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LABOUR DAY IN DUBLIN GREAT TRADES PROCESSION MEETING IN THE PHOENIX PARK

The Freemans' Journal - 4th May 1891

The procession and the meeting which yesterday made up the public observance of Labour Day in Dublin were both demonstrations of a very striking and singular character. The observance of this newest of festivals were marked in many places on the continent by the scenes of turbulence and violence, culminating in some instances in loss of life. The distinguishing feature of the Dublin demonstration was its peace and good order; still so far as earnestness could be displayed, there was nothing lacking. To those who have to follow demonstration after demonstration, and who are constantly hearing the cheers of great crowds and the sounds of the tramping feet of many thousands of men, such gatherings appeal neither so directly nor so powerfully as to those who make such meetings an era-making date; but, on the other hand, the eye accustomed to these assemblages of the people judges at once of their reality and representative character. That the demonstration of yesterday represented the labour and the working interest of the Irish metropolis there is not the slight doubt.

The trades assembled at Beresford Place and in the streets abutting on the open space and nearly all the contingents were headed by very handsome banners. Some of these ensigns of the trades were very striking and many of them full of artistic colouring. The chromolithographers marched after a banner belonging to the London branch, which was brought over specially for the occasion, and was full of daring contrasts of colour treated with much skill. By far the handsomest pictorial emblem displayed was the fine banner of the Stonecutters, which from every point of view deserved all the admiration of the multitude. A curious piece of bunting was carried at the head of the Amalgamated Railway Servants contingent – a Union Jack on a green ground. The stewards who had charge of the arrangements worked most energetically, and the great mass of men was got into order with very little difficulty and without the slightest confusion.

The bands began to assemble at half past two o'clock and an hour after that time the procession started for the Nine Acres Phoenix Park. The procession took forty five minutes to pass a given point, and a spectacle made a very picturesque display. The weather was not altogether favourable but the state of the atmosphere was just that in which the beautiful scenery of the Phoenix Park is seen to most

advantage. Over the background formed by the Dublin mountains there was a soft suffused light, which merged into the grey mist that hung about the hawthorns and the green sward of the park. The people thronged about the three platforms on the polo ground and the waiving banners, which marked out the positions of the different trades, broke the line of the black mass of men and added an element which to the artist for the illustrated papers must have been a perfect blessing.

*The trades were divided into fourteen sections,
which assembled at the following points:-*

Sections;

- 1st*, Coal Porters, Eden Quay, northside.
- 2nd*, United Labourers, north-east corner of Eden Quay and Beresford place,
- 3rd* Shipping Industries, Lower Abbey Street, south side, facing Beresford place.
- 4th*, Ancient Order of Foresters, Lower portion of Marlborough Street, facing Abbey Street.
- 5th*, Engineering Trades, do.
- 6th*, Miscellaneous Trades, O'Connell Street, east side.
- 7th*, Branches of Gas Workers Union, Lower Abbey Street between O'Connell Street and Marlborough Street.
- 8th*, Furnishing Trades, Marlborough Street, upper portion, facing Abbey Street.
- 9th*, Coach and Harness Trades, Lower Abbey Street, north side, facing Marlborough Street.
- 10th*, National Foresters, Beresford place, near Loop Line.
- 11th*, Railway and Tram men, Lower Gardiner Street.
- 12th*, Printing Trades, Eden Quay, south side, near O'Connell bridge.
- 13th*, Provision Trades, Eden Quay, south side, opposite Marlborough Quay.
- 14th*, Building Trades, Burgh Quay, facing Westmoreland Street.

The marshals were assisted in arranging the procession by a number of horsemen, delegates from the Carmen's and Horseshoers' Associations.

The stereotypers appeared in a trades' procession for the first time, this being but a lately organised branch of the trades. The whole procession was marshalled by Mr.

James Collins and so well were the arrangements carried out that the various sections took up the places allotted to them without delay.

The trades taking part in the demonstrations were:

National Union of Dock Labourers – Number of members in ranks 500; name of band, Sarsfield Fire and Drum band. Names of stewards or other officers: John Clarke, president; Peter Darcy, vice-president; J. Davison, secretary; Pat Cassidy, Mick Tierney, John Campbell, David Hoolahan, John Reilly, Tom Caffrey, Chas Ward, Pat Nolan, John Whelan.

Sailors and Firemen's Union – Number of members in ranks 300. Alliance Gas Band. M Bolger, sec; stewards – F. Roache, T Wall; marshall, D. Connor

Biscuit Operatives – Number of members in ranks 193; P. James Griffin, president; Patrick Cushen sec.

St. James's Branch, Grand Canal Labourers; Michael Megan, president; Daniel Burke, Secretary; John Kavanagh, check steward; William Kelly, collecting steward. Procession Stewards – Peter Grey, William Watt, Edward Walsh, James McDonnell. Banner Bearers – Patrick McDonagh, Michael Donohoe, James Foran, John Lawlor, Francis Keegan, and Michael Murphy.

Clondalkin Branch United Labourers of Ireland Trades Union – Wolfe Tone Band, Blue Bell President of branch T. Callaghan. Members of Branch; P. Cavanagh, W. Ryan, J. Murphy, W. Thindle, P. Kough, M. Cavanagh, J. Bollard, T. Butterley, T. Tancred, A. Nolan, P. Harrin, J. Kelly, and others

Ancient order of Foresters, Dublin District – Number of members in ranks 250, name of band, Finglas Fife and Drum, names of banner stewards or other officers, E. Manning D.C.R; E. Moore, D.S.C.R.

Iron Founder- Number of members 120; name of band, brass band; banner; name of stewards or other officers, C. Keogan, president; G. Bonaface, secretary, Campbell, Hutton.

Hairdressers Assistants Trade Union – Number of members, in ranks 126, name of band, St. Andrew's; name of stewards or other officers, Wogan, Feeney, Hayden, Grif-fith, McMahon; sec Brereton pres, R Murphy

Bottlemakers: Number of members in ranks, 150; name of band, St. Catherine's fife and drum; names of stewards or other officers, president, L. Byrne; secretary, T. Donald, son; steward C. Dunne.

