

The Times, Saturday, Jul 13, 1889; pg. 7; Issue 32750; col C

THE WORKERS' CONGRESS.

PARIS, JULY 12.

The International Workers' Congress, which is to meet next Monday, will be numerously attended. Credentials have been received from ten different nationalities, but the English are most numerous. Nineteen trade unions or trade councils send representatives, including Mr. Burt, M.P., and Mr. Fenwick, M.P., for the Northumberland miners. Six different English societies and 15 branches of the Social Democratic Federation have also appointed delegates. The Belgian Labour party, the trades of Verviers and Liège and the miners of La Hestre, the Italian Labour party, some trade societies from Vienna, Hungary, Switzerland, Madrid, and Barcelona, the Labour party of Portugal, and the Knights of Labour of America are all sending delegates. Adhesions from other nationalities are still expected. One hundred and five Parisian trade unions send 253 delegates, and the trade societies of 17 provincial towns have also appointed delegates, among these being eight from Algeria. A large number of workmen's clubs will be represented. Altogether up to the present moment 227 societies, established in 59 different towns or industrial centres, will be represented by 470 delegates.

The Times, Tuesday, Jul 16, 1889; pg. 5; Issue 32752; col B

THE WORKERS' CONGRESS.

PARIS, JULY 15.

The International Workers' Congress organized by the Possibilist party met to-day in the hall at No. 10, Rue de Langry. The proceedings were very orderly, and the large hall was crammed with delegates, their number having greatly increased during the last two days. There are 191 French societies represented by 421 delegates, coming from 35 different towns. There has also been an increase of foreign adhesions, Denmark, Holland, and Poland having sent representatives.

The business was principally of a formal character. Mr. Snow, member of the Tottenham School Board, was elected foreign chairman, and M. Joffrin, vice-president of the Paris Municipal Council, French chairman. M. Lavy, on behalf of the national committee, gave in a report on the organization of the Congress, and explained that they had done all they could to insure the union of working men. The doors of the Congress were open, he said, to all, and no distinctions as to opinions were made. Their bitterest enemies might enter, on condition that they could prove they were properly appointed and elected, and so long as they only discussed such questions as were down on the *agenda*. They did not believe in individuals, and therefore should only discuss subjects which had been before the societies represented, and on which those societies had had an opportunity of instructing their representatives. There was another principle they wished to maintain. They were anxious to reconstitute an International Workers' Association, but only on the condition that this association absolutely respected the autonomy of each national party, and did not attempt to interfere with the internal affairs of the associated countries.

Various foreign delegates then spoke. An Hungarian delegate complained that the Austrian newspapers which had defended their interests had been suppressed by the police, merely for announcing that this Congress was about to take place. Nevertheless, the Hungarian delegates present represented more than 40 societies. Some of the Spanish, Italian, Danish, English, and Portuguese members of the Congress spoke briefly. The strikes existing in the respective countries were referred to, and the efforts made to induce foreign workmen to take the places of those who were on strike. This, it was hoped, the Congress would prevent; and all the speakers advocated the reconstruction of an International Workers' Association.

The delegates then adjourned, and proceeded, grouped according to nationality, to a strict verification of their credentials. This evening the Congress is entertained at the Salle Wagram by the members of the Paris Labour Exchange.

*PARIS, JULY 15.

In the International Socialist Congress to-day, Herr Liebknecht, one of the Socialist Democrat members of the Reichstag, delivered a speech, in the course of which he declared that working Germany and working France united in this congress, which was not one of theorists.

"On the contrary," added the speaker, "we are making a compact, and contracting an alliance which will exercise an influence throughout the world."

The Times, Wednesday, Jul 17, 1889; pg. 5; Issue 32753; col A

LATEST INTELLIGENCE.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS.)

THE WORKERS' CONGRESS.

PARIS, JULY 16.

This morning M. Clément was elected French chairman and M. Defnet, secretary of the Belgian Labour party, foreign chairman of the International Workers' Congress. The representatives of the various nationalities having in the interval verified their credentials, gave in their reports. From these it appeared that the various English Trade Unions and political societies represented numbered in all 139,273 members, while the four American delegates represented between them 48,000 members, the Dutch 5,000, the Danes 20,200, the Spaniards 30,000, and the Portuguese 28,847. In the verification of the French mandates the very greatest severity was exercised, and a somewhat noisy incident arose because one trade had sent as its delegate a well-known Boulangist agitator. A proposal was made to pass a vote of censure on the society which had made this choice, but Mr. Fenwick, M.P., delivered an energetic speech against such a suggestion. The Congress, he said, had no right to discuss the political opinions of the delegates; it could only inquire whether they were *bonâ fide* representatives. This view was endorsed by all the foreign members and the majority of the French delegates present. Though the sitting was prolonged for several hours, the business done was purely formal.

