

Ode To Labor

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By WILBUR D. NESBIT

Majestic force that shapes the world, Betokened by the smake-wreaths curled Against the sky-

(Confound the luck! That roaring, rattling motor truck Makes so much noise I cannot think! 'Twould drive a stronger man to drink! There, it has passed.)

-Against the sky Like to a flag that floats on high And leads a vast, unconquered host To meet-

(Oh! I'll give up the ghost! Who's making all that racket? Hey? Some carpenters at work, you say. Well, how can anybody write? It sounds like bursting dynamite.)

Majestic force whose silent strength Makes new the desert place at length, And builds our walls-

(Great guns! That sound! Why do those boilermakers pound? It jars the ink right off my pen. And how that foreman yells and bawls! Well, bere we go:)

-And builds our walls And leads our highways fair and straight From city gate to city gate. It turns our dreamings into deeds: The future's great demands it beeds And by its might-

(What? Bless my soul! They're dumping in the winter's coal.)

Majestic force at our command-Force of the strong and brawny band, Of sinews tense and stout as steel, Of shoulders wide-

(My senses reel At this last wild and rancous blur Of sound, a wild steam riveter! There, it's shut off.) -Of shoulders wide,

Of faith that labors eager-cyed, Of sweating wow. (Ker-smash! Bing! Bang!

Dodgast that loud track-laying gang! Let's wind this up.) -Of sweating brow-

Majestic force, that will not bow. (What's that? Oh, why can' tyou keep still What? Can't I pay that plumber's bill?

WILL STUDY LABOR PROBLEM.

A comprehensive investigation of the relations of capital and labor will be undertaken by the federal government. The investigation is to be conducted by a commission of nine persons to be appointed by the president and with the advice and consent of the senate.

The commission is specifically ordered to investigate:

The general condition of labor in the principal industries, including agriculture, and especially in those carried on in corporate forms.

The existing relations between employers and employees.

The effect of the industrial conditions on public welfare and the rights and powers of the community to deal therewith.

The conditions of sanitation and safety of employees and the provisions for protecting their lives, limbs and

health. The growth of associations of employers and wage earners and the effect of such associations upon the relations between employers and em-

The methods tried in any state or foreign countries for maintaining mutually satisfactory relations between

employers and employees. The methods for avoiding or adjusting labor disputes through peaceful and conciliatory mediation and negoti-

ations. The officestion of smuggling or other illegal entry of Asiatics into the United States or its insular possessions. The underlying causes of dissatisfaction in the industrial situation.

WORK REVIEWED BY GOMPERS

Striking Accomplishments That

Have Resulted in Public

Good.

Head of the American Federation Points to the Things Organized Effort for the Prevention of Human Misery Have Made Possible.

By SAMUEL GOMPERS. President American Federation of Labor,

in Kansas City Star. The grandest achievement and the greatest glory of the American labor



REVISION

events in the in-

dustrial develop-

ment of our coun-

try and the pro-

gressive move-

ments of her peo

ple. It is the spe-

cial occasion when

wage-earners re

view the histor

and struggles of

the past, that

mark the on-

of life and labor.

Particularly is it

appropriate that

with all her

the men

for industrial up-

ward march

like

hallowed memories and traditions

lift should find expression among

whose sacrifices and achievements

contributed so much to the establish-

ment of political independence and

religious freedom on this continent.

fecting all sections of our country and

all the countries of the world, yet we

may look to the east, to the men of

New England, for a voice that, like

that of the immortal Revere, shall

warn us of our danger and point the

There are at this time many aspects

of the labor question that deserve and

demand immediate consideration; not

the least of these being the revision of

our laws so as to make them compati-

ble with the changes in our social and

industrial life that have followed the

momentous development of machinery

tive in any movement calculated to

promote their own interests or to pro-

tect them against the evils which have

grown out of the combination and con-

solidation of capital; they must be

both courageous and patient, aggres-

sive yet prudent; they must build

their organizations on sound founda-

tions and conduct them on business

lines, and it is highly important to the

security of the wage-earners and the

safety of society that women workers

shall be organized, and thus protected

against the demoralizing influences

that have always attended overwork,

The exhortation of Wendell Philips

excessive hours and under-nutrition.

cannot be too strongly emphasized:

"Organize and stand together! Let the

nation hear a united demand from the

John Mitchell

Protecting Children.

age limit for the employment of chil-

dren. The limit in some states is still

pitifully low, but the organizations of

labor that have wrested an age limit

from unwilling legislatures will soon

Forty-two states have set maximum

Thirteen states have boiler inspec-

Thirty-seven states order seats pro-

Seventeen states make provision for

Fourteen states officially inspect

Forty-eight states and the District

of Columbia have laws conserving

wages, making it possible to secure

wages due, by "mechanics' liens," thus

making wages preferred claims. These

liens in some instances are attached

to the property itself, in others to

Thirty-five states have established

chattles or to designated funds.

bureaus of labor statistics.

protection of employes engaged

hours for a working week for children.

force the limit higher.

vided for female employes.

construction of buildings.

tion laws.

bakery shops.