City of Dublin Regular Wine and Tea, Porters Association – Number of members in ranks, 440; trade banner, name of band, St. Mary's brass band, Rathmines; names of stewards or other officers, John Archibold, president; WM Kelly, treasurer; Jan Hickey, sec.

United Tobacco Trade Society – Number of members in ranks, 90, name of band, St. Catherine's file and drum; names of stewards or other officers, Jas Canning, R. Peelo.

Brickmakers – Number of members in ranks, 100; name of band, Wolf Tone banner; names of stewards or other officers. P. Carroll, president; J. Scanlan, sec; J. Vaughan, treasurer; Messrs. J. Wrenn, H. Murphy, T. King, J. Ward, J. Kendolen, T. Doyle, stewards.

Upholsterers Association – Number of members in ranks, 70; name of band, fife and rum band; banner; names of stewards or other officers, W. Wilkins, chairman; R. Tisdall, sec; Messrs Buckley, Harris, M. Walsh, stewards.

Goldsmiths – Numbers in ranks, 50; names of stewards or other offices, J. Bermingham, sec; G. Oman, M. Carr treasurer.

Coachmakers – Number of members in ranks 230; name of band, St. Paul's Milltown; names of stewards or other officers, Wm Gardiner, president; Geo Power sec; Thos Connor, steward.

Operative Horseshoers – Number of members in ranks 150, with 20 mounted; name of band, the trade's own band; names of stewards or other officers, J. Gorman, president; P. Redmond, secretary; C. Cummins, treasurer; M. Boyle, marshal.

Irish National Foresters – Number of members in ranks, 1,500; name of band, Emmet and Dunleer Brass Band; names of stewards or other officer, Messrs. Walsh, Farrell, Johnson, Fay and Cox.

The Workmen's Club, 41 York Street, was represented by their band and 200 members, amongst whom were Messrs. Jas J.P. Magennis, chairman; E.J. Cullen, vice-chairman, J.W. Moran, hon sec; Michael Tighe, John O'Connor, Joseph O'Brien, O. Delaney, Richard Levins, C. O'Mahony, Wm Walsh, T. Moran, T. O'Connor, J. Seery, Wm Breen, Jas Brooks, J. Handcock, E. O'Rourke, Sam Osborne, T. Murphy, J. Healy, Thomas Malone, PJ Kelly, W. Gaynor.

Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants – Number of members in ranks, 1,100, name of band, Workingmen's Club York Street; names of stewards or other officers; H. O'Rourke, marshal; branch stewards, P. Burne, B. Dunne. B. Gaynor, P. Tynan, T. Sherlock, M. Carroll; marshal, Mr. P. Burns.

The Dublin and District Tramways Union – Number of members in ranks, 60; name of band, St. Andrews; names of stewards, or other officers. T. O'Neill, secretary.

Dublin Typographical Society – Number of members in ranks, 600; name of band, St. Jame's Brass Band; names of stewards or other officers, W. Moore, chairman; J. Doyle, J.J. Joyce, T. Halpin, J. O'Brien, W. Norton, M. Loughlin, M. Glynn, E. Richardson, P. Seery, O. Timmons, T. Joyce.

Dublin Stereotypers' Society – Chairman, John White; treasurer, P. Armstrong; secretary, E J Dignam; M. Brophy, P. Fox, W. Flood; number of members, 50. The emblem of this society was of a purple colour, with the name of the society. There was also an inch and a quarter of gold fringe, which made it appear a neatly finished emblem of Irish manufacture.

Bookbinders – Number of members in ranks, 160; name of band, St. Mary's Band; names of stewards or other offi-

cers, M. Kinsella, president; Thomas Kilkenny, secretary.

Bakers' Trades Union – Numbers of members in ranks, 550; name of band, Trade Band; names of stewards or other officers, J. Flood, president; J. Lawlor, secretary; John Byrne, J. Morrin, stewards.

The Operative Pork Butchers and Bacon Curers; Branch of the G.W.U. – President, Charles Ousbourne; vice-president, Edward Kingsbury; treasurer, Patrick Shea; secretary, Edward Collins; number of members 200; banner bearers, Thomas Hogan, Thomas Sherry.

Operative Plumbers – Number of members in ranks, 100; name of band, Brass Band; trade banner; names of stewards or other officers, Mr. S. Connor, vice-president; Messrs. T. Elders, J. Sloane, G. Elders, J. Rylands, P. Dowd, stewards.

House Painters – number of members in ranks, 400; name of band, Trade Band; names of stewards or other officers, M. Bermingham, president; J. Warren, treasurer; P. Clarke, secretary.

Regular Operative Stucco Plasterers – Number of members in ranks, 500; name of band, St. Agatha Fife and Drum Band; names of stewards and other officers; Chairman, James Hogan; secretary, William Darcy; committee, S. Daniels, P. Malone, S. Logan, S. Leahy, C. Meehan, M. Doyle, J. Sutton; stewards, F. O'Brien, S. O'Brien, P. Rielly.

Stonecutters – Number of members in ranks, 400; name of band, Trade Band; names of stewards or other officers – M. Clancy, president; P. Smith, sec; M. Comerford, steward.

Saw Mill Machinists – Number of members in ranks, 100; name of band, Drumcondra Fife.

Operative Slaters – Number of members in ranks, 200; name of band, Rathmines Fife and Drum Band; name of stewards and other offices, P. Shephard, president; W. Haskins, sec; Thos. McDermott, J. Haskins, L. Geaghty, Wm. McKeon, D. Shephard, P. McDermott, stewards.

Brick and Stone Layers – Number of members in ranks 500, name of band, trade band; names of stewards and other officers, Patrick Clarke (master), Master L. Mulhall, J. Nolan (stewards), Michael Ennis (sec).

Lath Spinners were represented by a deputation.

United Labourers of Ireland Trade Union and Branches – South and North City Branches, Corporation, Saggart, Naas, Athy, Clondalkin, Ballynockan, Kildare. Represented by their splendid fife and drum band and Saggart Band and three banners, their new banner being truly magnificent.

