers, Vol. 67, (p.356.)

2. Fred Landon: The Canadian Scene, 1880-1890. In the Canadian Historical Association; Report of Annual Meeting held at Toronto, May 25-26, 1942, (p.9)

3. The Labor Union, Hamilton, 13 Jan., 1883.

4. Ibid., 17 Feb., 1883.

5. The Hamilton Palladium, 18 Sept., 1886.

6. The Labor Union, Hamilton, 17 March, 1883.

7. The Hamilton Palladium, 20 March, 1886.

8. Ibid., 29 May, 1886.

9. Ibid., 18 Sept., 1886.



in his own case, was one of the greatest anomalies on the statute book; and it was considered a "disgrace to our civilization and an outrage on humanity" that any creditor should be able to seize everything belonging to his unfortunate debtor and turn him out on the street.<sup>1</sup> And 'Enjolras' called for the remodeling of the entire legal and judicial system: "The whole system in all its ramifications from the Supreme Court down to the last appointed J.P. in a backwoods village, is a moss-backed anomaly and time-honored fraud - having no reason for existence, but the unwillingness of men to change institutions which have come down to them from past ages and round which self-interested or biassed adulators have woven deceptive myths and traditions." He denounced its costliness and dilatoriness, ridiculed legalistic niceties and appeals to the Privy Council in England - "who are supposed, of course, to know what the Dominion Parliament or the Ontario Legislature meant to say, better than they did themselves" - and cast contempt at the supposed impartiality of the judges. With reference to these judges, he demanded that they be elected by the people, instead of being nominated by the government, and that their tenure of office be fixed: "Then, perhaps, we should have less of that evident bias to the side of power and authority - less subserviency to the wealthy and influential than are now sometimes observable in the occupants of our judicial positions."<sup>2</sup>

There is a modern ring in many of these demands. As the times were moving in a direction in which the masses were becoming an important force in society, it is evident that these demands of the Knights were democratic and justifiable.

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1. The Labor Union, Hamilton, 13 Jan., 1883

2. The Hamilton Palladium, 17 April, 1886

We may now dwell on one point - that of independent political action. The lesser spokesmen of the Canadians had consistently fought all along for such action, since early 1883.<sup>1</sup> And in this they were quite right: for as they explained, time and time again, "We have no more to hope from Grits than from Tories.....[Our] duty is plain. Let the Grits and Tories fight their own battles, and let us stick to our distinctive organizations and stand up for our principles. It would be a burning disgrace to our cause if after years of agitation and discussion the next election should see us dividing on the old party issues, carried away by sectional or political prejudices and throwing away the opportunity of upholding the cause of Labor at the polls, and electing men who are straight-out Labor Reformers."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, they rightly saw that many of the aims and objects of the Order were distinctly political, and would have to be achieved by legislative methods.<sup>3</sup> Even in the United States, much reliance could not be placed on either of the two political parties: Powderly himself came to admit this, when in October 1891, he told an audience in Montreal that in the United States the party willing to give them all they asked was always out of power and when they got into power it was the other party.<sup>4</sup>

In 1886 Powderly did not have the experience of the five years to cause him to complain. Then he considered it a "mistake and a misfortune" - in the words of the editor of the Hamilton Palladium, - should the Order go into politics and become a party. The reasons were considered "so strong" that even the Hamilton editor was inclined to agree with Powderly. It was held that the distinctive work of the Order was "the inculcation of principles", that the Order was an "educating force"; to accomplish its

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1. See, for example, The Labor Union, Hamilton, 10 March, 1883.

2. The Hamilton Palladium, 28 Nov., 1885.

3. Ibid., 28 Aug., 1886.

4. Montreal Star, 1 Oct., 1891.

aim in that direction, it must not be identified with any political party - not even a Labor party - for as soon as it entered the political field as an Order, its influence with those belonging to other organizations would be weakened or destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

Such an excuse was nonsensical. It was pointless to have objects in view, when there was hesitation to employ the necessary means to achieve them. Powderly aimed, consciously or unconsciously, to reduce the Order to a mere talking machine, academic, respected and harmless.

But in reality, Powderly was undecided. An article in the Montreal Star of 31 July 1886, carried Powderly's "definition" of the "present political attitude" of the Order. Powderly said: "The Knights of Labor is not a political organization in the sense of being identified with either of the two great existing parties, but I have endeavored to impress it upon members of our order to watch the conduct of our legislators carefully and to give them their support or opposition according to their acts. It has been urged that the Knights of Labor should have nothing to do with politics. If that policy should be carried out we might soon have laws passed abolishing our organization and making it impossible for the workingman to obtain justice and putting us in a worse bondage than ever. It behooves the workingmen, therefore, to be alert and watch the acts of the politicians critically if they wish to be free." Again he said: "In the low sense of the word the Knights are not politicians, but when their rights are in danger they are politicians first, last and all the time."<sup>2</sup>

Powderly himself was elected mayor of Scranton in 1878 on the labor ticket, and in the following year on the democratic ticket. During his term of office he was made general master workman.<sup>3</sup> Other leaders

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 28 Aug., 1886.

2. Montreal Star, 31 July, 1886.

3. Ibid., 31 July, 1886.

in the United States had also taken part in politics as individuals, but not as members of the Order.<sup>1</sup> This political inertia of the Order in the United States aroused antagonism among the members. A "large class" of the Knights began to clamor for "political freedom as an order." It was related: "They think it the part of wisdom to utilize politically each individual or organization of the Knights as fast as they show a willingness and aptitude for the work, and believe that they might as well elect men of their own choosing to represent their ideas and aspirations in the law-making bodies of the states, or nation, as to depend on those chosen by others."<sup>2</sup>

The Hamilton editor said that the solution to the problem was that "all direct political action in furtherance of our aims must be carried on outside of the Order, and thus while Knights of Labor will effect the regeneration of politics, they will not act avowedly as Knights of Labor, but will carry out their principles taught in the Assembly in supplementary organizations formed for the express and sole object of political work. There should be a Labor Reform party, strong, united and embracing in its membership the bulk of the workers everywhere." The Knights were then to act as a "feeder" to such a party.<sup>3</sup>

This "solution" was a poor shift; it indicated spinelessness. In any case, the Canadian labor candidates, who all belonged to the Order, were not so comical. And in the early nineties, the leadership of the Canadian Knights made no such untenable distinctions: they said, "Our only hope lies in absolutely independent political action."<sup>4</sup>

1. Ware, op. cit., (p. 43)

2. Montreal Star, 31 July, 1886.

3. The Hamilton Palladium, 28 Aug., 1886.

4. The Labor Advocate, Toronto, 12 Dec., 1890.

It may be added in fairness to Powderly that he retraced his steps later. At least, he was among the delegates at a convention in Cincinnati in May 1891, who were to organize a new political party representing the industrial interests.<sup>1</sup> Henry George was more practical than Powderly in this respect: George not only made himself the leader of the party of the Industrial Democracy in New York, but had recognized the necessity of political action: said he, "I have believed that the Labor movement could accomplish little until carried into politics, and that workingmen must make their ballots felt before they can expect any real attention to their needs, or any real respect for their rights."<sup>2</sup>

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1. The Labor Advocate, Toronto, 29 May, 1891.  
2. The Hamilton Palladium, 16 Oct., 1886.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE KNIGHTS AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The attacks of the Roman Catholic Church on the Knights grew out of their denunciation of Freemasonry. Leo XIII, on the 20th April 1884, issued an Encyclical Letter on this subject. He wrote, inter alia:

'Depuis que, par la jalousie du démon, le genre humain s'est misérablement séparé de Dieu, auquel il était redevable de son appel à l'existence et des dons surnaturels, il s'est partagé en deux camps ennemis, lesquels ne cessent pas de combattre, l'un pour la vérité et pour la vertu, l'autre pour tout ce qui est contraire à la vertu et à la vérité.' The first was the kingdom of God, the other was the kingdom of Satan.

He continued: 'A notre époque, les fauteurs du mal paraissent s'être coalisés dans un immense effort, sous l'impulsion et avec l'aide d'une société répandue en un grand nombre de lieux et fortement organisée, la société des Francs-Maçons. Ceux-ci en effet, ne prennent plus la peine de dissimuler leurs intentions, et ils rivalisent d'audace entre eux contre l'auguste majesté de Dieu. C'est publiquement à ciel ouvert, qu'ils entreprennent de ruiner la sainte Eglise, afin d'arriver, si c'était possible, à dépouiller complètement les nations chrétiennes des bienfaits dont elles sont redevables au Sauveur Jésus-Christ...

'Cependant, en un si pressant danger, en présence d'une attaque si cruelle et si opiniâtre livrée au christianisme, c'est Notre devoir de signaler le péril, de dénoncer les adversaires, d'opposer toute la résistance possible à leurs projets et à leurs industries, d'abord pour empêcher la perte éternelle des âmes dont le Salut Nous a été confié; puis, afin que le royaume de Jésus-Christ, que nous sommes chargé de défendre, non seulement demeure debout, mais fasse par

toute la terre de nouveaux progrès, de nouvelles conquêtes.'

Freemasonry was also a threat to civil society: its members were 'une association criminelle, non moins pernicieuse aux intérêts du christianisme qu' à ceux de la société civile.' It was exercising 'la plus grande influence' on 'les principales thèses doctrinales'. It was for this reason that in his Encyclical Quod Apostolici muneris, the Pope combatted "les monstreux systèmes des socialistes et des communistes." His Encyclical Arcanum defended "la notion véritable et authentique de la société domestique dont le mariage est l'origine et la source." The Encyclical Diuturnum explained "d'après les principes de la sagesse chrétienne, l'essence du pouvoir politique," and had shown "ses admirables harmonies avec l'ordre naturel, aussi bien qu' avec le salut des peuples et des princes."<sup>1</sup> The Roman Catholic Church was the St. George, who was to defend, sword in hand, the 'ordre naturel', attacked from all sides, against all assailants.