Forty-four states have adopted an

laboring voice."

Wage earners must take the initia-

and methods of production.

While the problem of labor is one af

milestones

LAWS NEED

in New England

way to safety.

movement

descendants of

Labor day! Its celebration, its pa-

rades and its meetings are important

It has misery. mattered not whether such suffering was caused by accident, disease, greed poverty, the men of labor have been equal to the occasion by devising practical remedies for indus trial, social and political evils. Unkindly critics when piqued, cr

movement is its

laudable effort to

prevent human

at a loss for an argument to support their contentions, have at times thoughtlessly charged trade unionists as being "thoroughly materialistic" in possessing "no ideals or sentiments," and influenced by no great "soul-moving forces."

Sentiment in Organized Labor.

Such expressions can only come from those who are not informed, or such as are burdened with prejudice. In order that those who run may read and understand, a few facts are herewith unfolded so that cynics, critics, opponents and friends may obtain a glimpse in a condensed form of what these same trade unionists have ac complished-because of a great soul moving force burning within them. Conserving Men and Women.

higher conditions The farther the American people adrance in this direction in the future the more surely will they observe true economic principles—that is to say, the conservation of human resources and human energy of the toilers means the ultimate safety and well being of the nation and while it is only too true, and "pity 'tis 'tis true," that the greatest form of waste from which our people suffer at this time is the terrific waste of human energy, due to uneconomic methods. The awful slaughter of the workers whose bodies are maimed, or whose lives are unnecessarily destroyed in some in dustries and in transportation, is gen erally caused by long hours, ignorance, incompetence, haste or greed.

Still, while it is true that these grave charges are daily substantiated yet, if it had not been for the constant vigilance and heroic persistence of the workers in providing remedies for such awful possibilities, every trade and occupation would be equally subject to as frequent casualties as now occur in the mills and blast furnaces of the iron and steel industry, where organization of the workers has been slow to develop, as well as in those coal fields, where the mine workers are still subjected to serflike conditions by agencies of predatory wealth.

It is, therefore, perfectly appropriate to draw attention to such a comparison before enumerating the legal measures of prevention and safety already established in the several states.

The first subject covered is naturally the "Conservation of Time" of "The 8-Hour Day." Without time to recuperate, observe, study, reflect, the workers are rendered hopelessly unable to act either in their own behalf or in co-operation with others for the public good.

Shortening the Working Day. Observe the communities where the steel trust, the sugar trust, the cordage trust an dthe rubber trust are dominant, and, where greed is all powerful, where the workers grind out a miserable existence twelve hours per day, and in many cases seven days per week, never less than seventy-two hours, frequently eighty-four hours per week. In such places race suicide runs rampant, sickness, vice, disease, drunkenness and deaths by violence are the rule rather than the excep-

Boarding house shacks, corner saloons and squalor abound; homes, schools and libraries are conspicuous-

ly rare or absent. Human life is held cheapest in Pennsylvania, where the long and the many work days are prevalent. Butler loses 374 out of every hundred thousand of its people by violent deaths in industry; Pittston, 359, Mc-Kees Rocks and McKeesport 290, Shenandoah 279, Pottsville 276 and the large city, Pittsburg, with its diversifled population, revels in a violent death rate of 191 per one hundred thousand people, according to the mortality statistics of the United States census bureau in 1906.

The average age of these deaths by accident is thirty-three and a half years. This fearful drain occurs among men doing the work of the world before they have reached the

prime of life or the maximum of efficiency. The unreasonably long work day that saps vitality and vigilance from the workers is the principal cause of this heedless slaughter of human beings struggling for an existence.

So much for the 8-hour day. We next come to the proposition of conserving life and health by means of factory regulation and factory inspection. Much has been done in many states along these lines and this accomplishment is due to organized labor. Much is yet to be done, and organized labor intends that the work shall be finished.