The members of the Tobacconists' Association were represented by the following; James Kelly, chairman; Owen McCann, vice-chairman, T.J. Duggan, treasurer; Ed Andrews, secretary; also Felix McCann, John Corcoran, Thomas McGonegal, J. Kelly, Robert Malone, M. Grane, J. M. Devine, John Fay, M.J. McGonegal.

Stationary Engine Drivers – Number of members in ranks, 70; name of band, Dawn of Freedom; name of stewards or other officers, P. Donnolly, M. Farrell, E. Hayes and J. Snayes.

Dublin Operative Horse Shoers' Society – Number of members in ranks, 150 and 20 horsemen; names of band; trades own band; names of stewards or other officer, president James Salmon; secretary, Patrick Redmond; marshal; Mick Byle, treasurer, Christopher Cumins.

Bakers' Trades' Union (Bridge street) – Number of members in ranks, 520; name of band, trade band; names of stewards or other officers, James Lawlor, secretary; James Flood, president; John Byrne and Joseph Murrin, trustees.

PLATFORM No 1.

Speeches of the President Trades' Council and of Messrs. Poole and Wm. Field.

Around the brakes and cars at this platform a great crowd of people assembled. Mr. John Martin, the President of the Trades' Council and Labour League, presided. The proceedings were marked by perfect unanimity, and were most enthusiastic.

The Chairman, on coming forward, was received with loud cheering. He thanked them for having honoured him by asking him to preside over the thousands of labourers and tradesmen of Dublin who had assembled. They met that day under rather peculiar circumstances. The trades of Dublin of all classes met united, which had been for sometime unknown (hear, hear and cheers). He congratulated them on their great meeting, and though large demonstrations had been held elsewhere, yet in this poor little city they were able to hold their own (hear, hear). They had shown that there existed a unity of all classes of labour. (A Voice – "Union is strength"). They had shown that the workingmen of Dublin were united and would continue to be so for ever (cheers). Let nothing disturb that unit (hear, hear). He regretted that on the Continent several of the Governments had thought it necessary to interfere with demonstrations such as that, but in the countries where the Governments did not interfere the demonstrations passed off quietly, while the contrary was the effect in the other countries. In this movement they asked nothing but what was reasonable (cheers). They demanded reasonable working hours (cheers).

Their first resolution would ask for the eight hours as their working hours (cheers). At the Liverpool Congress, which he had attended, as a representative of the Trades Council, a vote had been carried that the legal eight hours were necessary, and if that right was not legally granted to them let them have recourse to other measures (cheers). He pointed out that railwaymen and firemen were now working fourteen and fifteen hours per day (cries of "Shame, shame"), and many females at other pursuits were working just as long. In this progressive stage his opinion was that the workingman would not stand such treatment any longer (cries of "No, no"). It

was only by united action they could obtain what they asked for, the eight hours and it was reasonable (cheers). The second resolution would deal with the question of organisation (hear, hear). He need not point out to them the great necessity for organisation. Without it they could get nothing. They had in their city many men who, for want of organisation, were in such a state that they never could have reached had they organised. If many of their shop assistants had organised years ago, would they be now worked as they are? He might mention that this was not the first time that a Dublin labour movement had taken a prominent part. Some years ago they had done so in the interest of the carpenters, and had gained the 60 hours time, while in England they were working 69 hours.

In conclusion he (the President) pointed out that another resolution would deal with capital and labour. It was a question that effected them all (hear). They asked nothing unreasonable from the capitalists – all they wanted from them was fair play (cheers). There would be a resolution on the subject of the municipal franchise. It was a peculiar anomaly that while the trades and labour people had the power to rule the destinies of the Empire their Government would not give them the control of their own municipal affairs. He considered it was most degrading to the workingmen not to have the municipal franchise extended to them (hear, hear). If they only showed determinedly that they wanted the concessions they would gain them within a limited time.

He submitted to the meeting the following resolutions –

1. That we, the workingmen of Dublin, are of opinion that the working day should be restricted to eight hours, and we hereby pledge ourselves to use every possible effort to bring about that reform by legislation of or otherwise. (Cheers)
2. That this mass meeting urges upon all workingmen the necessity for organisation, believing that no progress whatever for the elevation of the masses can be made without the aid of combination. (Cheers).
3. That in the opinion of this meeting the laws between capital and labour are unequal, and must be rectified in the interest of the community at large. (Cheers).
4. That we, the workingmen of Dublin consider the time has arrived when the municipal and Parliamentary franchise should be assimilated, and we call on our Parliamentary representatives to have such an act immediately passed, and we also believe that Irish labour should have representation in Parliament. (Cheers).

Mr. J. Poole, who was received with loud cheering, seconded the adoption of the resolutions. He said that when “Labour Day” in May came to be merely an “outing” then he thought that men of intelligence would stay away, but to-day they were there because work had to be done (cheers), and he felt confident that they would do it. They would not be here if they had not seen the poor suffering in their lanes and alleys in the big cities to the squares and suburbs. In the former there was no crime committed, because he held that a man who, through

want of occupation, who, to prevent himself from starving, committed an offence it did not amount to a crime (hear, hear); while in the latter places they found the rich man, who never worked at all. Amongst the rich there were many with feeling hearts, who thought that by dispensing charity they would close their mouths, but they did not want charity (cries of “No, no”, and “Never, never”). Every man there had a right to do a fair days work for a fair day’s wages. (Cheers). He considered that when a man received alms he became degraded (hear, hear). He was there on their behalf not to plead for anything (cheers), but to demand that to which they had a right (cheers).

The speaker then alluded to the Royal Commission on Labour, and said he believed that the working men would receive nothing from that commission. The majority of the commission were composed of English plutocrats, who would do nothing for the poor except give them hush money (cheers). On this subject what did the voice of labour say while working for the poor and in sympathy with them – “One remedy immediately and directly wanted is the eight hours a day work and fair wages.” Of course against this they had the capitalists, who argue their objections to it are on the grounds of foreign competition. He never heard anything so silly. He asked was it not a serious thing to trust the lives of people to a railway signalman who works 14 or 15 hours a day, and where would foreign competition come in?. Would they have to go to Cork by a foreign route (laughter and hear, hear).