LATER.

At the evening sitting great excitement prevailed, the question discussed being a proposal, emanating from the Belgian delegation, to amalgamate with the rival, or Marxist, international Congress. All the speakers (24 delegates tried to address the assembly on the subject) were in favour of union, but disagreed as to the means by which this was to be brought about. Mrs. Annie Besant was rapturously applauded when, in an energetic speech, she repudiated the accusation of personal differences, and declared that they were struggling for a matter of fundamental principle. They maintained that a person, however eminent and great his services, had no right to speak at a Congress unless he was elected properly by a *bonâ fide* society. Therefore, the credentials of the delegates to the other Congress must be examined, like those of delegates sent to the Possibilist Congress. The Italian delegates, Mr. John Burns, and the Belgian delegates insisted that the cause of union was more important than the question of credentials.

The chairman had the greatest difficulty in bringing the discussion to a close. It was past midnight, and the proprietor of the hall had already put out half the gas lights before the vote could be taken, and then this was done amidst so much confusion that the result is somewhat uncertain. Still it would seem that the Americans, Dutch, and Belgians were in favour of uniting with the Marxist Congress without examining the credentials of the Marxist delegates. The English, Danish, French, Spanish, and Portuguese delegates were in favour of union only if it was preceded by the strict examination of the credentials of the delegates to the other Congress. This would indicate that the amalgamation of the two Congresses will not take place, for it is almost certain that the Marxists will not allow the Possibilists to examine their credentials, though the latter are ready to submit Possibilist mandates to any scrutiny.

The Times, Thursday, Jul 18, 1889; pg. 5; Issue 32754; col B

THE WORKERS' CONGRESS.

PARIS, JULY 17.

This morning M. Allemane, for France, and Mr. Brown, of the American Knights of Labour, were elected joint presidents of the Workers' Congress. Great anxiety was manifested to know the exact result of last night's vote. The secretary of the Congress reported that the proposed amalgamation with the rival Congress had been carried, subject to the examination of the credentials of each new delegate coming from the other Congress. The delegates for seven nationalities had approved this, including those for the two most important countries—namely, France and England. The representatives of five nationalities were against the verification of the credentials—counting as a nationality the Polish delegate of a small society of Polish refugees. A letter notifying this result was forthwith drawn up and sent to the Marxist Congress.

The secretary of the Belgian Labour party, M. Defnet, then read a report on the condition of affairs in his own country, repeating some of the information given at the London Congress of last November. He added, however, that the new Belgian law, establishing courts of arbitration, had not proved a success, as there was now an important strike against an employer who had refused to accept the verdict of these courts. M. Defnet insisted on the necessity of establishing intimate relations between the English and Belgian coal-miners.

M. Jensen, the Danish delegate, explained that the Social-Democrats of Denmark numbered 50,000 and the Trade Unionists 25,000; that their labour newspapers were now profitable concerns, and that they had succeeded in returning a representative to Parliament, though the vote was only given to those who had attained the age of 30, and had an income of over £40.

The Spanish delegate pointed out how powerful the labour organizations of Spain had been in the days of the old International, and how these bodies had fallen to pieces, in consequence of internal squabbles over theoretical questions; but he remarked that they were now prospering once more, and able to support seven labour newspapers. The Spanish labour organizations were divided into three factions—Anarchist, Marxist, and Possibilist—and it was difficult to say which was the strongest.

LATER.

The honours of the evening sitting fell to the Dutch delegate, M. Fortuijn, who was elected foreign chairman. At the opening of the proceedings the reply from the Marxist Congress was read. It refused to amalgamate. The Possibilists had made a condition of the verification of credentials, and the Marxists wished for union without conditions. M. Joffrin thereupon rose and appealed to the foreigners to bear witness that the Possibilists had avoided all personalities and had done all they could for union, and this though they knew the Marxist Congress was composed in part of fictitious delegates, some representing fictitious nations. They had a delegate of Alsace-Lorraine, who voted as the representative of a special and separate nationality. Signor Costa tried to revive the question of fusion once more, but was sternly put down by the Congress. At that moment a Russian delegation entered the hall, thus adding one more to the list of nationalities represented.