These extracts show the general nature of the Humanum Genus. The Catholic priests expounded its contents from the pulpit. Jean Langevin, Bishop of St. G. de Rimouski explained to the clergy and to the faithful of his diocese what Freemasonry meant in everyday life: "Ces sociétés pernicieuses imposent à leur adeptes des conditions d'admission fort dangereuses et tout-à-fait contraires à la morale et à la prudence chrétiennes. Les initiés promettent de se soumettre aveuglément à tous les ordres qu'ils recevront de chefs qu'ils ne connaissent point et que, tout probablement, ils ne connaîtront jamais, et de ne dévoiler sous aucun

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1. La Minerve, Montreal, 7 June, 1884.

prétexte les secrets de la société où ils entrent. Que suit-il de là? Pour ne parler que de notre pays, il suit que les associés reçoivent, à un moment donné, l'ordre formel de former une vaste conjuration dans le but d'abandonner subitement ceux qui les emploient, et de nuire par là considérablement à ceux-ci, souvent même au bienpublic et au gouvernement, et d'arrêter ainsi des services importants et urgents. Ils ne se contentent pas de refuser de travailler un certain temps par jour, ou à un prix convenu, (ce pourrait bien être permis à moins d'engagements certains), mais ils gênent injustement la liberté de leurs compagnons qui ne veulent pas faire partie de la grève, et usent, ou menacent d'user, de violence à l'égard de ceux qui consentiraient à travailler à des conditions différentes. De là, stagnation des affaires, pertes, ruine pour les maîtres et pour les employés, défiance, haines mutuelles, enfin quelquefois rixes sanglantes et meurtrières: autant de conséquences funestes de ces promesses imprudentes, même de ces serments pour les moins indiscrets."<sup>1</sup>

The Humanum Genus aimed not only at Freemasonry, but at secret societies in general. Louis François Laflèche, Bishop of Three-Rivers, was careful to point this out to his flock, in a detailed examination of the Encyclical. "Il existe," ran the Humanum Genus, "dans le monde un certain nombres de sectes qui, bien qu'elles diffèrent les unes des autres par le nom, les rites, la forme, l'origine, se ressemblent et sont d'accord entre elles par l'analogie du but et des principes essentiels. En fait, elles sont identiques à la Franc-Maçonnerie, qui est pour les autres comme le point central d'où elles procèdent et où elles aboutissent." Bishop Laflèche concluded from this: "Les autres

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1. L'Etendard, 6 June, 1884.



sociétés secrètes sont donc, par rapport à la Franc-Maçonnerie ce que les branches sont à l'arbre, les affluents au fleuve, les satellites à l'astre. Ce seul rapport existant entre elles et une société, à laquelle il n'est pas permis de s'affilier, et qu'il est défendu de favoriser de quelque manière que ce soit, suffit à les faire tomber sous les peines ecclesiastiques.<sup>1</sup>

In like manner, Edward Charles Fabre, Bishop of Montreal, spoke to his audience. In a mandement dated 22 May 1884, he said: "Leon XIII vient aujourd'hui nous mettre en garde contre la franc-maçonnerie et toutes espèces de sociétés secrètes. Il nous déclare que la n'est ni la voie ni la vérité, ni la vie: que l'imprudent qui s'y engage marche dans la voie de la perdition, parce qu'il renonce à la vérité, et aboutira fatalement a la mort. Les sociétés secrètes n'ont en effet d'autre but, quelle que soit la bénigne apparence dont quelques-unes se couvrent, que de saper les fondements de l'ordre chrétien.....Les sociétés secrètes sont la conspiration la plus odieuse contre l'autorité, contre l'ordre établi dans le monde. Elles sont l'écho de l'amour exagéré de la liberté individuelle, qui ne veut avoir d'autres règles que ses passions, d'autres freins que ses intérêts purement humains. Le bien, pour elles, c'est le renversement de toutes les institutions qui gênent cette liberté mal entendue; le mal, c'est l'autorité légitime, sous quelque forme que ce soit, lorsque cette autorité ne se prête pas complaisamment à la satisfaction de leur tendances mauvaises."<sup>2</sup>

At this time secret societies, and in particular, Knights of Labor, seemed to be very few among the French-Canadian population. La Minerve held this view. And when L'Etendard and the Journal des Trois-

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1. L'Etendard, 13 June, 1884.

2. La Minerve, 9 June, 1884.

Rivières disagreed, La Minerve was led to say editorially: "Nous maintenons cependant qu'on nous calomnie, qu'on se lance dans une exagération regrettable, qu'on grossit inutilement le mal en essayant de faire croire qu'un très grand nombre de nos compatriotes appartiennent aux sociétés secrètes. Loin d'augmenter, nous croyons que ce nombre diminue au égard à la population. Il ne s'est pas trouvé un seul député français qui a voulu sanctionner à la Chambres des Communes l'incorporation de l'Association Orangiste, une association secrète., C'est la meilleure preuve que nos hommes publics restent étrangers à toute influence de ce genre." Another editorial of this issue quoted Blake as saying: "Secret societies have often been the fruitful mother of malignity, misrepresentation and bigotry." It then asked - "A quelles sociétés secrètes se rapporte cette dénonciation? Aux sociétés secrètes politiques ou quasi-politiques, telles que la Ribbon Society, la Phoenix Society, l'Association Fénienne, etc. Pas<sup>1</sup> a d'autres." The Knights were not even mentioned!

Mgr. Fabre also held this view. On Sunday, 25th May, a mandement from him was read at Notre Dame Church, in which he rejected charges that Freemasonry was strong among the French Canadians. He said: "Nous ressentons une honte indicible et un serrement de cœur inexprimable, il y a quelques jours, à lire un journal européen que, surtout le Canada, faisait le scandale du monde chrétien par le nombre des membres des sociétés secrètes qu'il renferme, et par la puissance

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1. La Minerve, 15 May, 1884.

It may be noted incidentally that Blake said that his remarks "ne s'appliquaient aucunement à la société des francs-maçons à laquelle il attribue un caractère de bienfaisance."

qu'elles y exercent. Ah! si cela était vrai, quelle humiliation pour nous! Non, grâces en soient rendues au ciel, nous avons conservé la foi de nos pères, et la religion parmi nous est encore la première institution que nous ayons appris à vénérer, et à laquelle nous sommes attachés de coeur et d'âme; et ce n'est pas un titre de gloire ou un sujet de vanité pour les catholiques de ce pays de figurer sur les listes des loges maçonniques. Nous pouvons le dire maintenant et en toute sincérité, à l'encontre de ceux qui, poussés on ne sait par quel motif, sèment de fausses alarmes dans nos rangs et semblent prendre plaisir à dénigrer notre pays, en le représentant comme un foyer d'infection maçonnique." This was his reply to a demand from Rome that he make an enquiry into the progress of Freemasonry among the Catholics of Quebec province.<sup>1</sup> The abbé Sentenne, who had read the mandement, said that the enquiry "a établi que le nombre des catholiques franc-maçons est extrêmement restreint.....La plupart de ceux que nous avons découverts.... avaient pris leur affiliation aux Etats-Unis, à l'époque où nos compatriotes émigrés n'avaient pas encore de clergé pour les empêcher de tomber dans l'indifference religieuse et les prémunir contre les dangers de la franc-maçonnerie."

As the Knights increased their membership among the French Canadians, the attitude of the Catholic Church towards them became known. Some of the priests were hostile. On February 7th 1885 at a mass meeting of workingmen at the Mechanics' Hall, organized by the Knights, Mr. William

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1. This demand was inspired by the same rumors of which Mgr. Fabre spoke. The Journal de Rome commented: 'Au Canada, c'est la franc-maçonnerie, cette franc-maçonnerie insinuante, distinguée qui est l'origine de ces conflits religieux et politiques, inconnus encore il y a quelques années et portés aujourd'hui à un tel degré d'acuité, que le Saint Siège a dû envoyer une commission extraordinaire pour pacifier les diocèses.' Quoted by L'Etendard, 5 June, 1884.

Keys expressed regret that this was so; and believed that their hostility was due to a misapprehension. But all the priests were not hostile; and strange as it might seem, Archbishop Taschereau seemed to be at first favorable to them. Mr. Keys said that after personally explaining the objects of the organization to him, Taschereau had replied: "I give you a clear receipt."<sup>1</sup>

Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau was born at La Beauce on 17th February 1820. A brilliant student of classical studies at the Seminary of Quebec, he exhibited qualities which became more pronounced in later life: a love of work, a solid piety, sincere modesty, friendliness towards equals, and, above all, respect for regulations and for authority - "respect pour la règle et pour l'autorité", if we use the words of his biographer. In 1836 he went to Europe with Father Holmes of the same Seminary. In 1837 he returned to Quebec Province, where he engaged in Church work, until 1854. In this year he returned to Rome, studied canon law for the next two years, and graduated with a doctor's degree in July, 1856. He was back in Quebec in the following month; and here he continued his services to the Church with zeal and distinction. In 1871 he was made Archbishop of Quebec; and in 1886 he became the first Canadian Cardinal, with wholehearted acclamation; as his biographer said, the elevation of Taschereau "au rang de Prince de l'Eglise a suscité autour de son nom un concert d'approbation dont pas une note discordante n'est venue briser l'harmonie. La presse toute entière, protestante comme catholique, n'a eu qu'une voix pour applaudir au décret pontifical et faire l'éloge de Son Eminence le Cardinal Taschereau."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Montreal Star, 9 Feb., 1885.

2. T.E.Hamel: Le Premier Cardinal Canadien, (p.22-29)

The strikes that swept the United States in the early months of 1886, and the prominence of the Knights in this connection - or so it was alleged<sup>1</sup> - brought their relations with the Church to a head. About mid-February Powderly came to Montreal, on the request of the local officers, to smooth out the differences with the Church, so strained had they become. The visit was felt to be necessary; for, some time previously, "influences" were at work endeavoring to persuade Mgr. Fabre to take some steps to condemn the Order. It was represented that the Order was dangerous to society, that it was a secret organization which would in the end do more harm than good, and was the cause of the labor troubles throughout the continent. A rumor was even widely circulated that the Executive Council of the diocese had counselled His Lordship to abolish the Order and that a mandement to that effect would be shortly issued. The local officers of the Order therefore sent for Powderly to explain to him that the society was merely a protective one and was not in any way a secret order or at variance with the Roman Catholic Church or any church. On Wednesday 17th February, Powderly called on the Bishop's Palace.<sup>2</sup>

When later, in Philadelphia, Powderly was questioned on his visit, he said that the matter was a "delicate one", and that he did not feel at liberty to say anything just then. What he did say however, seemed to indicate what he was told by Bishop Fabre. He said that in the United States, the Church was on the best terms with the Order. One of the principal reasons for this, he felt, was that the people in the United States were nearer the priests than in Quebec. There were so many

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1. See Chapter II for section on strikes.