He pointed out that now on this subject the rebel men of Dublin were in union with the English men of Dublin. They saw the labour men of Germany sympathising with their brethren in France (cheers). He saw no reason why all should not unite, and then he believed their demand would be granted (cheers). As to this movement, he (Mr. Poole) remarked that it had been said it was likely to bring about a reduction of wages. He believed that could not be so, because if the present wages were reduced the workingmen would not have enough to support themselves. If this eight hours system was adopted the wages would become higher. It would keep unfit workmen out of jobs, and he asked where would the scabs and black-legs find employment? (Cheers).

Now, how were they to make the eight hour movement a success? One resolution said by “legal means or otherwise.” They wanted to see what the “otherwise” amounted to, and he thought the work, they were engaged in that day in getting that demand was the proper course. When the capitalists saw them assembling in their thousands they would commence to think of giving something. He also thought a strike would be a good thing but he never would recommend that course. Their little capital would run out, but when men can strike, and when it was necessary, they should strike. If some demands were granted in consequence of strikes the hours would continue.

The eight hours in his opinion should be universal. The poor tradesmen as well as the well to do one who is able

to fight should be looked after. He (Mr. Poole) then referred to the great necessity of organising the labour in the agricultural districts, and said that he had heard people grumbling against the members of Parliament that they were a worthless sort. Who sent them into Parliament? It was they the workingmen of Dublin. He would not say that they had been sent in unpledged, but the working men had never asked them for a pledge. They could not at present censure a single member of Parliament, because they had not asked them to fight for them. He now appeared to them to vote for no man unless he was sound on the Labour question, no matter what his politics were (hear, hear). Vote for no man who is ashamed of the labourer's vote (cheers). Vote for no man who cannot be honestly trusted to work for the Labour cause (cheers).

Mr. William Field of Blackrock, one of the trustees for the Traders Hall, Capel Street, supported the resolutions. On coming forward he was received with cheers. He said he was glad to be on the platform, because it was the first indication that the men of Dublin were going to do their own thinking, and because that meant the resurrection of the labourer (cheers). He recognised in this their first labour day, and that they who worked were not going to remain the slaves of the few who used them as mere machines (cheers). He contended that the people were the State (hear, hear). What liberty had they previous to this movement except the liberty to starve (hear, hear). What was the party who had taken up the workers – they had no existence – and why, because they did not assert themselves, because they had thrown aside the only weapon they had for political warfare combination. Until they, the working men, proved themselves a powerful combination to meet with emergencies, no political party would care for them (cheers).

He considered that they should agitate for universal suffrage. Every man should have a vote. It was a monstrous thing to think that the workingmen in Dublin could not vote for a man for the Corporation. He wished to impress upon them that the wealth of a nation was not constituted in the banks, or the army or the navy, or the police even in the constabulary (laughter), but it was constituted in their right arms (cheers). All the power came from the people, and when they were organised their demand would be at once granted. He asked who built the railways, the houses, and contributed mostly to the welfare of the country but labour, and what has labour received in return? The right to live in the slums and alleys of the cities – to live in destitution. The laws had given them the right to labour all their lifetime and them to die in the workhouse. He urged upon his hearers to get at the next general election written pledges from the Parliamentary candidates consenting to support this movement (cheers). By the trades and labour organisation keeping united they would soon succeed in this movement.

Mr. James Lawlor, of the Bakers' Society, supported the resolutions and stated that the bakers worked from six o'clock in the evening until eight o'clock in the morning, and he compared these hours with the hours of work done

by bank clerks and Government officials. He represented over 3,000 men, who belonged to his society.

Mr. Whelan, of the Gasworkers' Union, also spoke, and said they should demand from their Parliamentary representative that they should see that justice should be done to the labourers (cheers). This meeting should tell all their representatives, be they Parnellites (cheers) – he was glad to hear that response – (cheers, and a voice, "Cheers for Parnell", loud and prolonged cheering).

A Voice: No politics here. This is a meeting for labour rights.

Mr. Whelan said he was glad to hear that response. They all knew that man was prepared to die in championing the cause of the workers of the country. He was satisfied, as an advanced Nationalist, that the cause of the working man was in good keeping when it was in the hands of Mr. Parnell (cheers).

The Chairman pointed out to the speaker that they were there on the labour question, and asked him to speak on it and not introduce any political matters.

Mr. Whelan, while bowing to the decision of the chairman, was of opinion that this question which called for Legislative interference, naturally became a political one (hear, hear, cheers, and cries of no, no). It was an important question and one which English members, no matter who they were could not close their eyes to. Why should they not in Ireland accept a strong Irish representative, such as Mr. Parnell, to champion their cause' (Cheers).

A Voice – Time, time.

The Chairman interrupted Mr. Whelan, who asked was their coercion about to be put on him (cheers, and cries of "no, no").

The Chairman said he was not using coercion but each speaker was confined to a certain time, and he hoped Mr. Whelan would not break that arrangement.

Mr. Whelan said that in the cause, as a Nationalist and workingman, they required to have some one to look after their interests. Mr. Parnell was reputed to be one of the greatest statesmen of the age. Were they going to ignore Mr. Parnell? (Cheers, and cries of "no, no, and chair, chair").

Mr. John Ward, of the painters, Mr. Farrelly, of the bookbinders, Mr. Teeling, and others having addressed the meeting, the resolutions were adopted, and the large gathering separated.

PLATFORM No. 2

**Speeches by Mr. A. Shields, Mr. Davidson, London;
Mr. Curran, Glasgow; Mr. C. O'Reilly
and Mr. F.J. Allan.**

At the second platform a large section of the meeting gathered, and there was considerable enthusiasm displayed by the people during the proceedings. Mr. Adolphus Shields, District Secretary of the Labourers' Union was moved to the chair.

The Chairman, who was received with loud cheers, said it gave him great pleasure to be called upon to preside over a section of that splendid meeting. He thought they had great reason to congratulate themselves on the great strides the labour movement had made during the past couple of years in the country (cheers). A year and a half ago Mr. Michael Davitt (some hissing), speaking at a meeting of the Irish Democratic Federation, felt constrained to tell his hearers that Ireland was in the background of the international labour movement, but he was glad that that reproach at Mr. Davitt's had been removed (Cheers).

