

LAYING OFF MEN

IT SEEMS to be generally believed that there is a purpose, among certain employers, to lay off workmen, not of necessity, or for slack work, but "to teach them." The proposition is that work is plentiful, that labor is haughty, which means that it acts like a commodity of which there is a scarcity, and that the way to take the starch out of labor, is to make an over supply, even up to the point of creating an artificial hunger line. The Pennsylvania has laid off some 12,000 men. Here and there the newspapers report an employer who is making the same experiment.

The plan isn't wise. The best way is to keep men working, and keep them happy as long as it can be done. It will be soon enough to lay off men when the pressure of actual industrial conditions compels it.

The "teach them" group of employers are forgetting what has recently happened in the world, and what is now happening.

All of Central Europe, is or soon will be, in the control of working class governments, with Russia in the lead. France, England, Italy and Belgium, are in imminent danger of coming into the same situation.

Here in America the workers are stronger. It is easier for them to take complete possession of things. Here more readily than elsewhere they can change systems, substitute their own plans for the plans of their employers, and otherwise make everything redhot, mixed up and revolutionary.

If all these changes are going on in Europe, an intelligent questioner may ask, are we not in the presence of a necessary and inevitable change?

Perhaps so. Perhaps not so. Even if the change is necessary and inevitable, it would be better, for the living, to have it come slowly rather than swiftly, and peacefully rather than violently.

France proceeded, some years ago, by the violent method, and Europe was thirty years in desperate trouble. Blood enough was spilled to dye oceans red.

In our own civil war a million lives were sacrificed, though it would have been possible, under calmer counsel, to buy every slave at a price to make the South rich beyond the dreams of avarice. The cost would have been a mere pittance, measured against the cost of war.

Russia made the great leap, necessarily perhaps. But there is suffering there, vast and general. Blood and the spilling of Hood count no more than dropping rain. Russia, in her struggles for a new day, threatens to plunge, not Europe alone, but the world, into a general slaughter.

American employers are in two groups. Those who want to hasten fate, and those who wish to work out the destiny of industry calmly, without passion, without hatreds, without blind action. These men are the real leaders of America. They may be strong enough to keep America safe and sane.

IMPROVING THE DISTRIBUTION OF RAW MATERIALS

HENRY FORD, in his own paper, The Dearborn Independent, and on his own page, makes a plea for the better ordering of distribution, especially in unmanufactured commodities used for food. "Why," he asks, "should cattle and grain be moved hundreds or thousands of miles, to be made into meat or flour?"

Part of the why is found in the commercial system, by which large, skillful producers, with centralized facilities, have been able to undersell small neighborhood producers of meats and flour.

There are men alive, plenty of them, who remember the methods by which the western beef producers, the so-called beef trust, destroyed the independent packers, and slaughter house men of New England.

The method was exceedingly simple. Those who bought local beef were not permitted to buy western beef. Western beef was sold against the competitor at prices he could not meet.

This method, of competition was based upon cheap long haul transportation.

Cheap land, and large scale farming were elements. But railroad rates had to be low enough so that there would be a margin sufficient to undersell the local product.

As freight rates rise, and railroad transport becomes ever more costly, the tendency will be to localize industry. The higher the cost of transportation, the easier it will be and the more economical it will be to make upon the spot, goods which are produced from raw materials found in the neighborhood.

Present developments in transportation make very strongly decentralization. That is to say, when the fare from Devon to Bridgeport is but five cents, the tendency is for Devon to do more of its trading in Bridgeport. But when the fare is 25 cents, Devon will build up its neighborhood markets as completely as possible.

The future holds very great changes, most of which are in progress. There will be a reconstruction of waterways, through which heavy raw materials, aided by motor transport can pass with considerable speed.

The motor truck is more efficient for short haul business than the railroads are. The railroads will be relieved by the development of water power, and by the development of electric power at the mouth of the mine.

