

BEAUTIFUL TRIBUTES OF RESPECT PAID TO UNION LABOR'S GREAT CHEFTAIN

Gompers' Fine Master Stroke During 1907 Financial Panic

The financial panic of 1907 is still fresh in the minds of the people. A meeting held in New York attended by some of the most noted men in America for the purpose of discussing the financial and industrial situation. Large manufacturers and other employers of labor planned to take advantage of the occasion to reduce wages.

There were present at the meeting a number of labor men including Mr. Gompers, and the great captains of industry and labor men gave full expression to their views. It is said that Mr. Gompers' address on this occasion was productive of greater results than any he has before or since delivered on labor. It was a master stroke. It had the effect of the employers reconsidering their proposed plan to reduce wages. He said: "An Unpleasant Duty. It falls to my lot frequently, and yet it is always an unpleasant duty, perchance I must sound a discordant note. We, all of us, like to be made comfortable. It is so pleasant; it requires no mental effort to be made comfortable. I should like at some time to inquire a little further into the profit-sharing proposition. I would like to inquire, if I had the time, what were the relative wages of men employed in the iron and steel industry 10 years and more ago, before the profit-sharing system was put into vogue, to what the wages are today. It suggests a little less comfort in our minds, but it appears to me to be a very pertinent question.

"I am always pleased to be with you. I like to hear what you have to say, and I doubt that anyone listens with deeper interest and concern; but whether it be here at your banquet board, in the hall for discussion, or anywhere, while I am contributing as best I can to the great uplift of all my fellow men and women, my chief concern is for the men and women who labor; and I trust that I may never fail to say a word particularly for them.

"Wages Must Stand. My colleague and friend, Mr. Mitchell, made references to certain conditions which now confront us and he called attention to an incident which transpired a few years ago. I might say that that same incident was repeated not less than 20 times within this past 12 hours that I have been in the city of New York. Gentlemen came to me and whispered, in private conversation, in gentle hints, and in knowing insinuations, that after all the workmen of the country must come down in his wages.

"Ladies and gentlemen, let me just suggest this thought to you—no, not necessarily suggest it, simply refer to it. Today the soil of our country is not less fertile than it was yesterday. The treasures beneath the soil are not less valuable, nor the they scarcer than they were yesterday; men's minds have not become dulled since yesterday; men are not less industrious than they were yesterday; the great zenith of all bygone ages are here with us today as they were yesterday; men are willing to work as they were yesterday, and wherefore, then, is there any reason why that with all the facilities for the production of wealth, with man willing to work and produce additional wealth—where is there the natural necessity to attack wages, the American standard of life, of the working people of our country? "If I believed for one moment that the reduction of the wages of the American working people would con-

tribute to improve the situation by one day, I would give whatever small contribution I could toward not only its acceptance, but its advocacy. But, as a matter of fact, the entire history of industry demonstrates clearly beyond question that every effort in the past to reduce wages, every reduction of wages made to relieve a like situation, has simply accentuated and made the condition worse. You can not reduce wages without reducing the consuming power of the people, and every time you reduce the consuming power, you make your situation worse.

Labor Would Fight. "It is the largest possible consumption of things produced which makes the largest possible prosperity and I may say this, without further attempt at serious argument—I may say this, that the employers of labor who make or believe they can make an attempt to force wages down are not going to have the easy sailing they had years ago, for the American workmen have come to the conclusion that if for any reason—and I shall not attempt to assign one tonight—the financial situation is as it is, it is due to no fault of theirs; that whoever is to blame, it is in the hands of the financiers or the captains of industry and the representatives in Congress, if you care to blame them; but I repeat, it is not due to any fault of the working people.

"They have made up their minds that they are not going to be the chief sufferers by reason of either an artificially-made panic or by the blunders of those who have the affairs of finance and industry under their direction."

TO SAMUEL GOMPERS, HIS 65TH BIRTHDAY

The following poem was penned by the late D. Douglas Wilson, for many years and until the time of his death, editor of the Machinists' Journal. Mr. Wilson and the father of the editor of The Labor World were apprentice-mates in the shops of the Highland Railway, Inverness, Scotland. Therefore this poem is of considerable personal interest to us. Mr. Douglas was an invalid for several years. He died within the twelve-months.

There was a time when you and I thought him an aged man Who'd cleft in twain the last decade, Of the Hebrew psalmist span. That was old chap, when both were young And the isle marked L-K-V, Was far off and a distant speck, In life's uncharted sea. That port today you've reached old chap In hale and hearty joy, With mind alert and spirit brave, That years can ne'er destroy. So here's to you with your sturdy will, And your youthful fire sublime, That mocks at age and changing years And conquers Father Time. Long may you live, direct and work, In Labor's helpful hive, Is the toast, to you I once more pledge, And welcome sixty-five.