The worker in Ireland had decided to take off the bandage, that bound his eyes with prejudice against the advanced labour movement, and had resolved to stretch out his hand to his brothers in England, in America, and on the Continent, and to demand, if he could not get the full fruits of his labour, at least that he should get as large a share of it as possible (cheers). Only a couple of weeks ago in the Antient Concert Rooms they agreed to a labour programme, and they brought that programme within the region of practical political measures, and that was a programme of which no labour party, no matter how advanced, need be ashamed (cheers). At that conference they obtained the adhesion of one of the ablest statesmen of the day (cheers). At the conference also that great statesman pledged himself to land nationalisation and to many other reforms (hear, hear and cheers). After that complete transformation in the position of the labour movement in Ireland he thought they had great reason to be thankful for the progress that had been made (hear, hear).

Now one great sign of the times was the difference between the demonstration of today and the demonstration in the Phoenix Park last year. The numbers were not very much larger this year, but the difference on the present occasion was that the people present there that day represented every class of industry (cheers). That, he thought, indeed was a great step in advance (cheers). Last year only two unions, two of the youngest of the trade unions, took part in the eight hour demonstration, while today every trade, no matter how aristocratic in its tendency, threw in its lot with the unskilled workers that celebrated the eight hour day last year, and resolved to make the demonstration a grand and splendid success (cheers). Now, he was happy to say they had on that platform one of the strongest advocates of advanced trade unionism in England.

He referred to Mr. Peter Curran, who suffered very recently as Mr. Wilson of the Sailors' and Fireman's Union, now was suffering from the results of capitalist made laws (hear, hear). Now, the first resolution was in favour of obtaining an eight hour day by legal enactment or otherwise. They had a significant difference of opinion as to the framing of that resolution, but they all agreed in the end. He personally believed the eight hour day could not be obtained by the great mass of the workers by any other means than by legal enactment. Great and powerful unions like the union to which he belonged – the referred to the Gas Workers' Union – by their enormous power and by the peculiar circumstances which concerned their industry, might be able to wrong an eight hours' day from the capitalist class without legal enactment but what about the men engaged in poor weak industries (hear, hear), and should they not as Christian men and Christian women look to the weak, as well as to the strong, and should they not insist that the weak should be granted the same privileges as the strong (cheers).

Too long had it been otherwise (hear, hear), and if they stood together as they had been doing for the past couple of years in Ireland they would soon change the present state of affairs. Now, the second resolution was in favour of combination amongst workers. Without combination workers would never succeed in increasing their wages and lessening their hours of labour, and without it workers would never be able to safeguard and protect what rights they have gained or been left.

He might give one illustration as showing the necessity for combination which came under his own notice. A body of workers in a certain industry were in the habit of receiving 3s 6d for doing a certain amount of work, and these workers did not see any necessity for combination to prevent their employer reducing that rate of payment. The result was that the payment of 3s 6d was reduced first to 2s, and next the payment of 2s was reduced to 1s, and then, and only then, did the employee see the necessity of there was for combination to protect their rights (hear, hear).

Now he regretted to say his experience very often was that which workers received a benefit from combination, an increase of wages or a reduction of hours, they began to grow cold regarding the organisation which obtained for them that increase of wages or reduction of hours. If these men were wise they would act otherwise. He could if he liked point to a couple of cases in this city where men had obtained a very large increase in their wages, and when they grew cold towards their organisation, and when the capitalists heard that they had grown cold towards it, they at once took away whatever benefits the men had obtained through their solidarity. Well, he could not help feeling almost glad that these men were so repaid for their meanness.

Now, at the conference to which he already alluded a project was started which he fondly hoped would be the means of cementing the workers of Ireland into solid union. A resolution was passed at the conference in favour

of forming an Irish Labour League, and if that resolution was put into effect before long they would have in Ireland a labour combination as powerful and as capable of doing good for those who look up to it as the National League (cheers). He hoped the workers belonging to the trades unions in the cities would join that Labour League. It would only mean a couple of pence extra in the year over what was paid to their own organisation, and the league would have the effect, if successfully carried out, of preventing that great danger from which they suffered continually in cities, namely, of men from the country coming in to blackleg them when city men had disputes with their employers (cheers). In conclusion he urged the workers to stand shoulder to shoulder, and if they did they might feel confident in the near future they would obtain all those rights for which they were now struggling (loud cheers).

Mr. Davidson, of the London Dockers' Union, who was received with loud cheers, moved the resolutions which were given in the report of the meeting presided over by Mr. Foreman. He said it was time that workingmen should seek for a reduction in the hours of work. The long hours of work were murdering and maiming hundreds of thousands of working men every year. The comfortable classes did not realise the immensity of the crime that was being perpetrated on the poor. He could speak for the dock labourers, and he had no hesitation in saying that not less than fifty per cent of them was maimed – some fingers off, some eyes out, legs and arms broken and to a large extent the long hours of work were accountable for this hideous immolation. Men turn up their eyes in astonishment at the horrors perpetrated by Berthelot in Africa, but here at their very doors there were horrors being perpetrated as cruel as any that ever stained the soil of the Dark Continent (hear, hear).

The so called civilisation of the present day was built on the slaughter of the poor (cheers). As far as the dock labourers were concerned they were driven like gallery slaves. They were worked 18, 20, 24 and often 48, hours without intermission in the old of a coal ship, and a few years of that brutal toil made them prematurely old, and they sink into their graves unnoticed by society, or they retire into a workhouse to await the end of their blighted lives (hear, hear). Think of the conditions of the wives and little children of the men thus done death (hear, hear). The imagination refused to realise the awful suffering thus brought about. Hunger, misery, sin, and shame, human hearts crushed, lives blasted, and the little children forced on the streets to beg – often to gravitate to jail and sometimes to the scaffold (hear, hear).