The Portuguese, Dutch, English, Americans, and Poles abandoned the right to report on the condition of their respective countries so as to be able to discuss at once the first question on the agenda—international legislation on labour. Mr. Bowen, representing the Knights of Labour, related that, as in America there were 40 Parliaments, one for each State, it was difficult to obtain legislation. It was also difficult to obtain improvements by the action of trade unions, because of the constant influx of immigrants. He urged that the many dishonest misrepresentations made by emigration agents ought to subject such men to severe penalties. The workers of Europe would win the sympathy and support of the Americans if they would take up the question of emigration.

Four French delegates and a Dane spoke, and all advocated international legislation to limit the hours of labour. They pleaded in favour of an eight hours' day, the reduction of night work, and improved inspection of factories, and urged that children should not be allowed to labour before they were 16 years old. The discussion was adjourned till to-morrow.

The Times, Friday, Jul 19, 1889; pg. 5; Issue 32755; col B

THE WORKERS' CONGRESS.

PARIS, JULY 16.

M. Jensen, the Danish delegate, and M. Dumais, Municipal Councillor, presided at this morning's sitting of the Workers' Congress. Mr. Walkor opened the discussion by urging that the trade unions were not strong enough to win the eight hours working day, and that it was at once more easy and more economical to obtain this by means of an international law. This fact was becoming patent to an increasing number of trade unionists. Mr. Hobart related the successful attempt to create a union among the gas-workers in London, the number of unionists having increased from 80 to 5,000 in 14 weeks. They had secured an increase of wages and a reduction of hours. This done, they were now menaced by improvements in machinery which would destroy these advantages. Therefore, on behalf of the Social-Democrats, he desired to declare that an eight hours day and other such reforms supplied only stepping-stones and not a solution of the labour problem. Peaceably if possible, by other means if necessary, they were determined to put an end to the prevailing misery, but nothing could be done without organization and the display of practical administrative capacity.

The delegate of the Cooks' Trade Union, from Algiers, protested that cooks should be treated as workmen, and not as domestics, and suggested the sanitary inspection of the unwholesome kitchens in which they worked. M. Clément, from the district of the Ardennes, described the prevalence of the sweating system and the miserable wages earned by the country people. At Charleville some boys worked in a glass factory for 2½d. per day. The boys among themselves organized a strike, but such was the poverty prevailing in the neighbourhood that their mothers drove the boys back to the glass works. M. Lenormand, of the Hairdressers' Society, spoke energetically against agencies that found employment for workmen in Paris. More than 300,000 persons were constantly taxed by these agencies.

All the speakers demanded an international eight hours law, one day's rest in seven, the better inspection of workshops, and the prohibition of work for young persons who had not reached the age of 16.

LATER.

The Portuguese delegate, Senhor Figueiredo, and M. Bertrand presided over the evening sitting, at which the discussion on international legislation was continued. Dr. Merlin delivered a speech in favour of anarchism, and denounced all legislation as a snare and a delusion. No one was found to agree with him, though out of fairness he was given a very courteous and patient hearing. Mr. John Burns answered, pointing out that workmen preferred Parliaments and laws, with eight hours of work, to anarchist freedom, with 14 hours of work. M. Dumais urged that even the French middle-class Republic had enacted laws of great benefit to the working classes.

Mr. Fenwick, M.P., said that when trades were well organized they generally obtained reasonable improvements. In a conference held this afternoon with foreign miners he had found that the English miners worked seven and a half hours, while they earned 2s. a day more than the German and Belgian miners, though the latter worked 12 hours. In such circumstances it was impossible to obtain further improvement in England unless the Continental miners were able to better their position. He would oppose a local eight hours law. An international eight hours law would be difficult of application. Would domestic servants, for instance, have to work only eight hours? Nevertheless, he would approve of an eight hours law, if it could be obtained, on condition that it was international. M. Limanofsky, the Polish delegate, urged that such legislation could only be international when countries like Poland, Russia, and Germany had regained their freedom.