PRONOUNCES LABOR'S GRAND OLD MAN PEER OF ANY PUBLICIST IN COUNTRY

During the convention to the American Federation of Labor held at Seattle in 1913 the press of the country heralded abroad that Mr. Gompers was to be defeated for president of the Federation. After his election there appeared in The Journal of Labor, Atlanta, Ga., the following brilliant editorial which rings with beautiful southern music and tells in emphatic language the true story of the rise and struggles of Mr. Gompers during the trying years he has served American labor. It is too good to omit in this issue:

"In re-electing Sam Gompers president of the American Federation of Labor that body honored itself. Much praise—some of it fulsome—and more abuse has been showered on Sam Gompers since that constructive genius has measured up to the standard required by his opportunities. Mr. Gompers was always a big man, a strong man. He grew great gradually. In the earlier years of the American Federation of Labor he was from the very nature of things a fighter, and his audacious courage justified the wisdom of the far-seeing group who placed him in command and kept him there when every month was a battle and every year a campaign.

Fighting and Growing. "However, while President Gompers was fighting he was growing. There are those who say Sam Gompers made the Federation of Labor. That is a mistake; the American Federation of Labor made Sam Gompers, just as every history-making epoch has produced a great character who seem to dominate the situation and typify the movement. But Gompers continued to grow. He became great. The latent philosopher in him asserted claim to greater recognition than the fighter of the surface. The character of the American labor movement was changing, gradually changing. Diplomacy and statecraft were being substituted for the mailed fist of the strike. That change came from below, but the leaders were quick to recognize it. The unfortunate lessons of the railroad strikes of 1894 were not lost on the thinkers of the A. F. of L. as were those of the 1877 strikes on the Knights of Labor.

Always a Leader. "Always Sam Gompers led in the new fields of endeavor. Wisdom came with the knowledge gleaned of the passing years. His voice was for peace, if peace could be had honorably. He believed in preparedness for war and in the might of numbers. He knew that opportunity was coming and he wanted organized labor to be prepared to take advantage of it. He saw, sooner than any one else, we believe, the great victory won in the anthracite strike of 1902, a victory gained only by shouldering the handicap of the "open shop," that barren idealism forced on labor by the price of phrasemakers, Theodore Roosevelt. But the anthracite strike of 1902 caused organized labor to receive national recognition, and its place was henceforth to be insured in the polity of the nation. "At that hour, when the most of us were bubbling with sulphurous profanity, when calamity was exacting, when brummasen heroes were being made overnight, Sam Gompers became what he is today—a philosopher who can fight and who knows how to fight, a seer who can anticipate race movements, and a statesman who knows how to advantage his people in the field of party politics without creating a frightful Frankenstein in the shape of a labor party. "Given national recognition—even

when demolition was intended by a fancy stroke—the use of the political balance of power was possible, and 1906 was the logical sequence of 1902 to so present a statesman as Mr. Gompers. He in that year led labor into non-partisan politics. His axiom, "Reward our friends and punish our enemies," became a battle-cry. What was accomplished in 1906 and has been accomplished since is but a tithe of the possibilities. "Then followed, or rather occurred concurrently, the famous injunction suit and jail sentences at the hands of the counterfeit Jeffery—"Wright, Justice." Like the sword of Damocles, this sentence hangs over the heads of Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison to this good day—but it has done more for the preservation of free speech and a free press than their initial acquittal would have done, thanks largely to the wisdom, audacity and fearlessness of Sam Gompers.

Peer of Any Publicist. "Today he is easily the peer of any publicist in the United States or elsewhere. Rippe with years, he is at the nontide of mental activity; sorely stricken of illness in the early summer of this year, yet his physical activity today would shame most men a decade younger than he. His very faults and foibles are lovable. Though imperious at times, and wont at other times sharply to resent a difference of opinion, he is one of the broadest-minded of men. He loves the good things of life and enjoys them with a zest almost child-like, but he never had a big red apple that he did not desire to share it with some one. And he would have the good things of life so distributed that the humblest might partake of them. He believes in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and lives his faith. Gentle as a child in the main, he can flame with wrath at times. And he fears no man, no unjust law. "The American Federation of Labor has, indeed, honored itself in re-electing Sam Gompers to its presidency."

HE IS UNION LABOR'S BATTLE-SCARRED VETERAN; A MAN WHO CAN'T BE BOUGHT

The following editorial from the Rocky Mountain News of Denver, Colo., in defense of Mr. Gompers will be appreciated by every union workman:

Perhaps there are few men in the country who have been more under the fire of fierce and organized attack than Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor. His motives have been impeached, his purposes malign, his ambitions distorted. In the industrial upheavals in which the federation has been a factor he has been accused openly and insidiously with countenancing crime and sometimes with inspiring it. In the McNamara cases it will be remembered that one way or another his name was dragged in with the plain intention of connecting it even remotely with the Los Angeles explosions. But the machinery of the criminal law, aided by an elastic and determined effort of private detective agencies, was unable to bring home to him either complicity in or sympathy with physical violence as a weapon to bring about victory for organized labor.