New England, harassed by coal strikes and coal famines, and profiteering in coal ought speedily to develop every water power that is available, and laws should be framed to expedite the economy. The tendency to legislate for the preservation of a decaying industry is entirely too strong. For instance the current now produced at Zoar Bridge, should have free access to Bridgeport, without legislative estoppel.

The obstacles which stand in the way of such changes as Mr. Ford desires are real. Obstacles which inhere in the minds and habits of thinking are the most difficult.

A beef trust which competes a local slaughter house out of the market by underselling is as real as a mountain. An entrenched and failing industry, like a trolley monopoly, appealing to a legislature to save it from modern invention, the automobile, is a genuine, and not a fanciful obstacle to progress.

Never can there be more than a proximate realization of Mr. Ford's ideal. A manufacturing plant tends to be a compromise. The best that can be done with it, is to put it at the most convenient point. The location must be where there is labor, where there is convenient transport, where all the raw materials may be procured, or brought.

There is a marked tendency to bring the plant to the raw material. Sometimes the raw material is power, as at Niagara; sometimes it is an abundant supply of skill and labor, as in Bridgeport. The evolution is slow, but it is sure.

INTER-CHURCH STEEL REPORT

THE INTER-CHURCH report on the steel strike but reflects the attitude which intelligent business men

have adopted toward the conflict between capital and labor. The managers of the steel trust are rebuked because they refused to negotiate with their men, because they are opposed to unions, because of the excessively long day they maintain and the low wages they pay. It is suggested to unions that they should promote the open shop, that they should remove restrictions on production, seek closer alliance with brain workers and so on, mostly matters which the unions tend to favor. The report is evidential of the changing opinion of the times. It is valuable as showing the growth of proletarian power, than as having an immediate effect upon the conditions.

EDUCATION AND PROGRESS

EDUCATION, using the word in the sense of the knowledge that is in books, is rather a quality of stability than of progress. An error that gets itself embodied in a system of education is in a fair way to get itself perpetuated.

If an error gets itself accepted as some part of a system which is empirical, rather than scientific, immortality may claim that error for its own.

Medicine is an empirical system. Science comes near it, but has not taken it over. Medicine, historically, counts more errors than pages could tell of. The great brews, the deadly poisons, the extraction of blood from the veins of the sick, the webs of spiders, are but a few of the grosser aspects of medical systems.

The pet error of modern medicine is vaccination, which has been inherited from an ancient past, which got it of the orientals.

The first form of the error was vaccination from arm to arm. The poison of small pox was taken from a sick person and put into the blood of a well person.

This gentle art of poisoning turned Europe into a pest house, and the seventeenth century was notable for the plagues of small pox that swept it with repeated devastation.

Jenner popularized the art of vaccination with poisonous material taken from the udder of a cow. The practice was less injurious than the custom it succeeded. It was introduced at the period when sanitation was discovered by Europe, as the nations emerged from the dark ages, and there was an immediate decrease in smallpox. Men and women lived more in accordance with the laws of nature, and they stopped the deliberate and artificial propagation of smallpox. But the doctors attributed the improvement to the Jennerian discovery. The nostrum remains a magic formulae in medicine.

In this, the twentieth year of the twentieth century, the health officer of New York is perturbed because there is small pox in Russia. He had himself and his family vaccinated, to prove he believes in his own magic, and he insists that everybody in New York shall take the rite.

Dr. Copeland complains that people who were vaccinated a long time ago refuse to be revaccinated, nor will they accept vaccination for their children, who have not been poisoned at all.

If Dr. Copeland will note the progress of the Jennerian rite in Great Britain, which was Jenner's country, he will get facts that may illuminate the darkness of his belief.

Great Britain, driven by her people, has abandoned compulsory vaccination. This has been done although the country supports official vaccinators, who have made large revenues from their vaccinations. These have constituted a privileged class, who fought fiercely to maintain the compulsion.

