THE CLOSED SHOP.

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In his annual address as president of the National Association of Manufacturers, Mr. D. M. Parry remarks as an apparent cause for congratulation "that organized labor is learning a very valuable lesson in economics." Mr. Parry, himself, deserves congratulation for the rapidity with which he is learning form his own study of economic questions. He has discovered that low wages are not a benefit to society at large. In making this discovery he has learned in a comparatively brief time a truth that has been attained by economics only after thought and discussion covering several decades. The old theory was that low wages caused low prices for products, and that their tendency was consequently beneficial to the entire community. That theory was long ago abandoned by economic students in favor of what is known as the doctrine of "the economy of high wages," —the doctrine that in the modern age of machinery the highest wages are paid in those factories which turn out the cheapest products. Mr. Parry shows that he has graduated from the old notion when he announces his conviction that "high wages are a blessing, not a curse."

Mr. Parry has still to learn that his wholesale and indiscriminate opposition to the closed shop can not be sustained. He declares it to be his belief "that the day must come when no industry will be allowed to run on the closed shop plan," and again, "that the closed shop is against public policy." With these propositions he couples the statement that the strides of this country in material welfare and in general intelligence are traceable to "the freedom of the individual," and declares that "all classes profit by the free dom of the individual to do as he pleases with his time, labor and property; so long as he does not infringe upon the equal freedom of another."

In my opinion, the application of the theory of the open shop to all industries is impracticable. This is a question upon which no sweeping decision can be reached, supported by sound reason, from the exclusive point of viey of one side. Nor is it a question that can be answered by an indiscriminate conclusion of universal application. The question of open shop and closed shop must be considered in its application to different crafts.

The theory of trade unionism is that it tends to elevate the workingman of lowest earning capacity above a rate of payment which is less than the minimum wages necessary to sustain decent living. Its purpose and its actual tendency are to help in establishing an average minimum payment for labor that will be adjusted for the general good of all workingmen, and indirectly therefore of the whole community, since the workingmen form politically the mass of the voters, and economically the mass of the consumers. It must be conceded that this theory involves a certain sacrifice of that "liberty of the individual" which Mr. Parry regards as of supreme importance. This theory of unionism traverses, also, the general proposition with which President Eliot, of Harvard university, has approached this subject If he has been quoted correctly in the daily press, he regards the surrender of personal freedom to an association as "almost as great an obstacle to happiness as its loss to a despot or to a ruling class."

Now liberty is indeed a precious thing. Liberty is in one respect the fruit and flower of modern civilization. Yet there are some things even more valuable than the freedom of the individual. Liberty must be regarded as a means, rather than as an end in itself. Liberty implies equality. But in the economic life the equality in the parties to a contract is not always present. The liberty of the strong may become the license of the oppressor; the liberty of the weak may practically come to mean the subjection of the oppressed. It is, therefore, sometimes highly important to make a partial sacrifice of individual liberty in order to secure the maintenance of a greater equality, and thus the conditions for the restoration of an ultimate and enlarged liberty. This is what unionism seeks to do; this is its essential principle, and it is a principle that should command general public sympathy and approval.

In some respects, the theory of the union is parallel to the political theory of democracy. The theory is based upon the proposition of human equality. In a certain and fundamental important sense, the statement that one man is as good as another is true. The carrying out of that political idea has proved of the greatest benefit in our political system that has had its influence in making the average American citizen in many respects an admirable type. But in that very proposition lie the difficulties of democracy. For in another sense one man is not as good as another. Men are differentiated into classes by opportunity, by education and by efficiency. The real ideal of a democracy must be to level up, not to level down; and in this leveling up the true natural leaders must be given ample scope. But the end must be a democracy, not an aristocracy.

To transfer the illustration from politics to sociology, there underlies trade unionism a similar proposition on democracy. That is to say, unionism would not drag down the rewards of labor to the lowest earning acpacity of the poorest workman. Rather would unionism tend to elevate the poorest workman so as to command a wage established on a minimum average higher than is essential to meet the bare necessities of existence.

The danger, however, in the practical operation of trade unionism lies in its working out toward the establishment of a fixed average payment for a day's work so as to put a check or limit upon the higher wages possible for superior individual merit. In that danger—the danger of the repression of individual excellence, and the limitation of its reward—is to be found the opportunity of opponents of organized labor for an attack upon it as a system. Therein, then, lies the necessity for intelligent leadership of organized labor to guard unionism against the attack.

Mr. Parry advances the general proposition that the rate of wages in any country is dependent upon the per capita production. It 's doubtless true that the reward of labor, like the reward of capital, must be a certain portion of the sum of wealth produced in any industry, and varies in accordance with its efective contribution to the common output. Thus, productivity does not bear a definite relation to the reward of labor. Moreover, capital and labor are intimately associated in this joint effort. If the productivity of capital can be increased through the use of fine machinery, not only will the return on capital be augumented, but the labor employed in using that machinery is certain to receive a higher reward than would labor employed in using inferior machinery at all. There are familiar illustrations of this truth to be seen on every side. The weaver, for example, using the best appliances in a New England mill will earn higher wages than can the hand loom weaver in the Southern mills.

But, admitting Mr. Parry's proposition to be true that the wage rate is depenedent upon the per capita production, it is a proposition that can be made the promise of an argument in favor of the employment of union labor. The aim of the unions, as has been pointed out, should be, and when the unions are wisely led is coming more and more and more to be, not the limitation, but the development of individual efficiency, and through it the attainment of superiority of workmanship for the group as a whole. The constant tendency of unionism under such conditions is to lift the lower grades of workmen toward higher capacity and excellence—in short to raise their standard of life. This increased efficiency must result in greater productivity, both in quality and quantity, and granted a market of adequate purchasing and consuming capacity, the outcome must be a greater sum of wealth to be apportioned between capital and labor as the reward of their trained efort and intelligent co-operation.