He often wondered that a howl of indignation and rage did not go up from the enslaved masses of the people when they reflected on the horrible crime that is being perpetrated upon them (hear). Robbed of their natural rights in the earth that God made for them equally with others, crushed into the filthy slums to heard worse than brutes, forced to work like gallery slaves to produce wealth for others to use, it was extraordinary that they

had not risen in their might and shaken off this terrible nightmare. They would have done so long since he was convinced but the classes have taken good care to provide for them a potion thus stupefies them and renders them completely submissive. The gin hells were a necessary part of the system that crushed workingmen (hear, hear).

They were there to-day to demand a change in the present social conditions; they were there to demand a just share of the wealth they produced (cheers), and to demonstrate to the world their determination to no longer submit to the grinding toil they had had to undergo (cheers). They demanded, as the essential part of their emancipation, the restoration of their birthright – the land (cheers). They were land animals, depending as much on land for their existence as fish on water, and until they get it all their efforts would be in vain to improve their condition (cheers). The monstrously unjust system, which permitted a few individuals to monopolise and fence in God's earth, and charge other people for the right to use it, was producing other all their sickening misery and these long horrors (cheers). If fish treated the water as men have treated the land, there would be overcrowding of fish in the ocean and they would die of thirst in an unlimited supply of water (cheers). Was there ever anything more preposterous than for the people of Ireland to pay near £20,000,000 a year to a few drones for the right to live on this piece of God's planet?.

Was there ever anything more glaringly absurd than for human beings to be crowded together in slums while there are thousands of smiling acres of land lying waste? (Cheers). This was the root and core of the labour problem. They asserted their right to use this land that was made millions of years after them, and they say that they were only asking justice in asserting this right (cheers). They heard it again and again declared that the working people had no right to the property of the rich, but they wanted it understood that the rich have no right to the property of the working people (loud cheers), and they demanded the unconditional restoration of the property they have stolen from them (cheers).

They did not ask the landlords to disgorge what they had got. They simply asked them to let go their old on the land now and allow them to go out to the suburbs and build homes for themselves (cheers). They demanded that the rent roll that was produced by their toil shall go into the pockets of the nation, and that it will go to pay off all other taxes and provide free trains and free railway travelling for workingmen going and coming from their work (cheers). To him it seemed that this was the only sure and permanent way of reducing the hours of labour and raising wages (cheers).

Workingmen must take an interest in this question. A heavy responsibility rests upon them. They had got the power in their hands in the franchise and they were responsible for the poverty and the suffering which surrounded them; for it was a crime for men to be content under existing conditions, while their wives, their sisters

and their little children were being slowly murdered in the slums of this city; and it was shameful if men did not exert themselves to rescue them from the conditions which were doing them to death as effectually as if they were being choked by a hempen cord. The workingmen of almost every country in the world are up in arms against the grinding tyranny that condemned them to life long, never ending toil (hear, hear). He hoped that the workingmen of Ireland will not be behindhand in this great struggle (cheers). What they wanted to do was to bring their intelligence to bear on the solution of the present difficulty, and having found out the remedy work for it without ceasing, zealously, and with deep determination, always remembering that what they were seeking, was not charity, but justice – no privileges, but rights (cheers).

Mr. Farrelly (Stationary Engine Drivers) seconded the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. Peter Curran, Glasgow, who was received with loud cheer, said it was argued that eight hours would drive trade out of the country, but where the hours were reduced from ten to nine how was it that trade was not driven out of the country? (Cheers). Then the bogie of competition was raised, but they were not afraid of competition (cheers). Next to the land monopoly the railway monopoly was the most abdominal (cheers). The profits from railways amounted annually to seventy millions sterling. Of that seventeen and a half million went to maintain the rolling stock, and seventeen and a half million went to pay wages from the humble worker on the line to the highest official, and the rest was paid away in dividends to shareholders, who might gamble away money which should go to support the child of the signalman or the porter (cheers). After the demonstration that day it could no longer be said that Ireland was in the background in this labour movement (cheers).

Mr. Charles O'Reilly (Letterpress Printers), in supporting the resolution, said he believed the eight hours' day to be adopted in Ireland should first be universal and international. If it were insisted that they should have an eight hours' day in Ireland, while in England and Scotland and other countries men worked nine, ten, and twelve hours at the same trade, then he believed the movement would be an injury to his country, and he certainly would vote against it, (hear, hear). However, in that great demonstration that day they were all tending towards the one object, but before they were able to carry that object to success the movement would have to become universal and international (hear, hear).

Mr. Fred J. Allan, who was received with cheers, said they might well be proud of that demonstration. Mr. O'Reilly said the movement to be successful should be universal, and international; but it should be remembered, bad as the laws were in their country, they were not obliged to meet under cavalry charges nor were they shot down as at Rome because they assembled to put forward and advanced social programme (cheers). If they were to

succeed in the objects they had in view the workingmen should stand by their organisations (cheers). If they did not stand by their organisations the workers were bound to be defeated; but if they stood shoulder to shoulder and brought fresh men into their ranks they were bound to win (cheers).

***The resolutions were put
and declared carried amidst loud cheers.***

The Chairman announced that a conference of gasworkers from all parts of the kingdom would be held in Dublin, and on Sunday preceding the conference, the 17th of May, they would hold another great demonstration in the Park (cheers).

PLATFORM No. 3

**Speeches by Mr. Simmons, Mr. Hutchinson, T.C.,
Mr. W Graham & co**

At No. 3 Platform Mr. Wm Foreman presided, and an enormous mass of people surrounded the brake on which he and his friends were seated. Amongst the banners attached to this section were those of the Letterpress, Printers, the Stonecutters, the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, the Irish National Foresters, the Operative Plumbers, the Bookbinders Consolidated Union, the Regular House Painters.

A car containing police notetakers took up a position close to the platform, and was surrounded by police. The Chairman, Mr. Foreman, who was loudly cheered, said he was sure it would be impossible for him to make his voice heard on the outskirts of that vast multitude. He believed that that was the largest demonstration that had every been held in Dublin, and an old townsman of Dublin had just told him that he never before saw so many people in the Phoenix Park. Well, he congratulated them sincerely on the fact; and what did it mean? They had not turned out that day for the purpose of having a march round the city and of listening to the bands; they had not brought out their banners for the mere display of them to please the sight. No, they held that magnificent demonstration for the purpose of showing and proving the power of trades' unionism in Dublin (cheers). He should think that they had opened a good many people's eyes that day who never imagined that there were so many trades' unionists in that city as there were, and what was better still, they had got a blending that day – such a blending as had never been before – for they had the old trades' union men and the new, the skilled labourer and the unskilled gathered together in one vast assembly contributing to the success of the demonstration, and helping towards the ultimate success of the Labour cause (cheers).