Just now the 48th Annual Report of the Local Government Board, gives vaccination statistics for the year 1913 to 1917 inclusive, which had been suspended during the war.

The number of children vaccinated had declined during ten years until about 60 per cent are unvaccinated, and during the same period fewer deaths from small pox have been recorded than in any previous epoch.

In Appendix C of the report is a statement of the vaccinal condition of small pox cases of 1918, from which the following official figures are taken:

| Small Pox Cases in England and Wales, 1918. | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| | Cases | Deaths |
| Vaccinated | 27 | 2 |
| Re-Vaccinated | 2 | 0 |
| Alleged Vaccinated | 2 | 0 |
| Unvaccinated or vaccinated during incubation period | 20 | 0 |
| Total | 51 | 2 |

Small pox is a decadent disease, the conditions of modern life not usually permitting it. But where sanitation is absent, where the life of the people approximates ancient conditions, small pox epidemics still rage, and the rows of the vaccinated dead would make a line several times around the world.

Germany is the best vaccinated country in the world excepting Japan, but was afflicted with small pox, when war conditions reduced the standards of living. It is interesting to note that among the small pox cases of 1919 the British report notes two doctors, and five nurses. One of the nurses, the report naively said had been "unsuccessfully re-vaccinated, in Nov. 1918.

SEVEN CENT FARES

THE YOUNG men have a phrase, "dead from the neck up," which is a polite way of saying, "no brains." Mr. Storrs with his prayer for seven cent fares, though he is unusually gifted outside of the trolley business, makes this slang seem almost a blessing specially contrived by providence. It would be impossible to express a condition more accurately.

The Connecticut Company, with its watered trolleys, its sick management, its unpaid taxes, and its perpetual whine had its biggest income when it charged a five cent fare. It raised the fare to six cents, and its income slumped. To six cent fares it added the zone system, with its eight, ten and twenty cent fares, always rising, and its income dropped like a shot. To this iniquity it added cash fares at three cents a mile, with tickets for the wary, and its revenues fell out of sight. Jitneys carried seventy per cent of the business.

The business of the trolleys is suspended in Bridgeport. Mr. Storrs threatens to suspend it everywhere else.

Bridgeport's mayor is in Hartford, or was, feebly protesting, against the seven cent rate. Whimpering, would be the better word. Or weeping, perhaps, in the presence of the dead. If the mayor had a little more knowledge, a little more practice in protecting the interest of the city, a little more gray matter under his hair, he would have acted, before the trolleys began the boycott of Bridgeport.

Now that the boycott is on, he should be taking steps to retrieve for his city its streets, that they may be devoted to those transportation uses which will serve the city and its citizens.

It ought not to be left to private persons, to meet from their own pockets, the cost of those obvious remedies which are available against the Connecticut company.

It is the City Attorney who should go to the State's Attorney for permission to bring a writ of quo warranto in the name of the State to obtain a declaration of forfeiture for non user.

It is still the law that a public service corporation which abandons its obligation to serve the public, is merely a usurper, and its franchise in the streets waits only the formal declaration of a court, to be voided.

There is but one logical remedy. Clear the Connecticut Company out of the way, so that it may be permanently replaced by something that will adequately serve the community.

BRINGING THE LAW IN CONTEMPT

THE MORNING'S NEWS tells a tale of conscience and diligence, which reflects as much glory as one can see upon the office where they handle Connecticut's automobile business.

A hundred jitneys have been arrested. They are charged with putting too many passengers in their cars. Humbly, imitating their mammoth, former competitor, they have been denying seats to some passengers. In the whole there have been more seated passengers in jitneys during rush hours, than there used to be in trolleys.

The spirit of law enforcement is a wonderful spirit, and quite novel. Such enthusiasm has seldom been exhibited, not by anybody in Connecticut since Bridgeport indulged in its riot of private detectives.

There is an emergency in Bridgeport, which the jitneys are meeting. The good conscience of the authorities requires such diligence, but Rip Van Winkle wakes ahead of time.