In the revelations of the workings of the National Manufacturers' Association, the most relentless enemy that Gompers and organized labor has had to fight in recent years, it is clearly shown that not only was Gompers against a policy of physical force in labor disputes, but was above the temptations of bribery to betray his organization. A money bribe of \$40,000 and a good salaried position for life might make a less honest and weaker man to pause. Not so with Gompers. His integrity was para-

ODE TO A PARADOX By J. W. Sullivan

Safe, sane, sagacious, And never disputatious; Merciful in judgment of an erring neighbor, Untiring in plans for the advancement of labor; Enthusiastic when others lose heart, Lacked only to take a new start. A veteran in years of activity, For all that, of sound vitality; Open, fair, courteous, kindly, Fearful, ever, of acting blindly; Laughing and playing while away from work, "Going like forty," otherwise, "Laboring like a Turk." Oh, Sam, your principles are sound! Mighty hard knocks brought you around Practical steps and real progress to follow, Excluding the fair promise that's hollow, Reck'ning little of theories unfounded, Sleeping soundly when by enemies rounded.

A NORWEGIAN PAPER PAYS FINE TRIBUTE

The following is a translation of an article that appeared some years ago in the Pacific Posten, a leading Norwegian daily paper published in San Francisco.

"The president of the American Federation of Labor is a man who, whether or not one is in sympathy with the movement which he represents, impresses you as a truly great personality. His insignificant physique but renders more impressive the reverence involuntarily given him by the stalwart men who surround him. His portrait do not give an adequate idea of his appearance, for although his head and shoulders are massive, he is very much below normal height and he walks with a slow step. "The most prominent features of his face are a broad benignant forehead and a wide flexible mouth, which droops at the corners. The expression which first strikes the sympathetic observer is fatigue, then patience, then nobility of soul. If he be the Moses who is leading laborers into the promised land—I think he sometimes says "with Moses"—and with many other great leaders of men in all times, 'these people are more than I can bear,' and who can wonder.

"With his mild, almost diffident manner, and his black coat and white tie, Mr. Gompers looks more like a kindly old country parson than like the commander-in-general of an army of two million working men. The illusion is not broken when he begins to speak, slowly and mildly, in a low voice and with many pauses, as though seeking after words, while his face works nervously. "The audience listens impatiently, half expectantly. Suddenly an electric shock passes through it. Indolent backs straighten and roving eyes are concentrated on the speaker. Mr. Gompers has not raised his voice, but there is in it a gleam of cold steel, then follow sarcasms that bite and sting, then sledge hammer blows that shatter his opponents to atoms. "Occasionally some deep and beautiful thought flash to the surface and there is a touch of profound pathos, as when remembering the departing workers in the cause of labor he said, in his slow old man's voice: "Perhaps when we have shuffled off this mortal coil someone will say a good word for me. "When all is said, the dominating impression left by President Gompers' personality is that of an intellect like tempered steel and a will that cannot be swayed to the right or the left. On the platform he is king, he quells a turbulent audience by sheer grit."

MANY FLATTERING OFFERS MADE TO GOMPERS TO QUIT LABOR MOVEMENT

A Fellow Worker's Testimony, By G. W. Perkins, President, International Cigar Makers' Union.

The following tribute to Samuel Gompers was written for The Labor World by G. W. Perkins, President of the International Cigar Makers' Union. It presents a side-light on the character of Mr. Gompers which attests his fidelity to the holy cause of labor. I have known Samuel Gompers for about thirty-seven years, during twenty-eight years of which time I have been officially associated with him as an officer in the Cigar Makers' International union. Samuel Gompers was endowed with a sound mind and body. Nature provided him with more than the average share of gray matter. His early social and economic surroundings were anything but kindly disposed. He was forced into the struggle for an existence for himself and family at about twelve years of age. He learned the cigar trade and on completion of his apprenticeship immediately joined the union and has been a member ever since.

No one but an oldtimer can realize the terrific struggle necessary to form and maintain a union in the early days. Trade unionists, especially those who like Gompers were of a vigorous type, were looked upon and treated practically as outlaws. Every difficulty was thrown in the pathway of the struggling trade unionists, and more especially so insofar as Gompers was concerned. When the employers saw that a few headed by Sam Gompers were bound to keep the union alive, efforts were immediately made to remove Gompers from the sphere of activity in the trade union movement. He was offered the position of superintendent in one of the factories at a magnificent salary. This offer came at a time when he was practically down and out, with sickness in the family, and may it be said to his everlasting credit that he refused the offer, and continued in the struggle to improve the condition of the cigar makers.