2. Montreal Star, 19 Feb., 1886.

anarchists in Quebec that the priests had "just reasons" to be suspicious. The inhabitants of Quebec Province, being almost exclusively French, were harder to manage than Americans. True it was that the United States had "some anarchists", but "happily they are not a dangerous class. About all they consist of is wind. They amuse themselves, and do no harm to anyone else. We can take our own people....and pack them in a solid mass from one end of Market street to the other, and there will be no harm. But take an equal number of Frenchmen and the results may be serious."<sup>1</sup>

It seems however that Powderly promised to make some changes; but the precise extent of the promises is not known. According to one Knight, Fabre himself had directed Powderly in the modifications and alterations which their constitution had passed through by the middle of the year.<sup>2</sup> And when a delegation of Montreal Knights left the city on the 5th October of the same year to submit an amended constitution to the Convention at Richmond, a prominent Knight stated that the priests of St. Ann's parish had been busy for the previous few weeks revising the constitution, and amending it as they thought proper: this was done, he explained, because Powderly had promised Archbishop Fabre<sup>3</sup> to have the constitution amended by the clergy.<sup>4</sup> The precise extent of these revisions and amendments is not known. On the other hand, if we are to believe Powderly's account of the interview, his promises were merely confined to one point. Accordingly to Powderly, Mgr. Fabre merely objected to a decision which read: 'The member whose wife sells liquor must obtain

1. Montreal Star, 25 Feb., 1886.

Powderly's account of his visit to Bishop Fabre in his book The Path I Trod (p. 350-1) differs from this. The difference is probably due to the fact that he was writing several years later. Prof. Ware carries the same story we have given here: his comment was apt - "somewhat naive reflections upon the French....Powderly may have heard rumors of Paris but he did not know his Quebec habitant." op. cit., (p.97-8).

2. Montreal Star, 8 July, 1886.

3. Fabre was made Archbishop in late June.

4. Montreal Star, 6 Oct., 1886.

a divorce either from his wife or this Order; the latter can be obtained in the shape of a withdrawal card.' Mgr. Fabre objected on the grounds that the decision favored divorce, while the Church "frowns on divorce, [and] it demands that its children shall not only not be divorced but that it shall be discouraged." After Powderly made the lame excuse that "it was not, with me, a question of divorce in the sense in which the term was understood by the Church", he promised to bring the matter before the next General Assembly, and to recommend that a change be made in the wording of the decision "as strong and effective..... so that no agent of the liquor trade could become or remain a member of the Knights of Labor."<sup>1</sup> In any case these points definitely showed that the Knights were prepared to come to an understanding with the Church.

At the time of the meeting, or shortly afterwards, it was learned from high ecclesiastical authority, that the attitude of the Church towards the Order had not changed since 1884, when the Pope's Encyclical on secret societies was issued. Later representations were made to His Lordship, showing that the organization was necessary for the protection of labor against capital, and to prevent the many abuses to which the laboring man was exposed. These representations, it was understood, were considered satisfactory by the Bishop.<sup>2</sup>

On Tuesday, 23rd February the Montreal Star reported that an Ottawa despatch announced that Mgr. Duhamel, the Catholic Bishop of that city, had issued a mandement on the previous Sunday condemning the Knights, the Telegraphers' Union, and in fact any labor organization of a secret nature. When in addition, rumors began to spread that in all probability

1. T.V.Powderly: The Path I Trod, (p.350-51.)
2. Montreal Star, 19 Feb., 1886.

mandements would be issued not only by Mgr. Fabre, but also by the other bishops of the province, great disappointment was visible among the officers of the Order in Montreal. One of them said that he was as good a Catholic as the Bishop, and he knew that there was nothing in the constitution of the Order contrary to the principles of the Catholic Church. He said that if the bishops could point out in the constitution any features obnoxious to them the officers of the Order would modify them to suit their views; but if the bishops persisted in condemning them without cause they would have to bear the condemnation as well they might. The Star angrily commented: "The time had gone by when bishops could lead men by the nose to the polling booths or anywhere else."<sup>1</sup>

But in fact, Mgr. Duhamel did not issue a mandement against the Knights, as the Star had asserted. The Ottawa Free Press had made the same mistake as the Star. Mgr. Duhamel pointed out that the document which was read was a decree from the Holy See condemning the Knights. The decree bore the date of September 1884, and was issued in answer to a communication from the Archbishop of Quebec, who had sent to Rome the 'Constitutions' of the Order.<sup>2</sup>

This simple incident serves to show how touchy was the question of the Knights of Labor, and hence how important a force they were becoming. For immediately certain journals rose in defence of Mgr. Duhamel, and sided with the Church.

La Minerve took exception to the Star's comment: "C'est une expression des plus fâcheuses, une expression injurieuse, que notre confrère n'eût pas employé s'il eut réfléchi avant de parler." It said:

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1. Montreal Star, 23 Feb., 1886.

2. Ibid., 26 Feb., 1886.



"Les évêques sont les pasteurs des âmes. Chacun d'eux a la garde du troupeau confié à ses soins, est juge de ses besoins. Mais si l'enseignement de l'évêque doit être respecté quand il parle en son propre nom, à plus forte raison doit - il en être ainsi quand il parle au nom du pasteur suprême, au nom du chef de l'Eglise.... Ce n'est pas Mgr. Duhamel qui a jugé les Chevaliers du Travail, c'est le Souverain Pontife....Mgr. Duhamel, en communiquant ce décret à ses prêtres, n'a donc fait que répandre l'enseignement pontifical. Il n'y a eu, de sa part, aucune initiative dans la condamnation des Chevaliers du Travail." Consequently the Star was guilty of an "attaque indigne."<sup>1</sup>

Le Canada, a Conservative organ at Ottawa, somewhat strongly, also condemned the Knights. It added: " Their case having been conveyed to Rome, it is therefore to Rome that the Knights of Labor should apply, in the event of their desiring to come to an understanding with the Catholic Church. There they will learn what they have to alter in the constitution of their society so that it may not be contrary to the laws and principles of the Church. Until that time Catholics will have to keep away from the Society, for the first duty of Catholics is to act according to the decisions of the Holy See."<sup>2</sup> La Minerve fully agreed with these views.<sup>3</sup> And Le Journal des Trois-Rivieres added its bit: 'We....ardently request our statesmen to watch with more care than in the past over the enlargement of these societies with which our small country is unfortunately infested to an alarming degree.'<sup>4</sup>

Strangely enough, one Church organ, the Catholic Tribune, took

1. La Minerve, 27 Feb., 1886.

2. Quoted by the Montreal Star, 26 Feb., 1886.

3. La Minerve, 27 Feb., 1886.

4. Quoted by the Montreal Star, 26 Feb., 1886.

a different attitude. It said that there was nothing in the constitution of the Order which could be condemned by the Church. It added, according to Le Monde, a paper which was at this time favorable to the Knights: "Les Chevaliers du Travail pratiquent - ils aucune cérémonie défendue? On nous assure positivement que non, que leur rituel est simple et pratique et n'est imposant qu'au point de vue des droits et des souffrances des travailleurs. On nous assure également qu'ils ne prêtent aucun serment, que leur parole d'honneur, donnée solennellement, est jugé suffisante pour lier ceux qui sont reçus comme membres. Aucune discussion religieuse n'est permise, et tout ce qui a un caractère illégal est défendu. Nombre des propositions des Chevaliers ont déjà été adoptées et défendues par les partis politiques et le programme de l'un d'eux est presque entièrement composé de la 'Déclaration des principes de l'Ordre' déjà publiée. De fait, c'est une grande société d'éducation dont le but principal est de créer une saine opinion publique sur la question du travail', but contre lequel on ne peut élever aucune objection valide.

"L'ordre repousse toute violence ou tout acte révolutionnaire commis par ses membres et tout Chevalier engagé dans une transaction déloyable ou illégale est immédiatement expulsé. Le fait que M. Powderly ....a dissous instantanément une assemblée de St. Louis, parce que quelques-uns de ses membres avaient trempé dans une affaire de dynamite, pendant la dernière grève des chars urbains est donné comme un exemple, confirme par l'expulsion de la salle St. Joseph, de deux agents des anarchistes, pendant la lecture donnée un soir par le capitaine Trevellick.

"Jugeant les Chevaliers du Travail, tels qu'ils <sup>ont</sup> nous été représentés par des catholiques intelligents et prudents, nous déclarons que non seulement l'ordre n'est pas eu conflit avec l'enseignement de l'église catholique,

mais qu'il est en tous points digne d'encouragement."<sup>1</sup>

This journal was probably published in the United States. In any case, its stand reflected that of some of the Catholic prelates there towards the Knights.

The next step taken by the Catholic Church in Quebec against the Knights was in the form of a mandement of Archbishop Taschereau, issued on the 19th April 1886. As this mandement was the chief instrument of attack of the Church in Canada, it seems best to reproduce fully the essential facts. But before doing so, a few preliminary words.

Taschereau said that he had issued a mandement on June 1884 condemning dangerous societies, and in particular Freemasonry. We have found no copy of this mandement. This explains why Taschereau was not mentioned above in our account of the sermons of the Catholic priests with reference to the Humanum Genus. But very probably Taschereau's mandement bore the same tenor.

Taschereau said also that as early as October 1883 he had sent to Rome an authentic copy of the rules and constitutions of the Order. As it was done on the request of a Knight, it seems to show that Taschereau was not at first opposed to the Order. And this conclusion is reinforced by the account given by Mr. Keys of his personal talk with Taschereau. That such soul-searchings<sup>occurred</sup> concerning the nature of the Order, was also quite natural. For Freemasonry had had a long history, and had been fought by the Church since then. It dated back as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century. Pope Clement V was alarmed by it; and in conjunction with Philippe le Bel, he abolished it. But it would not accept defeat. In

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1. Quoted by Le Monde, 6 March, 1886

1738 Clement XII decreed against it the severest penalties, which were sanctioned by his followers Benoit XIV, Pius VII, Leo XII, Pius VIII,<sup>1</sup> Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and now by Leo XIII.