Well now if they could just for a moment imagine the vast power that those men who had turned out that afternoon possessed by their combinations; if they could but

imagine how much they could make by the prudent exercise of their combination, and if they set themselves to work to utilise that combination for the purpose of elevating themselves, and of improving their condition, why what a great and vast reform it could bring about (cheers).

What a social revolution – aye, and a peaceful revolution! Why, if their combination was only used to its fullest extent, if they made up their minds to have this reform that they were there that day to pledge themselves in favour of, there would be need of any Parliamentary interference, no need to go to any House of Commons, there would be no need to appeal to anyone but their own organisation (cheers), and he said to them that they had got their union, they had got their organisation, and in that organisation they had got a mighty power (cheers). Why then not wield it, why not exercise it for their own good, for the common good of the working classes? Some people might ask him was he suggesting that there should be a universal strike of the whole of the trade and labour associations of the city? he replied “no” and what he did say was this – that if the whole of the labour organisations and trade organisations in that city were to make one united demand for one of those claims contained in the resolutions he held in his hand there would be no fear of any strike, there would be no fear of the employer turning round and saying “Strike away: we can do without you.” No, the employer could say to a handful of men when they came out on strike, to a section of men, who make a demand - when a small body of men make an appeal to their employers for better conditions of service they could in such a case be refused and turned away, their applications could be, and too frequently were treated with indifference (hear, hear).

But did they suppose for a moment that if there was an united demand put forward by the whole of the men in this Park that the employee, could do anything, but at once open up negotiations with those men for the purpose of seeing how far their demands could be conceded (hear, hear). If it could be done, if they could keep the whole of the men that were in the Park at the present moment in the Nine Acres until such time as the united body of employers said that they would grant them, say, the eight hours day (cheers), the work would be accomplished before tomorrow morning (hear, hear, and cheers). Well, they had got that power and if they had it, he said that if they all really and seriously and earnestly desire an eight-hour day why did they not put their heads together, and why did they not make that universal demand for its concession when they knew that they could get it so easily (cheers). They could get it much quicker that way than by going to Parliament (cheers).

His friend, Tom Mann (cheers) and he had a discussion on the subject, and Tom Mann said – “I am for the quickest way.” He replied – “I am for the best way; but on the whole I think that my way is the quickest way, because while Parliament is thinking about it you could be doing it” (cheers). Well now, he was not going into discussion

on that point. As a trades unionist he wanted to see trades unionists exercising the power of their unions, exercising these unions for the purpose of improving their condition (cheers). Heaven knows, there was plenty of room for such improvement; and when they were strong and united they were false and foolish and standing in their own light, and forgetting and neglecting their own interests if they did not use that union for the purpose of improving their condition (cheers).

Well now, there was another matter referred to in this resolutions – namely that all workingmen should organise (cheers). Every workingman who knew what was good for him would recognise the necessity for organisation (hear, hear). Every workingman worthy of the name of a man would join his union, for if he declined to do so and was willing and ready, as in such cases they generally were, to participate in the advancement that that union might get for them, he (Mr. Foreman) could not but dub such a man other than as one of the meanest individuals that ever breathed (cheers). They did not like the name of black-leg; but the name black-leg was too good for such a man (hear, hear).

His experience of non-unionists was that they were most ready of all men to accept any gain that was going (hear, hear), and were the most dissatisfied. They were nothing but grumblers and growlers, and yet they had not the manliness or decency or honesty to do anything to help in bringing about the movement to better their condition in the realisation of which they were anxious and ready to share (cheers). Such men would live on the fruits of other men’s independence and industry. Organisation! Why no matter what the movement was, whether it be religious or political or social, they knew that no advancement could be made unless there be organisation (cheers). Aye, even if men wanted to do anything bad they must organise (hear, hear). Take the shipping organisation – he meant the shipowners organisation – even that had to be organised, and without organisation any business could not succeed (hear, hear).

He hoped that every man there that day was a Trades’ Unionist. If he was not he trusted that that magnificent demonstration, and the spirit of the men assembled there that day would have the effect of leading them to turn from the error of their ways, and of becoming strong and honest trades’ unionists (cheers). Before concluding there was another topic in the resolutions he wanted to say a word about, and that was as to the laws as applied to trades’ unionism. The anomalies of these laws, had thrust into prison an esteemed friend of his, who on the very last occasion that he had the privilege of addressing a meeting in the Park, stood at his right hand – he referred to Mr. James Havelock Wilson, general secretary of the Seamen’s Union (cheers). The law that would send a man like that to prison under such circumstances for doing no more than his duty ought to be struck off the statute book (cheers).

Only a few weeks ago an attempt was made in the House of Commons to bring about a reformation of that law, but

the capitalist interests in that house would not allow it to be done; aye, and what he was going to say now was the truth, and it applied to both sections of the political party, the kind of support given to that movement by the Irish members were not creditable to either side (hear, hear). Well the remedy for that was to send into Parliament somebody belonging to and representing themselves (cheers).

Let them send a working man, a man who feels as they felt, who knows their wants, and, what was more, who if he did not do his duty, could be brought to reason and his supplies cut off until he did so (cheers). That was what they wanted, and that was what he hoped they would have if possible at the next general election (hear, hear). Let them not wait until they got Home Rule, they would want plenty then (A Voice – Sweating Rule). If they had Home Rule they would want a lot of labour candidates, so let them have them ready, and let them send a man into Westminster to do what he could until such time as Home Rule arrives (cheers).