Laws regulating guards for cleaning of machinery were adopted by Massachusetts in 1882, in New Jersey in 1884. This was almost the beginning. As manufacturing has developed in the other states some protective provisions have been adopted. . The present status of their provisions is as fol-

Twenty-four states require factories to be so ventilated that a sufficient amount of air space shall be provided for each operative.

Thirty-three states require fire escapes on factories and public buildings.

Twenty-four states require guards on dangerous machinery. Twenty-seven states insist upon

sanitary and sufficient toilet rooms for the sexes. Thirty states provide factory in-

spectors to enforce observance of the

laws. Seventeen states make it mandatory for employers to report all accidents to an authorized state official so that accurate vital records can be readily obtained for the further advice and information of the people as to the needs of additional conservation of life and limb. This is an especially neces-

sary provision. Thirty-six states restrict night work by children.

Compensating the Maimed. Thirty-eight states have enacted some form of employers' liability law, very few of which have been interpreted favorably for the workers by the courts. This is to be accounted for largely because the courts have clung tenaciously to former precedences of peculiar judicial reasonings, which have at times been referred to as the "unholy trinity," viz., "assumption of risk," "contributory negligence" and "fellow-servant" rulings, as if these obstacles were not large enough to offset a workman's claim for damages. Another method has been devised which the courts have duly recognized as valid and sufficient grounds to prevent an injured employe from obtaining an award for damages. This cunning device has

been to induce or coerce an employe when arranging for employment to sign a contract "walving his rights" to sue for damages in case of injury during employment. Giving Life a Value, rulings of "assumed risk" and "contributory" to "comparative negligence" have been adopted in several states, but such triffing with measures of such grave import is not sufficient. must be enacted by the states-legis-

"fellow servant" rule, "contributory negligence," "assumption of risk" and "waiving of rights." burden of accidents to the human being, exactly as it does now toward mechanical accidents, or accidents that

occur through the natural elements.

lation that is uniform and uniformly

Compelling Safety Appliances. The next in importance are safety appliance laws, enacted by the congress for the purpose of conserving life on the interstate railroads of the United States. Every one of these laws is a monument to the everlasting credit of organized labor.

This complication of life-saving and life-preserving legislation enacted by the state legislatures and the United States congress at the behest of the organizations of labor is far from being a complete record, but it is sufficient at this time to enthuse the workers and to convince the most skeptical as to the great good which has been accomplished for all labor-unorganized as well as organized-and particularly for that part of society sometimes defined as the general public, who have been safeguarded while traveling on railroads, while resting in hotels, amused in theaters, or when coming in contact with those who might disseminate disease propagated in workshops or factories that would remain insanitary and dangerous if it had not been for the vigilance, fidelity and foresight of the organized work-

So we feel cheered on this Labor Day. We even feel like laying aside the hardness that is acquired in the course of many battles against big odds and allowing the sentimental sides of our natures to show themselves. We feel like talking of our women and children, and the battle organized labor is waging to make them comfortable at their work and healthy in their homes. We want to cite the human suffering that the organized workers have been able to abolish, and to pledge ourselves anew to a continued battle to bring decent working hours and conditions into those dark places of the nation that are still its most crying disgrace. And, withal, we are sanguine of a day that is coming when all working people may perform their tasks with the satisfaction that a happier life is possible to them. The progress has been such that there is occasion for hope-

fulness.



It chanced that once upon a time remote, The weary giant, known as Labor, smote His thigh a sounding whack and cried, "I'm blest, But I have toiled enough and now I'll rest. I'll let the world wag onward as it may, While I go home and have my holiday." So, Labor laid aside his tools and crept Deep in his cavern, where be promptly slept.

An hour went by, an hour without a sound, The shops were stilled, no more their wheels went'round, The mills were fastened close with bolt and lock, The steamship idly rubbed against her dock, The engine moveless stept, the anvil stood As silent as a gravestone in a wood. While Mankind, startled by the awful still, Together whispered, awed, "Is Labor ill?"

And as the moments passed o'er town and farm, And all was still, there 'rose a great alarm, Went forth the giant Commerce, loud to shout, Deep into Labor's cavern, "Friend, come out, You're needed by us-needed in a trice. Please come at once! We'll pay you any price. You've slept an hour already—all your fill. Come forth at once. The world is standing still."