Certain resolutions prepared by the standing orders committee were then put. The Italian delegation, being divided into Anarchists and Socialists, abstained from voting. The English would not accept Clause 6, as they disapproved of overtime altogether. The Swiss and Russian delegates, being absent, did not record their votes. With these reservations, the following nationalities voted yes:—England, the United States, Belgium, Spain, Denmark, Poland, Austria-Hungary, Portugal, and the 300 French delegates. There was no opposition vote. The resolutions thus carried may be thus summarized:—(1) Eight hours a day to be the maximum of the day's work fixed by international law, (2) at least one day's holiday to be given each week, and no work to be done on *fête* days, (3) abolition of night work as far as practicable for men, and entirely for women and children, (4) the total suppression of labour by children below the age of 14, and protection of children up to the age of 18, (5) complete technical and professional education, (6) overtime to be paid for at double rates, and limited to four hours in twenty-four, (7) civil and criminal responsibility of the employers for accidents, (8) an adequate number of qualified inspectors to be nominated by the workers themselves, and paid by the State or the commune, with full power to enter workshops,

factories, or religious establishments at any time, and to examine the apprentices at their own homes, (9) workshops to be organized by the workers with subsidies from the municipalities or the State, (10) prison and workhouse labour to be conducted under the same conditions as free labour, and to be employed as far as possible on great public works, (11) no foreign labourers to be allowed to accept employment, and no employers to be allowed to employ such labourers, at rates of wages below the Trade Union rates fixed for their trade, (12) a minimum wage to be fixed in every country, in accordance with a reasonable standard of living, (13) the abrogation of all laws against the international organization of labour, (14) equal pay and opportunities for women and men for equal work.

At the meeting of the Marxist Congress this morning, Mr. William Morris stated that Socialism, almost unknown in England six years ago, had become a power which had to be reckoned with. Socialist stump orators, formerly hooted, were now enthusiastically applauded. Other speakers dwelt on the progress of Socialism in Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Russia, and Roumania. There are 21 English delegates at this Congress, just half the number present at the Possibilist Congress.

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THE WORKERS' CONGRESS.

PARIS, JULY 19.

The honours of the morning sitting of the Workers' Congress were given to the Polish delegate, M. Boleslas Limanowski, who was elected president. M. Dubois was named French president, and Mr. Christie, of Edinburgh, vice-president. The Polish chairman expressed his gratitude for the honour rendered to his downtrodden and bleeding country. A number of resolutions were carried without discussion. The first was that the resolutions bearing on international labour legislation should be sent to the Conference convoked by the Swiss Government at Berne. Another was that when the State prevents children from working, it should provide for their free education with maintenance.

The second question on the agenda was then introduced by Mr. Hyndman. He pointed out that the English Socialists had kept in the background during the Congress, because they found that the trade unionists were acting loyally, and in the most excellent spirit. The Socialists had supported all the palliative measures proposed, and he trusted that the good understanding between the two would be maintained. They had now to establish the principle that each national labour party understood best what tactics it should follow, and that a permanent central council, with power to give orders to branches throughout Europe, would fall into the hands of a clique.

Mr. Cooper, on behalf of the London Trades Council, congratulated Mr. Hyndman on his very judicious speech, and regretted that his conciliatory ideas had not been better and sooner known in England, as they would have secured greater harmony of action between the Socialists and the English trade unionists. He deplored the action of the Trade Union Parliamentary Committee in abandoning this Congress, though pledged to give it firm support. He begged the Socialists to believe that when the trade unionists had obtained small measures of improvement they would not rest satisfied.

A Spanish delegate spoke warmly in favour of union between nations based on complete autonomy, as any interference with each other's business would certainly break up the union between the various labour parties of the world. Mr. Greenwood (representing the glass-bottle makers) who had brought £200 to help the French glass-workers on strike, was anxious to have an international bureau for the translation and forwarding of correspondence on labour questions, and a resolution to this effect was carried.

At the afternoon sitting M. Bonvalet, a Belgian delegate, was called to the chair, and M. Verryken, also a Belgian, read the report of the Standing Orders Committee on international organization. It was favourable to the establishment of a correspondence bureau which might facilitate international intercourse, but which should have no power to give directions or orders. This was carried. The next resolution adopted was one suggested by the Amalgamated Engineers, and proposed by Mr. Eveleigh, that it should be obligatory to teach French in all English schools and English in all French schools, while the schools of every other nation, besides the native language, should teach either French or English. Thus the next generation would possess either the French or the English language, and the peoples of all nations would be able to speak to each other.

The third question, the formation of trusts or rings, was now taken in hand. M. Coupeau pointed out the international character of capital, and insisted that the State should stand between

the capitalist and the worker, and protect the latter. Mr. Herbert Burrows thought that the formation of trusts or syndicates among capitalists who would otherwise compete with each other was the last stage in the evolution of capitalism towards Socialism. It was difficult by law to prevent capitalists associating with each other, but when by such association they became the complete masters of any one branch of industry or trade, and converted it into a monopoly, then the time was ripe for the State to step in, capture that monopoly, and work it for the advantage, not of a few individuals, but of the entire community. At this stage the Congress adjourned.