While a splendid workman and comparatively fast, activity in the labor movement kept him for years on the ragged edge of despair. He was always ready to stop work in the factory for the purpose of serving on some committee or doing some work for the union, for which he received no compensation. For years he worked without financial compensation for the trade union cause. When first elected president of the American Federation of Labor his salary was \$1,000 a year. There has been no time since then when he has not had flattering offers to go into other occupations with magnificent salaries attached. He has been offered and has refused partnership in established business. He served the cause of unionism and his fellow workers when there was no compensation in sight except glory and the satisfaction of achievement beneficial to his fellow workers and helpful to the trade union movement.

No one, not even his enemies, dispute his ability; no one can successfully question his integrity, his courage or his devotion to the trade union movement; no one more fearlessly defends the cause of trade unionism or more fearlessly denounces its enemies regardless of personal consequences, than does Samuel Gompers. No living power on earth can swerve him from the chosen and self-imposed task of being helpful to the trade union movement to which he has devoted his talents and made his life's work. Few men in any walk of life have a more sturdy character and determination, or fixedness of purpose than has Samuel Gompers.

WHY HE'S FOREMOST LEADER IN AMERICA

Following is a splendid pen picture of Mr. Gompers by a special writer in the Pittsburgh Dispatch: "Imagine first of all, an aggressive, positive, stocky example of Americanism. Then with this the voice of a tragedian and the face of a bishop, and you have Gompers—Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor. He has a dynamic personality, one that grips and holds you; and when you see and hear him you know in an instant why he is the foremost union craftsman of the continent of America. "He is short, wears a frock coat, but you forget the details of clothes when you look into those fighting eyes. Those eyes have a setting of spectacles, but glass or gold cannot hide the touch of aggressive glint, cannot hide the touch of softness that come when the bishop in him succeeds the militant. "To hear one speech is to know that he understands men. His mouth is not small, and there is a fascinating study in the play of his lips. In his talk he reveals himself as something above the general public estimate. He is not alone a champion of an eight-hour day. He wants men to work, and to work hard, not only to support

themselves and their families, but to earn an honest leisure whereby they may deepen and broaden their lives. It is the life that Gompers wants to improve. His ideas are high and pure, and his speech is any criterion. He is of the rarest and most effective combination in humanity—a man of dreams and action. "His delivery is democratic, and his enunciation, if anything, almost too precise. He says 'par-tic-u-lar-ly.' He does not glide over sounds, and just the slightest touch of the British creeps into his pronunciation. "But it is not all idealistic or bene-dictory, if there is such a word. He can snarl the whip of scorn, and the sting of his words smart. It is impossible to reproduce the effect of a little sentence from a recent talk which ran: "Some eat to work, some sleep to work, some dream to work, and it seems that some are born to work and it seems that some are born only to work." In cold type this is fairly rhythmic, but in the mouth of Gompers it is a sardonic trumpet call."

WANT 44-HOUR WEEK. MINNEAPOLIS, Jan. 27.—Typographical unions of this city and St. Paul are in a joint movement to improve conditions of their job printer members. The new scale will include demands for a 44-hour week and wage increases from \$21 to \$24 a week.

GOGGLES SAVE CAR REPAIRER'S EYE; FLYING RIVET ONLY BREAKS GLASS



Courtesy of D. M. & N. Ry. Co. The above picture shows a fractured glass on goggles worn by Stoney Moskaski, a car repairer employed at Proctor by the Duluth, Missabe and Northern Railway Company. Moskaski was helping to dismantle a steel one car. His fellow employe was chiseling a rivet head. It flew straight for Moskaski's eye, and were it not for the fact he wore goggles the eye would have been injured, and probably destroyed. Thousand of eyes have been lost in the same manner. In this instance the goggles saved the eye. It is a practical vindication of the "Safety First" program adopted by the railroad company.

IRON MINERS BECOME SKILFUL IN ADMINISTERING FIRST AID TO FELLOWEMPLOYEES WHO MEET WITH ACCIDENTS UNDERGROUND



Courtesy of Oliver Iron Mining Co. First aid is attracting considerable interest among the iron miners who are realizing the importance of giving prompt attention to injured fellow workmen. In the above picture note the improvised stretcher made on a ladder to carry an injured man through a shaft or raise. The Oliver Iron Mining company has a number of well made stretchers about all their mines, but if one should not be available the miners lose no time in constructing a ladder into a stretcher. Their first concern is to get the injured man to a hospital at the earliest moment, and without unnecessary loss of time.