It is to be hoped that the judicial authorities, in imposing their penalties, may take the emergency into account, even if they should thus be led to suspend sentence for the period of the emergency.

EXTRA SESSION NEEDED

FOR ITS SOLUTION the trolley problem needs an extra session of the General Assembly. The solution which the General Assembly might offer would not necessarily be a wise or adequate solution. It might be no solution. It might make the confusion worse. The General Assembly has had the transportation problem before, during many years, and ruinous legislation has gone hand in hand with ruinous railroad and trolley management.

Yet the General Assembly is the only recourse. Good or bad, it is the only authority that has ample power to handle the situation.

Will there be an extra session, if so, when? Senator Brandegee is waiting for a re-election. An extra session would have to deal with the suffrage amendment, as well as with the trolley mess.

It is rather good betting that there will be no extra session of the Assembly, until it is too late to enfranchise the women this year.

This will be good for Brandegee, against whom the women will vote at the first opportunity.

GOOD JUDGMENT

THE ACCUSATIONS made by former Assistant Superintendent Suckley were not very pretty. The action taken upon them is wise, from the standpoint of the administration. The charges are to be dropped. Nobody wants to go into them. Nobody wants to probe them.

The administration must be somewhere near the bottom of the descent. No accusation is degrading enough to make it demand a vindication. It would rather have a common reputation for badness, than be convicted of it upon evidence in a public tribunal.

CAUSES OF SUICIDE OF WOMEN

RECENT STATISTICS show that one of every three adult suicides is a woman. Former statistics indicated one woman in every four was a suicide. Psychiatrists are guessing at the cause of the increase. Dr. H. M. Warren, president of the Save-a-Life-League, of New York, thinks that more women kill themselves because more of them enter business and industrial pursuits. The burden of life, he thinks, has been increased for women. He predicts a time when suicides will be even as between the sexes.

The figures upon which this discussion is based are not in view. Dr. Warren, apparently, is in possession of nothing but the ratio. There ought to be a "proportionate" increase in the suicide of women, because war tends to decrease suicide among males, and because alcohol is perhaps the most potent cause of suicide among males. Thus the long dry period would tend to decrease self destruction by men.

Women more frequently kill themselves because of disappointment in love. Such disappointments have doubtless been increased by war conditions. They tend to be increased by the accentuation of the sex side of life, which is furnished by the theatre and by the conditions in the great modern cities. The quantity of suicide increases with the quantity of education. Education increases suicide because the educated person is better able to compare the evil condition that he suffers, with the condition of sleep, which he often assumes death to be. Cats never commit suicide. Savages seldom do it.

The next decade probably will show a reduced suicide rate among men and women, unless, indeed the country should pass into a period of anarchy, due to social disturbances. With the disappearance of alcohol, and the entrance of women to the political field, the impulses to suicide should be considerably reduced.

The jump in the suicide rate of women is too sudden to be due to the great general causes, such as the complexity of civilization. An increase from such a cause would be gradual, not immediate. A study of the very figures may make the causes of the change more apparent.

ONE PASSENGER, ONE SEAT

WHEN THE transportation difficulty is adjusted, whether by building up an adequate automobile service, or by the return of the double service, let the city, now partially escaped from bondage, insist upon one seat for one passenger. Do away with the standing. Mr. Schwartz, of the Jitneyman's Association suggests that slight changes in store and factory schedules would solve the problem. Why not solve it?

GUARD AGAINST COMMERCIALISM

Paris, August 3.—In order to prevent any commercial encroachment upon Romagne cemetery, where 23,000 American soldiers are buried, the French government has been asked by the American Army Graves Registration Service authorities to purchase the gentle slope facing the front of the cemetery, and the entire crest of the hill occupied in part by the cemetery, as well as plots at both sides. The Romagne, Suresnes, and Belleau Woods cemeteries have been approved by the Secretary of War as the permanent resting places of more than 30,000 soldier dead who will continue to sleep in French soil. Suresnes, which is on the slope of Mont Valerien, one of the forts built to defend Paris, is already protected against encroachment of any sort, and the same is nearly true of Belleau Woods.