Taschereau's mandement read as follows. And incidentally we are introduced to some new facts on the relations between the Church and the Knights.

Dans notre mandement du 29 juin 1884, Nous vous avons déjà mis en garde, Nos Très-Chers Frères, contre toutes les sociétés dangereuses, et en particulier contre la franc-maçonnerie, ~~si~~ formellement condamnée par les Souverains Pontifes, et en particulier par Sa Sainteté le Pape Leon XIII dans la bulle Humanum genus.

Nous croyons devoir vous rappeler..... que la loi de l'Eglise défend de s'enrôler dans la franc-maçonnerie sous peine d'excommunication encourue par le fait même, et dont l'absolution est réservée au Souverain Pontife. Vous savez bien que l'excommunication est la plus terrible peine que l'Eglise puisse infliger à un coupable. Quel malheur pour un enfant de se voir chassé de la maison paternelle! Celui qui a encouru l'excommunication se trouve en dehors de la sainte église catholique, il ne participe plus à ses prières, n'a plus de droit à ses sacraments et s'il meurt dans cet état, son âme séparée de la vrai église ne peut avoir droit à l'héritage céleste et son corps ne peut repaser dans une terre bénite par l'Eglise.

A l'occasion du jubilé, le Saint Père accorde à tous les confesseurs le pouvoir d'en absoudre ceux qui étant sincèrement repentants et voulant gagner l'indulgence du jubilé, renonceront franchement et pour toujours à la franc-maçonnerie. Nous exhortons tous ceux qui auraient eu l'imprudence et le malheur de s'enrôler dans cette association condamnée par l'Eglise, à profiter des grâces du jubilé pour se reconcilier avec Dieu et avec son eglise, hors de laquelle il n'y a point de salut. Nous les en supplions pour l'amour de Jésus qui a versé jusqu'à la dernière goutte de son sang pour le salut de leur âme.

Des troubles sérieux, accompagnés d'incendies désastreux et de nombreuses pertes de vie, viennent d'avoir lieu dans un bon nombre de villes des Etats-Unis. Et s'il faut en croire les journaux, ces malheurs sont le fruit des grèves organisées par une société dont les ramifications s'étendent partout et comptent pour associés des ouvriers de toute espèce.

Ayant appris que des émissaires de la société des chevaliers du travail avaient essayé de recruter des membres dans quelques parties de cette province, Nous croyons devoir.....vous mettre en garde contre elle. Et veuillez remarquer que Nous ne parlons en notre propre nom, mais au nom du Saint-Siège que Nous avons consulté.

En effet, au mois d'octobre 1883, Nous avons envoyé à Rome un exemplaire authentique des règles et constitutions de cette société, qui Nous avait été mis en mains par un membre qui désirait savoir au juste à quoi s'en tenir. Pres d'une année plus tard, la Congrégation du Saint Office, après avoir examiné ces constitutions avec tout le soin et toute

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1. From the mandement of Bishop Lafleche: L'Etendard, 13 June, 1884.

la prudence possible, Nous a donné la réponse suivante, qui doit vous servir de règle absolue et vous tenir éloignés des chevaliers du travail. En voici la traduction fidèle:

'Vu les principes, l'organisation et les statuts de la société des chevaliers du travail, cette société doit être rangée parmi celles que le Saint-Siège prohibe, suivant l'Instruction de cette suprême congrégation, donnée le 10 mai 1884.'

Nous n'ignorons pas..... que pour éluder cette condamnation si précise et si claire on a cru qu'il suffisait de changer quelques articles des constitutions. Nous ferons remarquer deux choses:

1. Que le jugement étant appuyé sur les principes, l'organisation et les statuts de la société, il faudrait changer tout cela de fond en comble pour échapper à la condamnation.

2. Que le Saint-Siège est le seul juge compétant pour décider si les changements opérés sont de la nature à rendre cette société acceptable pour les enfants de l'Eglise: en attendant cette décision un catholique doit tenir la société pour défendue.

La Congrégation du Saint Office continue sa réponse en exhortant les évêques à employer contre cette société et les sociétés semblables, les procédures et les remèdes exposés dans l'Instruction du 10 mai 1884, c'est - à - dire, à regarder comme coupables de péché grave et indigne de l'absolution ceux qui persistent à en faire partie.

Prenez donc pour règle générale..... de ne jamais donner votre nom à ces sociétés, surtout si elles vous sont proposées par des étrangers. Cela vous épargnera bien des difficultés sérieuses, quelquefois des dangers pour votre vie ou votre fortune. Défiez-vous en d'autant plus qu'elles se couvrent du voile d'une fin honnête qui peut en imposer facilement.

\*Sous prétexte de protéger les pauvres ouvriers contre les riches et les puissants qui voudraient les opprimer, les chefs et les propagateurs de ces sociétés cherchent à s'élever et à s'enrichir aux dépens de ces mêmes ouvriers souvent trop crédules. Ils font sonner bien haut les beaux noms de protection mutuelle et de charité, pour tenir leurs adeptes dans une agitation continuelle et fomenter des troubles, des désordres et des injustices. De là résultent pour les pauvres ouvriers deux grands malheurs. D'abord ils s'exposent au danger de perdre leur foi, leurs mœurs et tout sentiment de probité et de justice en faisant société avec des inconnus qui se montrent malheureusement trop habiles à leur communiquer leur propre perversité.

"En second lieu, l'on a vu ici, comme aux Etats-Unis, comme en Angleterre, comme en France et partout ailleurs, les tristes fruits de ces conspirations contre le repos public. Les pauvres ouvriers n'en ont retiré qu'une misère plus profonde, une ruine totale des industries qui les faisaient vivre; et quelquefois même, les rigeurs de la justice humaine sont venues y ajouter des châtiments exemplaires.

"Croyez -le donc bien.....lorsque vos pasteurs et vos confesseurs cherchent à vous détourner de ces sociétés, ils se montrent vos véritables et sincères amis; vous seriez bien aveugles si vous méprisiez leurs avis pour prêter l'oreille à des étrangers, à des inconnus qui vous flattent pour vous dépouiller, et qui vous font de séduisantes promesses pour vous précipiter dans un abîme, d'où ils se garderont bien de vous aider à sortir."<sup>1</sup>

A ces causes et le saint nom de Dieu invoqué, Nous reglons et ordonnons ce qui suit:

1. Le présent mandement sera lu le premier dimanche après sa réception, dans toutes les églises et chapelles de paroisses et de missions où se fait l'office public;

2. Après cette publication on recitera à genoux un Pater et un

Ave pour la conversion de tous ceux qui ont eu le malheur de s'engager dans une société defendue par l'Eglise.<sup>1</sup>

Taschereau's mandement was greeted with intense feelings, both of disapproval and support. It was the cause of "une vive impression, non seulement dans la province de Quebec, mais dans les autres provinces du Canada et meme aux Etats-Unis."<sup>2</sup>

The Toronto World, a liberal and protestant paper, said that Taschereau could well take up such a position, because he had nothing to fear, seeing that there were no Knights of Labor in his diocese, whilst it was the other bishops who would have to bear the embarassment of declaring against a society already powerful among their flock. The Monetary Times held that the mandement would have effects in Quebec province, but that if similar documents were issued by the bishops in the United States, they would produce no effect.<sup>3</sup> Shown a copy of Taschereau's mandement, Archbishop Lynch of Toronto expressed the views of the Church in Toronto: he said that as far as Ontario was concerned the Church did not antagonize the Knights. The constitution of the organization was sent to Rome to see whether it would meet the approval of the Holy See; but it was returned with condemnation. A second one, amended to the objections found in the first, was despatched to the Holy See, and was then still under consideration. Meanwhile the Church in Ontario, while waiting the decision of Rome, did not order any Catholics who might have joined to resign from membership, but simply forbade any Catholic from becoming a member until Rome finally decided for or against the Order.<sup>4</sup> The attitude of the Church in Ontario was in marked contrast to its stand in Quebec province.

1. La Minerve, 29 April, 1886.

2. Ibid., 4 May, 1886.

3. Ibid., 4 May, 1886.

4. Montreal Star, 30 April, 1886.

Let us now examine opinion in the United States. Vicar General Conway of Chicago announced that Taschereau's mandement had no effect in his diocese, and that the Church did not forbid its members to take part in the Organization. In New York, the mandement was "vivement commenté" by the Catholics of the city. Its archbishop, Corrigan, refused to commit himself. Grand Vicar Quinn said that the question had been discussed by the Church authorities in New York, but that they had arrived at no decision. He added however - according to Le Monde - "Nous observons.....la conduite des Chevaliers du Travail et si nous y voyons quelque chose de contraire à la loi et aux enseignements de l'Eglise, nous avertirons nos ouailles de se retirer de l'organisation."<sup>1</sup>

This evidence indicates that the Catholic authorities in the United States were, at best, undecided on the question. Some did not even care. Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia had declared that no general disapproval of the Knights had been made in the archdiocese, and that, indeed, he knew very little about the nature of the Order. Archbishop Kendrick of St. Louis was unfavorable to the Knights. Mgr. F.X.Leroy, Archbishop of New Orleans, favored them. He found nothing objectionable in their constitution, and said that workmen had an undeniable right to form co-operative self-protecting, mutual aid and benevolent associations. They could not be prevented from banding together, provided they did not intend to resort to violence or to injure property. There was no harm in the Order, unless further investigation proved that the members were bound by some oath to obey blindly the orders of a chief or secret council.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Le Monde, 30 April, 1886.

2. The Toronto Palladium, 23 May, 1886.

The Knights were quite calm. Their organ, The Palladium of Labor, of Hamilton, declared that it was too late in the day for the prosperity of any organization to be affected by ecclesiastical fulminations even in Quebec province. "There is no occasion to get excited over the matter..... When men were grossly ignorant their fears were excited by sheet-iron thunder of this kind but they now laugh at it." Possibly a few might be deterred from joining the Order; but it had more serious foes to contend with than ecclesiastics jealous of its power. If the Jay Goulds could be met with and fought successfully, the Taschereaus and "reactionaries of that sort need not excite much alarm."<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand the enemies of the Order were jubilant.