At the Marxist Congress to-day reports were presented on economic conditions in Sweden, Denmark, and America, and on the Westphalian mines, &c. Herr Bebel, a member of the German Reichstag, warned his colleagues to be cautious in their conversation, as wolves in sheeps' clothing were present. The advice was also given to the Germans by Herr Volmar to burn all their papers before returning home. The speeches delivered at this Congress to-day showed that Republican institutions and universal suffrage are regarded with as little favour as monarchies and limited suffrage. France and the United States are threatened with revolutions as much as England, Italy, and Germany. If universal suffrage is against the Marxists, it is not to be converted, but subverted. The canopy of tobacco smoke which hangs over the meetings of the Marxists suggests the reflection that they are voluntary contributors to the revenue raised by the Governments denounced by them. Self-denial, however, is notoriously difficult in small matters.

Both Congresses are invited to-night to a wine party by the Municipal Council at the Hôtel de Ville. The Marxists, after some hesitation, accepted the invitation to meet the Possibilists, but hitherto it cannot be said "See how these Socialists love one another!"

THE WORKERS' CONGRESS.

PARIS, JULY 21.

Yesterday morning the discussion concerning the formation of trusts was continued, though the French delegates clearly showed that they did not understand the meaning of the word. At last Mr. Bowen, representing the American Knights of Labour, explained that a trust was a combination of capitalists to monopolize the whole of business. They then became the only purchasers, and therefore could buy cheap; the only sellers, and therefore could sell dear; the only employers of labour, and therefore could pay low wages. Nevertheless, by the economies realized in the concentration of management, the greater knowledge of the requirements of the market, and the more scientific methods of production, a trust could sell cheaper and yet make greater profits. Thus the Standard Oil Company had replaced 3,000 small producers, and now oil was cheaper. The trusts had rendered immense service by destroying competition, and demonstrating practically that private enterprise and the rivalry of one against another were not essential elements of progress.

Trusts, said Mr. Bowen, would have to fight not the workers, but the small capitalists, and were sure to win, for the extinction of the weakest was but the fulfilment of a natural law. On the other hand, while capital was thus concentrating labour was also uniting its efforts; and the future would rest between monopoly and co-operation. If there were but one tyrant in the world standing on 16 square inches of space it would not be difficult to overthrow him. Trusts, by piling up capital, would render the creation of collective industry much easier. The workers had only to organize, and when labour and capital were thoroughly concentrated would weld them together, and the social question would be solved.

Two resolutions were then carried on this subject. The first, dealing with rings, called upon the Governments to oppose monopolies of raw materials and the articles necessary for existence. The second, dealing with trusts, declared that it was impossible to prevent their formation, but that the working classes ought to organize, so as to take over these trusts and work them for the benefit of the entire community.

At the final sitting, held last night, the hall was crowded to suffocation. Amid loud cheers Mrs. Annie Besant was called to the chair. After some discussion it was decided that the next international Congress should be held at Brussels two years hence. Meanwhile, the national committee of the Belgian Labour party will act as an international Correspondence Bureau for the labour organizations of the old world.

Thus the International has been resuscitated on lines diametrically opposed to those on which it was founded. There will be no central council having the right to interfere with the Labour parties of the different countries; but a federal Labour Bureau, possessing no rights and no powers, and with the sole mission of facilitating intercourse between the different countries. The Congress of 1891, it was further stipulated, should be managed on exactly the same principles as the Possibilist Congress which has just terminated its labours. The Belgian Labour party, now intrusted with this international mission, numbers about 150,000 adherents. Its general secretary is M. Defnet, and its headquarters are at the Maison du Peuple, Brussels.

A number of resolutions were passed without discussion. One presented by Mr. Drew, who represented the London building trades, called upon Governments and municipalities not to give out contracts unless the contractor undertook to pay the Trade Union rates of wages. Another affirmed that to render possible a thorough understanding between the workers of the world oppressed nations must recover their freedom. Mrs. Besant and M. Lavy delivered the concluding speeches. Both alluded to the dangers menacing the French Republic, and were greeted with tremendous applause when urging that every possible means should be employed to resist General Boulanger. The proceedings broke up very harmoniously amid general congratulations. According to the report issued by the managing committee, the number of delegates had notably increased. There were 142 foreign societies and federations of societies, represented by 91 delegates, and 227 French and provincial societies, represented by 521 delegates, giving a grand total of 612 delegates with mandates to speak on behalf of 14 different nationalities.