GOOD SENSE FROM DEBS.

The trades union is not and cannot become a political machine, nor can it be used for political purposes. They who insist upon working class political action not only have no intention to convert the trades union into a political party, but they would oppose any such attempt on the part of others.

The trades union is an economic organization with distinct economic functions, and as such is a part, a necessary part, but a part only of the labor movement; it has its own sphere of activity, its own program and is its own master within its economic limitations.

But the labor movement has also its political side, and the trades-unionist must be educated to realize its importance and to understand that the political side of the movement must me unionized as well as the economic side; and that he is not, in fact, a union man at all who, although a member of the union on the economic side, is a non-unionist on the political side; and while striking for, votes against the working class.

The trades union expresses the economic power and the Socialist party expresses the political power of the labor movement.

The fully developed labor unionist uses both his economic and political power in the interest of his class. He understands that the struggle between labor and capital is a class struggle; that the working class are in a great majority, but divided, some in one political party and some in another; that because they are divided they are helpless and must unite their class in the trades union on the one hand and in the Socialist party on the other hand; that industrially and politically they must act together as a class against the capitalist, and that this struggle is a class struggle, and tnat any workingman who deserts his union in a strike and goes to the other side is a scab, and any workingman who deserts his party on election day and goes over to the enemy is a betrayer of his class and an enemy of his fellowman.

THE ANSWER IS EASY.

The demand of the employer for a reduction in wages proportionate to the reduction in the length of the workday rests upon nothing more substantial than the habit of computing wages. Why, it is asked, should labor demand "nine hours' pay for eight hours' work?" The answer is easy. For the same reason that the merchant asks $7.75 for a coat that costs $5, or that the butcher, charges a quarter for the 15-cent steak. Because the toiler wants and has a right to a profit the same as everybody else who has anything to sell. Because his labor is his stock in trade, and he has no more need to sell it at cost or for a bare living than has the merchant to dispose of his stock at what he paid for it. If capital has a right to profit, so has labor. What is fair for one is fair for the other. Profit in business is recognized the world around as legitimate. Why not in labor likewise? Eight hours' pay for eight hours' work represents just about the cost of the strength and energy the toiler expends. The extra hour's pay represents the legal, lawful, legitimate profit of the seller of his services. That is all there is to it. Who dares say it is unreasonable or unfair?

VICTORY IN DEFEAT.

The lost strike is often a victory. The history of labor's efforts for better conditions reveals scores of apparent defeats which have ultimately proven to be substantial gains. There are many instances where after a gallant struggle in which the employer has filled the places of the strikers with incompetent men, that he has been made to realize the folly of his action and has rid himself of them and has voluntarily, from a business standpoint if no other, re-employed the union men and has granted them all they struck for. Many employers do not know what a strike means until they have one on their hands, and after they have one taste of experience they are far more favorably disposed toward a committee of employes. It is safe to say that in 95 out of every 100 defeats the workers really gain in the end.

THE BASIS OF STRENGTH.

The higher the civilization of the people, the higher and greater their respect for and appreciation of the value of labor. A people who labor and who respect honest toil will remain long. Labor is not only the source of the wealth and greatness of this republic, but it is the enduring basis of the strength and hanhood of the people. They are fortunate in living in a time when the rights of the man who works are heeded and when the freedom of the toiler is at least partially assured. Labor and capital should not be antagonistic, for each is dependent upon the other for existence and progression. But of the two labor is the more enduring and will win out in the end of every struggle that arises.

JUDGE ASKS QUESTIONS.

Judge James Phelan of Detroit asks these questions:

"Have you ever known of a trades council or labor organization corrupting or uebauching a legislature of any state?

"Have you ever read of a labor organization, no matter how humble, corrupting or debauching the members of a common council for the purpose of securing a franchise?

"And is it not the principal object of labor organizations to secure a better wage, such as will enable its members to leave their children in the school-room instead of sending them to the doorways of factories seeking employment at the tender age of 14?"

ORGANIZED LABOR NEEDS

Men who cannot be bought.
Men who are not afraid.
Men who possess good sense and use it.
Men who have a will and assert it.
Men who are not selfish.
Men whose ambitions do not rule them.
Men who are willing to sacrifice personal interest for public good.
Men who are honest.
Men who lead clean lives.
Men who are generous and kind.
Men who are sober and industrious.
Men who are cool-headed and fair-minded.
Men who are true-blue unionists.
Men who will help the cause as they expect it to help them.

ELIMINATE DISSENTION.

The elimination of dissention among the trade unionists and the promotion of internal peace among the various factions of organized labor is at present one of the most important matters which can be given attention anywhere and one which, unless handled without gloves in a most radical manner, will grow into a monster evil of such enormous magnitude that it will have gone beyond the bounds of correction and will work infinite harm to all concerned. Personal feelings and jealousies, backbitting and knocking, local disputes and differences, hotheaded arguments, and bitter aftermath are the weeds which too often flourish in the field of trade unionism, and must be uprooted lest they draw the life from the common cause and drag into disruption the amalgamation of interests and the concentration of power. The powers that oppress are never better pleased than when the labor unions are at war, for well do they realize the truth of the old adage, "united we stand, divided we fall." Full well do they know that when labor is fighting among itself that it will have little time or energy to fight for its rights and to seek to better its conditions. Therefore, cut out local strife and do away with local dissention. It is the parasite that saps the life of the union and the evil which will wreck it in the end.

Shoe workers in Mexico work from eleven and one-half to fifteen hours a day, receiving from 15 cents to $1 a day, American money. They are not organized, but will be in the near future.