La Minerve spoke of "la prudence et la sagesse de Son Eminence qui met ses ouailles en garde contre un danger menaçant." With respect to the Catholics of the Archdiocese of Quebec, to whom only did the mandement apply, La Minerve opined "ils savent quelle conduite ils ont à tenir"; and dropped an open hint to those elsewhere to follow suit - "et ceux des autres diocèses connaissaient l'opinion de Son Eminence le cardinal-archevêque comme l'opinion du Saint-Siège. Leur devoir est tout tracé."<sup>2</sup> This paper was a staunch supporter of ecclesiastical authority. On another occasion it said: "Le pape est l'autorité suprême, sans doute; il a le gouvernement de l'église universelle sans doute; mais il a ici des représentants de son autorité, qu'Il appelle ses collaborateurs, auxquels Il a confié cette position de son troupeau. Voilà pourquoi tous les catholiques savent que les évêques sont chargés de gouverner l'Eglise et que les simples brebis doivent les écouter comme elles

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1. The Hamilton Palladium, 1 May, 1886.

2. La Minerve, 23 May, 1887.



écouterait le pape lui-même. Les paroles saintes: 'qui vous écoute m'écoute, qui vous méprise me méprise', s'appliquent aux dignitaires ecclésiastiques, à tous les évêques comme à leur chef suprême.

L'enseignement infallible ne peut nous être communiqué que par eux, ne nous être expliqué que par eux."<sup>1</sup>

Le Monde expressed regret, and advised that Catholic members submit to the Church and that the Order modify its organization: "Comme catholiques nous devons nous soumettre aux décisions de Rome. Si la société des Chevaliers du Travail a réellement l'intention de travailler au bien-être de l'ouvrier sans nuire à qui ce soit, elle devra chercher à modifier son organisation de manière à pouvoir mériter l'approbation de l'Eglise catholique." It would be unfortunate to see the workingmen in disagreement with the Church: for, "Ce qui est la cause de leur progrès, l'élément de leur prospérité et le principe de leur force, ce n'est pas ce qui est condamnable et condamné par l'Eglise." And there was no obstacle in the way of their asking and obtaining the modifications of their society to make them acceptable to the Church and accessible to everyone. Furthermore the progress that the workers' societies had made in the past few years ought not to be relinquished by difficulties "d'un genre aussi sérieux qu'un conflit entre leur association et l'Eglise à laquelle ils appartiennent." The organisation was above all prepared for United States workers, so that it could happen that it did not conform to the teachings of the Church; if the chiefs of the organisation wished to recruit members in Canada, they ought to modify their organisation. At a moment when the workers were making themselves heard in a common action

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1. La Minerve, 23 May, 1887.

to determine the principles of justice which would be the triumph of their cause, it would be regrettable to see them compromise the success which was on the point of crowning their efforts. The Knights were a progressive association "qui a tout à gagner à se conformer aux enseignements de l'Eglise."<sup>1</sup>

It is quite clear from the foregoing that the Church's official action had roused strong criticism. But its influence was strong as well: the immediate results were that many French Canadians signified their intention of withdrawing their membership from the Order.

The Catholic bishops and priests were opposed to the Order. But there seems to have been some exceptions. The Irish priests, without giving open support, were well disposed towards it. Mgr. Duhamel seems also to have been favorable: he observed Taschereau's mandement and condemned the Knights, but added that their aim "pouvait être innocent"; if the association was praiseworthy, it ought not to be secret. Mgr. Fabre was the most favorable of them all. It was to him that the executive committee of the Knights in Montreal sent a lawyer, to inform him that it was ready to submit its constitution to all the modifications which he thought necessary. Fabre set a date for the meeting, but he could not help them because he had no power to change what was already contained in Taschereau's mandement.<sup>2</sup>

The submission of the Montreal Knights to Mgr. Fabre, and the fact<sup>3</sup> that a copy of the amended constitution was sent to Rome for

1. Le Monde, 17 May, 1886.

2. The statements of fact made in this and the preceding paragraph were taken from a New York paper quoted by La Minerve, 8 May, 1886.

3. It seems to have been a fact that, as Mgr. Lynch of Toronto said, the Knights did send a revised constitution to Rome. For, the curé Sentenne of Notre Dame was to speak later of the modifications made "spécialement pour le Canada." Taschereau was therefore wrong in supposing later that the Knights did not submit any modifications to Rome.

reconsideration -as we have already mentioned, incidentally, - show conclusively that the Knights were ready to reach an agreement with the Church. "Cette marque de bonne volonté nous rassure sur les intentions et les bonnes dispositions des classes ouvrières. Ils sont disposés à faire modifier la constitution de manière à avoir l'approbation de l'Eglise." - said Le Monde, with reference to the sending of the constitution to Rome.<sup>1</sup> But the Church remained implacable. The Fathers of the Seventh Council of Quebec issued a Pastoral Letter, dated 6 June 1886. Signed by Taschereau; Laflèche; Jean Langevin, bishop of Saint G. de Rimouski; Fabre; Antoine Racine, bishop of Sherbrooke; Duhamel; the bishops of Saint-Hyacinthe, Chicoutimi, and Nicolet; the Vicar Apostolic of Pontiac, and the Apostolic Prefect of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, it represented a concerted attack - "un enseignement conjoint"- on Freemasonry. In this respect, it differed from Taschereau's mandement, which was aimed specifically against the Knights. Two references were, however, made to the Knights. Firstly, objection was made to their cosmopolitan character: "Le caractère cosmopolite des sociétés secrètes et en particulier celle des Chevaliers du Travail expose nécessairement beaucoup de ceux qui en font partie à exécuter les ordres d'un conseil siégeant dans un pays étranger, qui, à un moment donné, peut être en opposition d'intérêts et même en guerre avec le gouvernement auquel ces membres doivent fidélité." Secondly, objection was made, because the Knights "exigent de leurs membres un secret qu'il ne faut dévoiler à personne, une obéissance sans réserve devant être prêtée à des chefs occultes."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Le Monde, 17 May, 1886.

2. Ibid., 21 June, 1886.

The Letter launched attack from new angles on secret societies. It pointed out that a society might be good at first, but might become bad, in which case it was the duty of good Catholics to withdraw: "D'après les principes que Nous vous avons exposés.....vous comprenez que c'est un devoir rigoureux et urgent pour ceux qui se sont laissé entraîner et sont affiliés à quelqu'une de ces sociétés, de s'en retirer quand bien ils y seraient entrés de bonne foi. Leur obligation serait la même, si la société à laquelle ils appartiennent était d'abord irréprochable et serait reprehensible dans son but ou ses moyens, depuis qu'ils en sont membres." Workers must also guard against a sophism - or as Le Monde describes it "un certain raisonnement spécieux qui serait de nature à les induire en erreur, peut-être même malgré eux" - which said that l'union fait la force, and that it was a means de se protéger et de s'aider mutuellement: the Letter commented - "C'est malheureusement ce sophisme qui rend populaire dans notre siècle la formation de ces sociétés secrètes. Elles ne sont pas sans posséder du crédit et du pouvoir, Nous l'avouons sans peine: mais aussi Nous vous ferons remarquer que l'Eglise catholique ne s'oppose jamais à des associations fondées sur la justice et soumises aux lois. Elle exige de vous une seule chose, c'est que le but soit légitime et les moyens employés conformes à la loi divine." Those who claimed to see nothing wrong in the society were poor dupes and unconscious accomplices; the obligation to retire still remained with them: "Ne sont pas exempts de l'obligation d'abandonner les sociétés défendues, ceux qui prétendent n'y voir aucun mal: car ils sont alors de pauvres dupes à qui

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l'on n'ose pas confier les desseins pervers des loges. Mais en les fréquentant ils se rendent les complices, peut-être inconscients, de tout le mal produit par ces sectes infernales."

These new arguments increased the strength of the attack, and produced wavering and desertion among the friends of the Knights. Le Monde began to suspect their integrity, and abandoned them. It declared: "Nous avons nous-même parlé avantageusement de l'association des Chevaliers du Travail lorsque nous ne soupçonnions pas que sa constitution ne pouvait pas être approuvée par l'Eglise. Nous n'hésitons pas un seul instant à nous soumettre à l'autorité religieuse qui est la seule compétente à juger ces matières. Nous engageons les ouvriers à se soumettre eux aussi, si toutefois ils ne l'ont pas déjà fait. Nous savons que les ouvriers ont cessé de faire partie des Chevaliers du Travail aussitôt que l'association a été défendue par les évêques de la province. Nous osons croire qu'il n'y aura pas un seul recalcitrant. Les ouvriers peuvent travailler à leur avancement social sans faire partie d'une société défendue par l'Eglise."<sup>1</sup>

The Knights still hoped and fought desperately. One of them hoped that the difficulty with the Church would be adjusted; not however by amending the constitution, but by "laying the matter before the Papal Nuncio, and explaining to him that our Order is recognised in the United States and in the other provinces of the Dominion, and to show to his Excellency that it is in no way antagonistic to the Church."<sup>2</sup> And in reply to a question whether the Pastoral Letter had any disastrous effect on the Order, a Knight confidently replied: "No! Not by any means." According to this Knight, too, it seems that the members of the Order

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1. Le Monde, 26 June, 1886.

2. Montreal Star, 22 June, 1886.

refused "to heed the injunction"; but they did not consider this action as being disrespectful to Archbishop Fabre, for they felt that he "only affixed his signature to the letter for the sake of form. Mgr. Fabre feels disposed as a matter of fact to tolerate the Knights, whom he has found to be as harmless as they are numerous."<sup>1</sup> A special despatch of 29th June to the Hamilton Palladium also gave a bright picture of the situation in Montreal. Seeing that the defection of Le Monde was already a fact three days before, the despatch was somewhat exaggerated: it stated -"Organization still keeps going on in the city. Notwithstanding the obstacles thrown in the way. The Mandement [sic] of the Quebec Council of bishops is not going to hurt the movement in the least, and there have been no deserters from the Order in consequence of it; on the contrary there are new assemblies coming into line every week, and hundreds of new members stepping into line."<sup>2</sup> The Knights had friends, too, in the Irish Catholics: these latter had requested Rome some time previously to prevent their bishops from meddling either directly or indirectly with the Home Rule scheme, and it was felt that they would be more hostile to dictation than the French Canadian Catholics.<sup>3</sup>

L'Etendard published the full text of the Pastoral Letter in its issue of June 21st. It considered it "un vénérable document", so "vénérable" as to publish it "à l'exclusion de matières très importantes." It said: "Cette lettre doit fixer définitivement l'opinion des catholiques touchant les dangers énormes dont cette secte infame [i.e. Freemasonry] nous menace, et l'obligation qui existe pour tous de la combattre sans merci."