And Labor, wakened by the other's cries, Stretched forth his brawny arms and rubbed his eyes, And mused a bit, then with good-natured smile, Said, "Yes, I'll come, but make it worth my while. One day each year you'll give me privilege free, One day each year you'll consecrate to me, While one day I will consecrate to play, And (chuckling, said), we'll call it Labor Day."



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

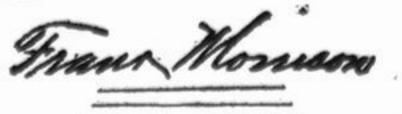
The ultimate aim of the labor movement is to establish a condition of soclety, first, that will insure to each head of a family equal and ample opportunity to secure a livelihood, which Modifications of the common law will be sufficient to provide his famlly with the same necessities and luxuries of life enjoyed by any other citizen; second, that will enable him to give his children an education in whatever direction they may decide Just, humane and effective legislation to follow, equal to that received by the children of every other member of society.

good; effective legislation that will To enlarge the opportunity to seforever abolish the defense known as cure employment, the trade unions areadvocating and establishing a shorter workday for its members. To insure equal education, the trade unions Industry must bear the financial are endeavoring to secure the enactment of compulsory education laws and child labor laws in every state, territory and province in America, thus withdrawing the children from the factories, mines and workshops.

The trade unions assert that all benefits accruing from the inauguration of labor-saving devices or cheap forms of distribution should be enjoyed equally by all the people, instead of being diverted to the benefit of the

The labor movement holds that all people are entitled to partake equally of the joy of living; that a condition that permits part of our people to live in affluence, while another part is compelled to work long hours for meager wages, should be abolished; that a condition that furnishes work to only a fraction of the people and leaves another fraction without employment, and helpless for long periods, should be eliminated from our civilization.

Many claim that efforts along that direction are an iridescent dream and cannot be realized for years to come In my opinion it will come. It is now approaching. It will come with the full awakening of the consciousness of our people; a consciousness which is rapidly growing in strength and power, and is now in abeyance, awaiting the psychological moment when the great vibrating will of all the people has been crystallized into an active and intelligent force that will sweep aside all obstacles that resist its purpose to mete out justice to all mankind and establish among all the peoples of the earth—the Brotherhood of



A Trophy of Victory. The annual holiday of labor is not a bit of driftwood picked up by accident. It is one of the trophies of battle and victory. Its message is of labor's rights and struggles and triumphs, not of labor's play spells or of gifts received from any source.

The only demand the 250,000 shopmen in the Federation of Federations are making is for recognition of the federation as the only contract making organisation in the railroad industry between the shopmen and the com-

LESSON OF LABOR DAY

An Annual Holiday That Is More Than Just a Play Time

The first Monday in September brings an annual reminder of the fact that one of the holidays which are now practically nation-wide is so new and so vital that it is growing visibly and rapidly in prestige and usefulness. Labor day was an experiment so recently that men still young remember its beginnings; now it is one of the firmly established and much-valued rest and recreation days of the year.

But the day is more than that. It is a holiday which is not a mere play day. Nor is it only a celebration of some great event of the past. It looks ahead guite as much as it looks backward. It is filled with the spirit of advancing, confident, buoyant life. It is even a militant day, with a strong suggestion of willingness and ability to battle for rights denied or principles assailed.

It is well for the country that Labor day is so thoroughly alive. It is a good thing for American people that such a holiday comes around every fall to remind all classes and conditions of men and women of the vital and fundamental part which the labor of the hands plays and must always play in the progress of the world and the very existence of mankind. It is too easy to forget, at times, that everything rests on hard physical toff and that without it all of the boasted flowering of civilization would be impossible.

Labor day is broad enough, in its name and in the break which it makes in the regular grind of trade and industry and in all of the productive activities of the country to cover all kinds of work, but it is the especial property of manual labor and more particularly of manual labor so organized, so awake and so strong that it can speak as a vast body of men trained to act together and work for the same ends.

That is to say, the annual holiday of labor is taken as a right, not as a gift. It is a demonstration of strength ready for use, not a day of recreation and fun without a serious thought

But the stronger labor becomes the less danger there is of needless and destructive labor wars. With power comes responsibility, and the more there is that has been won the more there is, also, to hazard in strife. The labor organizations which are most thoroughly developed and united are the ones which get along best employers and are most reaso and businesslike in the negotiation which they carry on. The strong and successful do not lightly risk fruits of their past triumphs, and same qualities that made them ceed keep them safe and so

Labor day is filled with su sons. It is stimulating, pelling and instructive as a and there are few cars