In the conclusion he read the resolution –

- *That we, the workmen of Dublin, are of opinion that the working day should be restricted to eight hours, and, we hereby pledge ourselves to use every possible effort to bring about that reform by legislation and otherwise.*
- *That this mass meeting urges upon all workmen the necessity for organisation, believing that no progress whatever for the elevation of the masses can be made without the aid of combination.*
- *That in the opinion of this meeting the laws between capital and labour are unequal and must be rectified in the interest of the community at large.*

That we, the workmen of Dublin, consider the time has arrived when the Municipal and Parliamentary franchise should be assimilated, and call on our Parliamentary representatives to have such an act immediately passed, and also believe that Irish labour should have representatives in Parliament.

Mr. Simmonds, secretary Trades' Council, moved the adoption of the foregoing resolutions. He said that to his mind they embodied the spirit and feeling of the trades' unionists of Ireland (cheers). He was proud to be present that day as that magnificent demonstration, whose spirit was in sympathy with that of the demonstration of magnificent proportions which, he was sure, was being held simultaneously in London. As to the question whether the eight hours' work object be achieved in Parliament or by their own organisation opinions might differ. But that the day had arrived when eight hours' work was a matter of necessity was a matter upon which there was a clear consensus of opinion (cheers). The great difficulty under which type, the workmen of Ireland laboured was the excessive working house which operatives and labourers

on the Continent worked. If a system were likely to be adopted by which uniformity would exist on the continent and here for a universal Labour Day the difficulties under which they laboured in connection with continental competition would cease. It was most gratifying to find that that magnificent demonstration was unmarred by one single blot or conflict with the authorities (cheers). This eight hours' day movement was matter of necessity. They did not want the laws delays or Parliamentary delay. They did not want a labour commission to examine as to whether it was deserving of it or not (hear, hear).

As to that labour commission he might observe in passing that they were wholly incompetent to judge whether they wanted such a measure or not (hear, hear). In the first place it was presided over by the Marquis of Hartington (hisses), son of one of the largest landowners in Great Britain, and whose estates extended to the South of Ireland. What interest had that gentleman in the welfare of the working classes. Then there was the Earl of Derby (laughter) who took an income of £400,000 out of the sweat of the serfs over whom he presides, and out of the 23 or 24 members of that labour commission they had just seven bona fide working men. Now, what good could they expect from that commission, he really could not say. The second part of the resolution was with reference to the necessity for organisation. Now, as long as the capitalist could keep them divided the longer they would be in bondage (cheers).

Therefore they must organise. He was not so sanguine as Mr. Foreman in saying that doubtless all present were trades' unionists, but he was sure that that great demonstration would make those who were not join the ranks (cheers). It was through trades' unionism in England that they were able to return the seven or eight labour representatives to Parliament (hear, hear, and cheers). Let them in Dublin see that they could do something in that way by the general election. In the St. Patrick's Division he saw that Mr. Wm Murphy expressed himself to the effect that if a bona fide workingman's candidate were put forward at the next election he was prepared at any moment to resign. No matter what their opinions might be that was a move in the right direction, and he trusted sincerely that capable and able trade unionist would be found at the next general election, and give Mr. Murphy an opportunity of redeeming his word (cheers).

The speaker referred to the treatment of Mr. Wilson as an illustration of the injustice of the law's dealing with capital and labour. That masters and servants ought to be placed on an equal footing of justice before the law was plain necessity, and called for the intervention of Parliament, and it was regrettable that whenever these subjects were brought forward affecting the Labour interests the Irish representatives were conspicuous by their absence (hear, hear). He hoped they would wake up to the knowledge of that fact, and to the fact that the city of Dublin was alive to the necessities of the case. Referring to the necessity for Labour representatives in Parliament he said it did not follow that because a man was a worker he

could not be, as a Labour candidate, a good Irishman. (A Voice – “Better than Healy anyway”). It was remarkable that out of the eighty six Irish members they had not a single bona fide Labour representative. They had Mr. Blain, from Armagh, an operative tailor, but he did not get to Parliament to represent the tailors and they had a carpenter, do doubt from Kilkenny, but he did not represent the carpenters. At the night election they must exact pledges from their representative to support the labourers as well as the agriculturists (cheers).

Mr. Joseph Hutchinson, T.C. seconded the resolution, and said that the great meeting would bring joy and gladness, to the leaders of the labour movement in the Irish capital. Complaints were made that the working classes did not support or use the public libraries, but those who made those complaints did not stop to consider if the working classes had time to visit these libraries. When the eight hour labour principle was established they would have time and opportunity to do what it was now complained they did not do.

It was an outrage that in cities like Dublin where they had 40,000 inhabitants there were only 8,000 municipal voters, and was it not an outrage that they had not 150,000 Parliamentary or municipal voters. It was only by returning labour candidates to municipal and Parliamentary positions and on public boards that they could get the reforms necessary (cheers).

The most important resolution of all was that dealing with combination. Without combination no reform could be won or ever would be won. O’Connell in his day preached that doctrine. A distinguished writer – whom he need not name – said as to the unjust laws which prevailed that the working classes never could have respect for the laws so long as they knew and felt that from the protection of those laws they were religiously excluded (cheers). In conclusion, he again urged the absolute necessity of powerful and earnest combination.

Mr. William Graham (bottlemakers) also supported the resolution, and during the course of his speech dwelt upon the anomaly presented, by the contrast between the amount paid to shareholders companies and the wages earned by the workers. In Barrow, certain steel works paid to the landowners £126,000 as royalties, and only £63,000 to the workers. Why should twice as much go to the idler as to the labourer (hear, hear). He urged the necessity of combination and of having their interests represented in Parliament by members of their body.

Mr. Birmingham (Goldsmiths’ Society) also supported the resolution and suggested the desirability of having a great convention representing the countries of the world.

Mr. Kindlan (National Foresters) briefly supported the resolution.

Mr. Culling (secretary of the Gasworkers’ Union) on behalf of the St. James’s Gate Brewery, and others, prom-

ised their support, and that they would start a fund if necessary to pay members at Parliament to represent them properly. They would oppose Mr. Murphy, M.P., if he did not support the eight hours’ labour and put forward labour candidates in the three Dublin districts with every hope of winning. They could not hope to win the St. Stephen’s green Division. He concluded by urging unity and combinations.

The resolutions were put and carried with enthusiasm, and a cordial vote of thanks having been passed to Mr. Foreman.

The proceedings terminated.