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1. Montreal Star, 8 July, 1886.
2. The Hamilton Palladium, 3 July, 1886.
3. Montreal Star, 22 June, 1886.

With the Hamilton Palladium it was different. A bitter editorial claimed that a systematic effort was being made to destroy the Order in Quebec province; that the Quebec bishops were animated by social and political, fully as much as by theological considerations. They mostly belonged to the 'old' and aristocrat French families, and were closely allied by relationship and community of feeling with the "rascally Bleu politicians, whose extravagance and profligacy have done so much to plunge Canada in debt." Men of this class viewed with alarm the growth of a vigorous independent democratic public opinion, such as was always engendered by the spread of Knighthood. The politicians and the wealthy monopolists of Quebec province, finding themselves unable to check the movement in any other way, had as a last resort induced the bishops to interpose, and by putting the Order under the ban to stop its progress.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to these charges, the following remarks may be made. The wealthy monopolists and the bishops might have acted through "relationship and community of feeling"; but to prove such a statement by documentary evidence would be difficult: similarly difficult to prove would be any connection between any individual monopolist and any individual bishop. It seems, however, that such relations between individuals, or groups of individuals, of the Catholic clergy and the monopolists did not exist.<sup>2</sup> Similarly difficult to prove would be any relations between the churchmen and the political parties: and, again, it seems very unlikely that these relations existed. For the Bleus -as well as the Rouges - were at the time trying to win the support of the workingmen.

The last attack on the Knights was in the form of a circular,

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 26 June, 1886.

2. Taschereau at least, would have acted as he did without their encouragement.

issued by Taschereau and dated July 31, 1886. In it he related that on the 13th May, he had submitted to His Eminence the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda, the divergences of opinion expressed in the newspapers of Canada and the United States concerning the Knights condemned in September 1884. As it was claimed the effect of the sentence was suspended by an appeal which, it was asserted, had been sent to Rome, following on changes made in the constitution of the Order, he asked His Eminence what they were to do. A letter from Cardinal Simeoni, dated 12 July, informed him that, on the 27th of June, the Holy Office after having again examined the question, had maintained its judgment of 1884.

The appeal of the Knights to the Holy See had been held out as a reason that, pending a final decision, people might continue to enroll themselves in the Order or remain in it, provided that they were sincerely disposed to obey the sentence this appeal might bring forth. Taschereau now doubted whether such an appeal was actually sent: "The absolute silence preserved by the Holy Office in regard to this pretended appeal, in the decision which I today communicate to your Grace, proves that this appeal has not been sent to the Holy See, and that it has been expected to deceive Catholics by invoking it as a means of protection against the sentence of September 1884." Even if an appeal were sent, he considered that the decision of the 27th June would be an answer to the same. He concluded: "I cannot see that there can now be any doubt on the line of conduct to be followed by Catholics of the entire world, over whom extends the jurisdiction of this Holy Congregation."<sup>1</sup>

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1. The full text is given in La Minerve, 13 Aug., 1886.  
With slight alterations it is also given by the Star, 13 Aug., 1886.



It is to be noticed that, by this last statement, Taschereau considered that the decision of the Holy See should be obeyed by Catholics "of the entire world". He was evidently referring to the Catholics in the rest of Canada outside Quebec province and in the United States.

The effect of the circular was negligible - at least on the surface. The Hamilton Palladium said that Taschereau's edict had no effect in breaking up assemblies of the Order, or of causing withdrawals.<sup>1</sup> Later, a Montreal correspondent wrote: "For some time a great deal has been said and written about the K. of L. and the R.C. Church. To peruse some of the papers one would imagine that the Order was shattered to pieces, and that the members were running away from it like rats would from a terrier. I would have written you concerning this affair, but I thought I would wait and see what the result would be; and after giving the matter careful attention, I am happy to state there has not been one deserter from our ranks, here to the city of Quebec."<sup>2</sup>

Le Monde maintained the position it had taken after the publication of the Pastoral Letter. It rejected the Knights, encouraged the workingmen to abandon the Order, and to form associations in harmony with the teachings of the Catholic Church.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, a despatch from Baltimore showed that Cardinal Gibbons of that city did not consider Taschereau's condemnation as being the attitude of the Catholic Church towards the Order:

Le Monde reported him as saying - "La condamnation des Chevaliers du Travail par le cardinal Taschereau ne devrait pas être prise comme

1. The Hamilton Palladium, 21 Aug., 1886.

2. Ibid., 11 Sept., 1886.

3. Le Monde, 14 Aug., 1886.

étant le sentiment de l'Eglise envers cette organisation." He said, however, he was not familiar with the organisation in Quebec province, but that "il est certain que l'hostilité du cardinal est venue de ce que les Chevaliers auraient dans Quebec des règlements locaux ou une attitude contraires aux doctrines de l'Eglise." But with reference to the Order in the United States, while he had not thoroughly examined their constitution nor studied their aims, nevertheless the press reports and the reports about Mr. Powderly led him to conclude "que les buts des Chevaliers sont dignes de louanges et nullement opposés aux vues de l'Eglise. Les prélats catholiques se prononceront tous, comme un seul homme, en faveur de l'organization ouvrière. Il ne peut y avoir de mal dans une telle ligne de conduite. L'organization est la base de tout progrès, politique, social, et religieux. C'est seulement quand on en abuse que l'Eglise élève la voix et rapelle ses enfants." He explained that there were different types of secret societies, some dangerous, and some harmless; the latter the Church would support: "Nous soutenons..... que si un homme fait partie d'une société, jure de ne jamais révéler aucune de ses opérations, quelque criminelles qu'elles soient, et d'obéir aveuglement aux dictées de ses officiers, il abandonne sa liberté personnelle, devient l'esclave de ses semblables et ne peut participer aux sacraments de l'Eglise. D'un autre côté, si un homme se joint à une organisation et, jure de ne révéler aucune de ses opérations, pourvu que celles-ci ne soient pas contraires aux lois du pays, de sa conscience et de ses principes religieux, nous soutenons que cette action est tout à fait justifiable. Toute la question touchant l'attitude de l'Eglise envers les Chevaliers du Travail dépend des serments que font les membres.

Si c'est le serment mentionné en dernier lieu et s'il est conforme aux déclarations de M. Powderly, alors l'Eglise dit aux Chevaliers du Travail: 'Que Dieu vous conduise.' "<sup>1</sup> This was a realistic attitude to adopt. It showed furthermore that the United States Catholic authorities were by no means disposed to answer Taschereau's call that Catholics "of the entire world" should obey the instructions of the Holy See.

The Montreal Daily Star tended to follow the path taken by Le Monde, though it tried to take up a position of neutrality. It considered the Order a secret society, and therefore dishonest, or at least, having no "advantage". On the other hand, it held that there could be no doubt "among fair-minded people" that some combination among workingmen was necessary. It was better for the Order to give up its secrecy, and only good can come from having open meetings: "In countries so free as are the United States and Canada no possible harm can accrue to workingmen if they make their meetings free and open to public scrutiny. Public opinion will come irresistibly to the support of any union over which capital may show a disposition to tyrannize if that union be composed of honest men<sup>2</sup> openly engaged in an upright cause."

The bishops of Quebec province - with probably a few exceptions - followed the line laid down by Taschereau. It seems however that their obedience was automatic, and that therefore, personally, they might have held opposite opinions. In any case, at High Mass in St. Patrick's church on Sunday October 3rd the Rev. Father Dowd said that the Archbishop and Bishops had denounced the Knights, and he found himself obliged to utter

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1. Le Monde, 17 Aug., 1886  
 2. Montreal Star, 14 Aug., 1886.

the condemnation in common with the other bishops of the province. It was the duty of all good Catholics to shun the organization, and if they had joined it to abandon it at once. He attacked the Knights on the strike method and on the fact that they had their executive in a foreign country.<sup>1</sup>

Even in Ontario, Taschereau was beginning to find a favorable response. Mgr. O'Brien of Toronto said that the condemnation of the Knights by the Holy See was - in the words of Le Monde - "absolue et sans appel" and that "tous les catholiques devraient y obéir dans toutes les parties de l'univers". But even his attitude showed an automatic character: he hoped that the difficulty between the Knights and the Church would be "réglée à l'amiable", and that the constitution of the Order modified "de manière à satisfaire le Saint Père."<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the ecclesiastical thunders, the curé of Notre-Dame, Sentenne, had to warn against the Knights over two months later. To those who said that they saw no evil in the Order, Sentenne replied that the Church looked at things from a more elevated viewpoint and saw them more clearly than they did themselves. He told them moreover: "Même si vous avez peur qu'on ne fasse perdre votre emploi, en laissant la société, vous ne devez pas hésiter, à l'exemple des martyrs qui ont souffert la mort plutôt que d'abjurer leur religion et leurs principes. 'Notre contre-maître trouvera quelque raison pour nous faire chasser de notre emploi, si nous renonçons à la Chevalerie', nous disent quelques ouvriers. Eh bien, si tel est le cas, c'est là une raison plus que suffisante de condamner cette société; car une association qui s'érige ainsi en tyran

1. Montreal Star, 14 Aug., 1886.

2. Le Monde, 24 Aug., 1886.

de l'honnête ouvrier ne saurait être bonne et honnête. La classe ouvrière n'a jamais eu à regretter la confiance qu'elle a toujours mise dans son clergé; qu'elle prenne garde de se laisser dépouiller de cette boussole si sûre et si précieuse, c'est la société qui en souffrirait et les classes ouvrières, les premières, en ressentiraient tout le mal." He warned the faithful to be on guard against the modifications that the Knights had made in their constitution "spécialement pour le Canada". He advised: "prenons garde que ce ne soit un leurre; car si la constitution est modifiée pour le Canada, ceux qui appartiennent à cette société n'en seront pas moins soumis à la direction de chefs résidant à l'étranger et se conduisant d'après les règles de la constitution primitive."<sup>1</sup> The curé was attempting to break down all excuses: he succeeded in showing how stubborn were the Knights and how futile the Church's attempts to destroy them.