The extra ground to be purchased at Romagne will not only safeguard the cemetery against any encroachment but will provide areas which will be used by American horticultural experts to surround the hallowed spot with trees and shrubbery. At the present time the cemetery is surrounded only with a long wall and there is no available space for planting.

The beautification of the cemetery will not begin for some months as most of the bodies in the cemetery now are to be removed to America, and this work will not start until mid-September and will not be finished until sometime next year. After this work is finished bodies from other cemeteries will be moved in.

MINE VILLAGES "GARDEN SPOTS"

Connellsville, Pa., Aug. 3.—Coke and mining villages in the Connellsville region are becoming veritable "garden spots," according to the committee and judges appointed by the H. C. Frick Company which has started its annual inspection of flower beds and vegetable gardens planted by the miners and their families.

The first inspection made at the Phillips mine, showed that 135 gardens had been started, three of which had been carried along until harvest. The value of the crops has been estimated by the committee at \$10,000. The next inspection made at the Colonial No. 1 mine, where there were 230 gardens, showed 24 in a high state of cultivation, with a total valuation of \$14,970.

After awarding the prizes at the Colonial, the committee took occasion to praise the miners and their families for the excellent sanitary condition of the little town and its streets. The plant was declared to have one of the finest baseball parks and stands in Fayette county, while satisfaction was expressed with the progress being made in the construction of the new playground and athletic field.

SUDDEN CHECK PUT ON ROBBERS

Shanghai, Aug. 3.—Brigands who have terrorized the upper reaches of the Yangtze river in recent months found a sudden check put upon their activities when American and British gunboats were dispatched into the upper river from Shanghai, according to reports that have filtered back to Shanghai.

The gunboats were sent up to Chinking after a band of outlaws took possession of the Robert Dollar II, of the Robert Dollar Company of Shanghai at Wansien in Szechuen province, and were frightened away only by the timely appearance of the American gunboat Faloo which came in response to distress signals.

The Robert Dollar II on the maiden voyage of the new up-river service the Dollar company is establishing, was fired upon from shore after the first encounter. Messages to Shanghai said that the bandits vanished into the hills on the appearance of the gunboats.

LABOR MARKET FEELS SEUTDOWN

Philadelphia, Aug. 3.—The return of shipyards located along the Delaware River to a competitive basis of operation rather than that of obtaining contracts through the government is being reflected in the labor market.

Many men who made big wages in these yards have returned to the trades they followed before the war. In consequence there has been a noticeable easing of the labor market. Workers are being shifted from one department of the plants to another as various contracts are closed. At the yard of the New York Shipbuilding Corporation only four torpedo boats are on the ways out of the great fleet built there.

Hog Island is soon to shut down and turn loose many thousands of workers.

MARIE MARGUERITE, MARCHIONESS FE BRINVILLIERS.

This woman might better be classed as infamous than famous. She was born in Paris in 1851 and later married St. Gobelin, Marquis of Brinvilliers. Not very long after her marriage she fell madly in love with Goden St. Croix, a Gascon officer and adventurer. Her father, hearing of the affair, had her lover imprisoned in the Bastille.

As a result of this the marchioness harbored a terrible hatred against her father and the rest of her family. While in prison St. Croix learned how to mix a particularly deadly and subtle poison, and upon his release he and the marchioness contrived to poison the woman's father, sister and two brothers, in 1870.

One day while St. Croix was mixing the poison meant for others its fumes killed him, and his guilt as well as that of the marchioness was discovered. In consequence the wicked woman was put to death.

Pennsylvania farmers have asked employers of labor in the cities to supply the names of shop workers who would be willing to help out at harvest time.