As we have already related, there seems to have been no connection between the policy of the Catholic Church and any political party. The policy of the Church was based purely on instructions from Rome. But as the provincial elections of October 1886 drew near, the Church took a hand in alienating support from the labor candidates. The Hamilton Palladium charged: "The fulminations of the dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church in the Province of Quebec, against the Knights of Labor are being resumed with increased vigor, as the elections in that Province draw near." But this political activity of the Church was only temporary, and secondary to its religious motives. The Palladium was therefore in a sense, incorrect in claiming that this political activity of the Church "confirms our previously expressed opinion that the animus of the movement is political rather than religious."<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly too, even if the Church had not

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1. Le Monde, 2 Nov., 1886.

2. The Hamilton Palladium, 9 Oct., 1886.

participated actively in politics, its policy would have caused the labor candidates to lose many a vote among Catholics; and this result was surer to come, and greater in magnitude, when the Church did work actively on the political stage.

It was unfortunate that the Church conflicted with the Knights. When Henry George was in Montreal in December 1886, he told a Star reporter that he thought that<sup>1</sup> there was no reason for the Catholic Church in Canada to interfere with the organization. Large numbers of the members were good Catholics and they found nothing in opposition to their religious practice. The order inculcated morality, religion and temperance, and strongly advocated educational progress, principles in accord with the teaching of the Church.<sup>1</sup> And Henry George was quite right. The whole conflict could have been avoided -as it was in the United States- but for the unbending, bureaucratic nature of Taschereau, who was at best a good servant obeying the letter of his instructions, but a bad statesman.

The influence of the Church was not unopposed. Not only did the Knights resent it, but at least one other voice was heard in protest. The pastor Cruchet -probably a Protestant - wrote: "J'affirme que le clergé catholique romain est moralement responsable de cet état de choses, parceque des siècles il façonne l'âme, le coeur, la conscience et l'intelligence du peuple et courbe sa volonté à une obéissance prompte et docile. C'est lui qui a donné au peuple les idées et les croyances religieuses qu'il professe et qui lui a prescrit ses devoirs. C'est lui qui a contrôlé l'instruction et qui l'a donnée ou fait donner au peuple comme il l'a voulu.....[Le clergé catholique] détourne le peuple

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1. Montreal Star, 20 Dec., 1886.

de l'instruction, décourage le travail de la pensée, condamne la liberté de recherche et les convictions religieuses qui ont un caractère personnel. Mais il se garde bien de toucher aux superstitions qui hantent l'imagination du peuple et à l'idée fétichiste qu'il se fait du prêtre. C'est que l'ignorance et la superstition menent à la servitude; et le rêve du clergé est de gouverner avec une autorité despotique le monde tout entier."<sup>1</sup> One cannot always accept statements made by partisans. And Cruchet was an ardent national. Hence his charges might have been somewhat exaggerated; but there was some element of truth in them.

But the fortunes of the Knights were destined to rise. Cardinal Gibbons went to Rome and made a "strong plea forcibly expressed" on their behalf. His appeal was further strengthened by the report of the ablegate Mgr. Stranieri, which stated that the principles of the Order were not opposed either to religion or to the social order, that the Order was not a secret society, that it had no political or religious bias, but that its object was simply to protect labor from the injustices of employers.<sup>2</sup>

Cardinal Gibbons made it clear that he spent months studying the question, and was guided by the Encyclicals of Leo XIII, and by the teachings of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore. This latter body had set up a Commission of Archbishops, which studied the Order. Of the twelve archbishops on the Commission, only two voted for condemnation of the Order. The vote of the others was determined by the considerations which he was about to present.

Firstly, he could find nothing in the constitution, the laws and official declarations of the Order, which could put it among those

1. La Minerve, 18 Jan., 1887.

2. Montreal Star, 5 March, 1887.

associations condemned by the Holy See.

Secondly, there were real injustices in American society, which ought to be resisted and remedied.

Thirdly, the workers, rejecting those associations forbidden by the Church, formed themselves into associations "n'ayant rien en commun avec les desseins funestes des ennemis de la religion, et ne cherchant que leur protection et assistance mutuelles et l'assertion légitime de leurs droits." Once again, however, they found themselves menaced with condemnation, and deprived of their only means of defence. Surprised, they began to question why?

Fourthly, the objections to the Order could be disposed of. The mixing of Catholics and Protestants did not work to the peril of the former: it was neither possible nor necessary to substitute brotherhoods under the direction of priests or under the direct influence of religion, for the workers' organizations: while it was true that the liberty of the organization exposed Catholics to the sinister influences of the most dangerous associates, even of atheists, communists and anarchists, yet good Catholics mistrusted them with good sense and firmness: the strikes associated with workers' associations, were not the invention of the Order; under the conditions, violence was as inevitable as it was regrettable; and the Order did not encourage violence.

Fifthly, the masses of the people were becoming more and more prominent on the page of history. The United States presented an aspect " d'un pouvoir populaire réglé par l'amour de bon ordre, par respect pour la religion, par obéissance à l'autorité des lois; ce n'est pas la démocratie de licence et de violence, mais la vraie démocratie qui cherche la prospérité générale par la voie des sains principes et du bon ordre social." Hence, in order to conserve such a desirable state, it was



"absolument nécessaire que la religion continue à posséder les affections, et régler ainsi la conduite des multitudes.....Perdre l'influence sur le peuple, ce serait perdre le futur tout entier; et c'est par le coeur, beaucoup plus que l'entendement, qu'il faut tenir et guider cette puissance immense pour le bien ou pour le mal."

Sixthly, the consequences of any contrary policy by the Church would be that the Church would lose its right of being considered as "l'amie du peuple"; that the hostility of the "pouvoir politique" of the nation would be roused, and the Church branded as "unaméricain"; and the danger would be incurred of losing the love of the "enfants de l'Eglise", and pushing them into an attitude of rebellion towards their Mother. For, the Cardinal warned: "Le monde entier ne présente pas un spectacle plus beau que celui de leur devotion et obéissances filiales. Mais, il faut le reconnaître, dans notre siècle et dans notre pays, l'obéissance ne peut pas être aveugle. Ce serait se tromper gravement que de s'y attendre. Nos ouvriers catholiques croient sincèrement qu'ils ne cherchent que la justice, et par les voies légitimes. Une condamnation serait regardée comme fausse et injuste, et ne serait pas acceptée. Nous pourrions bien leur prêcher l'obéissance et la confiance dans l'Eglise; mais ces bonnes dispositions ne pourraient pas aller si loin. Ils aiment l'Eglise et ils veulent sauver leurs âmes; mais aussi il leur faut gagner leur vie; et le travail est maintenant tellement organisé que, sans appartenir à l'organisation, il y a très peu de chance pour gagner la vie."<sup>1</sup>

The arguments of Cardinal Taschereau were powerful because they were based on life. But he made it clear that he did not wish to come

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1. La Minerve, 12th and 16th May, 1887.  
The full text is given in these issues.

into conflict with Taschereau: he said - in the words of La Minerve - "Avant tout je désire qu'il soit bien compris qu'il n'y a pas de divergence d'opinion essentielle entre l'archevêque de Québec et moi sur ce sujet. La société canadienne-française n'est pas celle des Etats-Unis, et peut-être les autorités ecclésiastiques et administratives canadiennes-françaises sont plus portées à s'alarmer que nous et à voir surgir des revolutions."<sup>1</sup> That there was this possible difference between the Knights in Canada and in the United States, he had already maintained. And, in fact, there were some Canadians who asserted that Cardinal Gibbons' representations did not apply to the Canadian Knights.<sup>2</sup> But favorable results were to come for them.

They also received, indirectly, moral support from Cardinal Manning of Westminster, England. In a letter he wrote - according to La Minerve - "J'ai lu avec la plus grande satisfaction le document du Cardinal Gibbons au sujet des Chevaliers du Travail.....Les arguments du cardinal sont irrésistibles." So enthusiastic was he that he thought that a copy of his conference on the dignity and rights of labor would qualify him "pour être choisi comme chevalier de l'ordre."<sup>3</sup>

Taschereau was not impressed by Cardinal Manning's letter.<sup>4</sup> But he issued a circular to the clergy, dated 5th April 1887, in which he said that following the representations made by the bishops in the United States, the Holy See had suspended until further instructions the effect

1. La Minerve, 11 March, 1887.

2. Montreal Star, 5 March, 1887.

3. La Minerve, 1 April, 1887.

4. Ibid., 12 April, 1887.

of its sentence of September 1884 against the Knights. He therefore ordered the confessors of his diocese to absolve the Knights on the following conditions:-

- " 1. Qu'ils s'accusent et se repentent sincèrement du péché grave dont ils se sont rendus coupables en n'obeissant pas au décret de Septembre 1884;
- " 2. Qu'ils soient prêts à abandonner cette société aussitôt que le Saint-Siège l'ordonnera;
- " 3. Qu'ils promettent sincèrement et explicitement d'éviter absolument tout ce qui peut favoriser les sociétés maçonniques et autres qui sont condamnées, ou blesser les lois de la justice, de la charité ou de l'Etat;
- " 4. Qu'ils s'abstiennent de toute promesse et de tout serment par lequel ils s'obligeraient à obéir aveuglement à tous les ordres des directeurs de la société ou à garder un secret absolu même vis-à-vis autorités légitimes."

In favor of the penitent only and in virtue of an indult, he also prolonged the time of the ~~Easter~~ communion up to the feast of the Ascension inclusively.<sup>1</sup>

The condemnation of the Knights was merely suspended. The Church authorities pointed out, according to a Star reporter, that "the position of the order before the Vatican was still in the same position as before, but that an indulgence had been granted." One prominent priest repeated that the indulgence did not affect the result if the decision of the Vatican should ultimately be against the Order.

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1. La Minerve, 12 April, 1887.

The Church's policy was determined in this way because the Order then was "not the same body as was condemned, their rules being so altered as to make it a public and not a secret organization."<sup>1</sup> There was nothing final in Taschereau's circular.

Taschereau said that it was the strict duty of the priests to explain the conditions. The Rev. Curé Sentenne of Notre Dame did so. He read the circular. Then he repeated the tale of how, when Christ left the earth to dwell with his Almighty Father, he appointed Peter to administer the affairs of the Church; how Peter had received unlimited power from heaven; how that power was handed from Pope to Pope until now it reached Leo XIII; how all good Catholics were to obey the Pope, since he was God's representative. Taschereau was the Pope's representative in Canada. The cure then said that some Catholics had disobeyed the Cardinal's decree by remaining in the Order. Some had done so without malice but others had sinned most grievously. Nevertheless the Church in its almighty kindness, and only desiring the good of its children had decided to suspend the decree against the Knights and give the faithful who had gone astray, an opportunity of returning to the path of righteousness and obedience. It had consented to wait for its children to return and give them plenty of time to avert a future decree. He earnestly hoped that there would not be a single Catholic Knight who would not profit by the occasion.<sup>2</sup> A comparison with Cardinal Gibbons' plea would show that the curé's explanation was very different from the real motives which inspired the Holy See to change its policy with reference to the Knights.

The suspension of the condemnation was favorable to the Order.

1. Montreal Star, 11 April, 1887.

2. Ibid., 15 Aug., 1887.

When Mr. A.A. Carlton, representative of the General Executive Board of the Knights at Philadelphia, gave an address at Quebec City, the meeting was presided over by the mayor, and many Roman Catholics were on the platform.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, Cardinal Gibbons' plea brought more decisive results. The Church there supported the Knights without condition. At the Minneapolis General Assembly in October, Mr. Powderly read letters from ecclesiastics of high standing to show that the Catholic Church was not hostile to the Order.<sup>2</sup>

Following the suspension of the decree of September 1884, the Vatican followed a policy of non-intervention as regards the Knights. On the request of the Vatican as to the advisability of the Catholic Church interfering with the Knights, the Commission of American bishops voted ten to two in favor of a decision that "there is no occasion for the Church to make a special deliverance regarding the Knights of Labor." The Congregation in Rome, after examining the question, also arrived at the same conclusion, and the secretary of the Congregation communicated this resolution to Cardinal Gibbons in a note. When, subsequently, an attempt was made in the United States to induce the Vatican to reverse its decision, the Holy See refused to reopen the question.<sup>3</sup>

Taschereau was not satisfied. On the 6th January 1888, he wrote a letter on the Knights. He repeated the conditions 2, 3, and 4 for absolution contained in his circular of 5th April 1887, and said that Catholics, who did not satisfy one of these conditions, were unworthy of the sacraments of the Church. He advised strongly - je conseille fortement - all Catholics of the Archdiocese not to enroll

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1. Montreal Star, 15 Aug., 1887.

2. Ibid., 10 Oct., 1887.

3. Ibid., 28 July, 1887.

in the Order, "qui est pour le moins dangereuse", and to leave it as soon as possible if they were members. He then reiterated the conclusions arrived at by the bishops of the fourth council of Quebec of 14 May 1868, and which he had incorporated in his mandement of 19 April 1886. He proceeded to lay down further obligations:

" 1. Un catholique ne peut pas entrer ou rester dans la société des chevaliers du travail si dans la reception d'un membre il y a des cérémonies qui ressentent la franc-maçonnerie condamnée absolument et sous toutes les formes qu'elle prend;

" 2. Un catholique ne peut pas entrer ou rester dans une société où l'on exige des membres un serment ou même un simple promesse d'obéir aveuglement à toutes les ordres des directeurs, ou à des règlements qui en pratique seraient contraires aux lois de la justice, ou de la charité, ou de l'Etat, comme cela arrive trop souvent dans les grèves;

" 3. Si dans une assemblée de la société un membre quelconque, et à plus forte raison un chef, énonce des principes contraire à la religion, à la justice, à la charité, à la loi, et n'est pas appelé à l'ordre et blâmé, cette approbation tacite et indirecte de mauvais principes doit être regardée par tout catholique sincère comme une insulte à sa foi et une invitation qui lui est faite de sortir au plus tôt de la société;

" 4. Toute menace faite pour engager quelqu'un à entrer ou à rester dans la société, ou à commettre quelque injustice, doit être regardée comme un attentat à la liberté personnelle et comme une preuve qu'il y a quelque chose de mauvais de la société."<sup>1</sup>

This letter seems unnecessary. The only explanation seems to be that Taschereau was hurt in his pride with the success of the bishops in

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1. La Minerve, 10 Jan., 1888.

the United States, and that therefore he wanted to assert himself, however disagreeable he became in consequence.

The following points are clear from the foregoing.

The attacks of the Quebec Catholic Church on the Knights were set off by the denunciation of Freemasonry by the Holy See. These assaults were largely the result of Taschereau adhering too much to the letter of his instructions. The bishops of the province obeyed Taschereau blindly; but there were exceptions among them. The Catholic Church in Ontario was more favorable to the Knights. In the United States, the Church authorities were at best vacillating in their attitude at first. Later, Cardinal Gibbons there swung the pendulum decisively in favor of the Knights. The Holy See suspended its sentence of condemnation. In Quebec Taschereau grudgingly granted an indulgence.

Throughout the conflict, the Knights made every effort to come to terms with the Church; but Taschereau looked upon them with suspicion.

The issue was hotly debated in the press. The French papers especially were either wholeheartedly on the side of the Church, or they toed the line quickly after an initial deviation.

The precise results of the Church's attacks on the Knights in Canada cannot be determined, because of the conflicting nature of the reports arising from the partisanship of the press. But there were, indeed, Catholics who defied Taschereau's condemnation and remained in the Order.

The whole conflict was unnecessary. The Order was not a threat to society: its preaching of land-nationalisation was neither far-reaching nor was it translated into practice: instead of violence the Order advocated social peace. The political activities of the United States were undertaken not in the name of the Order: in Canada, the political leaders

aimed not to overthrow the political system, but to use the usual political procedures to gain largely economic ends. Even from the purely religious viewpoint, there was nothing dangerous in the Order: the religious passages in the initiation ceremonies were long ago dropped, and the Order was sincere in its attempts to come to an agreement with the Church. Even the dreaded secrecy was harmless: it is significant that when Powderly had his first interview with Cardinal Gibbons as late as the 28th October 1886, the Cardinal, in his enquiry on the Constitution, "never once referred" to the secret work or ritual.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Powderly: The Path I Trod, (p. 348.)



## CHAPTER V.

### CONCLUSION.

Prof. Ware was correct in characterizing the Order in the United States as "primarily a bargaining organization"<sup>1</sup> and not a political one.<sup>2</sup> For Powderly himself said: "We do not propose to have any part in politics. It is bread and butter, the rights of the employed, the material and concrete things of everyday life that constitute the elements which do now and always will hold us together."<sup>3</sup> It was only in Canada that some political activity was undertaken; but then it was done largely to gain economic ends.

And the Knights made a commendable attempt to better the condition of the working classes. Their most realistic aim, the most 'revolutionary' in so far as it went, was their attempt to bring about the land reforms. They did not go as far as Henry George officially, but this aim was practicable. The Knights put greater hopes in co-operation however: theoretically co-operation was possible, but success could only have been achieved under exceptionally favorable circumstances; the half-hearted support given to the co-operative ventures, the lack of capital, the difficulty of competing with larger and more efficient capitals in the same line of business - these factors made for disaster, or at best scant success.

The Knights tried to satisfy too many social classes that necessarily conflicted with one another. In this feature lay their decisive weakness: it arose from the economic and social conditions of the time,

1. N.J.Ware: The Labor Movement in the United States, 1865-1895; (p.163.)

2. Ware: op. cit., (p.43.)

3. Montreal Star, 9 March, 1886.

when classes were still fluid, when small-scale industry was still predominant, when even the wage system was still "comparatively new";<sup>1</sup> when, consequently, social antagonisms were not clear-cut and the interests of the farmer, the small employer and the wage laborer were held to be more or less identical. The heterogeneity of the membership of the Order, and the consequent vacillation in the leadership were largely to be explained in this transitory, this fluctuating character of North American society. It was real insight on the part of the leaders, under such conditions to divine the 'solidarity' of the interests of the wage-earning class. But perhaps, to the Knights the concept was not quite as clear as this.

The coming of the Order into Canada provided some backbone to the Canadian labor movement. When D.J.O'Donoghue lectured to Montreal workingmen at Nordheimer's Hall on the evening of the 25th February 1886, he recalled how eleven years previously, he had lectured in the city in public on the labor question, and how the men who came to listen "came shrinking along in the shadows of the walls so much did they fear lest their employers should come to know where they had been": but, he added, "There is no such fear today." Indeed there were 600 people gathered to hear him, most of them being workingmen.<sup>2</sup>

As in the United States, so in Canada, the Order represented an advance over the trade unions, in that it overstepped the particularism of the unions by pointing towards labor solidarity (however imperfectly this was understood) and by having larger aims. But in another sense, the Order was nothing but a trade union writ large: there was nothing in the

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1. Ware: op. cit., (p.74.)

2. Montreal Star, 26 Feb., 1886.

Order so revolutionary as to profoundly upset the social system. The Order in Canada was in its methods far in advance of the parent body in the United States, in that here it actively engaged in politics: however this political activity was in no way terrible in its aims; for it aimed merely to better the condition of the worker within the framework of the capitalist system. And in fact, the Order did achieve something in this direction for Canadian workers.<sup>1</sup>

Lacking a truly revolutionary programme, it was idle for the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec to assail the Order. Clerical condemnation had been based mainly on instructions from Rome and their literal execution by Taschereau.

If the aims of the Order reflected the social and economic conditions of the time, one may well ask why the Order declined. The answer to this question has already been given. The basis of its decline lay in precisely the same fact. Class interests and selfishness caused internal dissension. Even those who belonged to the wage-earning class quarreled among themselves, as instanced by the hostility of the trade unions to the Order. Reflecting conditions that were essentially transitory and unsettled, the leaders could have no clear-cut policy, no definite objective. Lacking such a policy, the Order consequently failed to present itself as a rallying point for the working class, and became an easy prey to other corroding influences as the opposition of capital and social disinterestedness.

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1. D.R.Kennedy: The Knights of Labor in Canada, (p.136).

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