

# LABOR IS WITH GOVERNMENT IN WAR, HUGHES REPORTS

INDUSTRIAL INSURANCE COMMISSIONER, "DRAFTED" BY FEDERAL LABOR DEPARTMENT FOR LECTURE TOUR, REVIEWS CONDITIONS AS HE FOUND THEM—"HARMONY AND TEAM WORK" BEING ADOPTED BY BOTH SIDES MORE EVERY DAY, HE SAYS—ADMINISTRATION RECOGNIZES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PRINCIPLE—UNION LEADERS DISCOURAGE STRIKES.

H. L. Hughes, member of the industrial insurance commission, who was "drafted" by Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson for a 30-day lecture trip on "The War and What It Means to Labor," returned to his duties on the commission the other day.

Commissioner Hughes left Olympia January 30, for this work on a leave of absence from his duties here, granted by Governor Lister. He went direct to Washington, D. C., and spent four days in the Labor Department, conferring with Secretary Wilson and others on various phases of the war situation and the part that labor is playing and is to play in the great war drama.

In these conferences were 11 other men, prominent in the labor movement of the country, who had been selected by the department to carry a message from Secretary Wilson to the workmen in the shipbuilding plants and other war industries of the nation. These 12 speakers were all placed under the direction of Honorable E. P. Marsh, member of the president's mediation commission, who now holds a position as director of the speakers' bureau in the department.

### Labor Gives Loyal Support.

Commissioner Hughes was directed to proceed to San Francisco and vicinity. He arrived there February 12, and by covering frequently as many as three meetings a day, he succeeded in getting before most of the laboring men of San Francisco, South City, Oakland and Vallejo, where the Mare Island navy yard is situated, by March 1, after which he returned home. He says that the spirit of the men working in the big shipbuilding plants in that section is fine and that the work is going ahead with a rush.

"Of course there are always some few rough spots where so many thousands of men are to be found working under varying conditions," he says, "but these are as nothing to

the great accomplishments of this mighty army of labor that is patriotically bending its back to the Herculean task of giving support to the men who are going into the trenches in France.

"It fills one with pride to go into one of these great shipbuilding plants and witness the spirit of these toll-begrimed men of labor, rearing and molding into shape the giant steel leviathans of the deep that are to become the 'bridge of ships' that General Pershing has asked that the nation build to span the Atlantic to carry men and supplies for the mighty war task we have assumed in Europe, that the world may be made safe for humanity.

"Union labor prevails in all these yards, and for almost the entire part workman and employer are co-operating for the greatest possible production. With such tremendous expansion, however, coupled with all the problems that go with such sudden growth of activity, there are bound to be some disputes—and they are all small affairs, yet in this time of such great need of active production, they loom all out of ordinary proportion—but they are being quickly settled.

"More and more each day both sides are realizing the necessity of harmony and team work; mutual good feeling between employed and employer is therefore rapidly taking the lead in the zeal of each to do all that can be done in the service of the nation at this time. It was largely for the purpose of promoting this spirit of co-operation that the Labor Department organized its bureau of speakers.

### Abandon Strike Weapon.

"These speakers are particularly urging upon the men the importance of abandoning the strike weapon at this time, and to depend upon the conciliators of the Labor Department to right all wrongs that may come up in the line of these employments. The department points out that of the hundreds and hundreds of strike

matters that have been submitted to its conciliation department, nearly all have been successfully settled with great advancements to labor.

"Also the department has taken the position that it is a correct principle to recognize the right of collective bargaining, and that as a result of this labor has been tremendously strengthened. The men are accepting this position of the Labor Department, and so are the employers for the most part, and I am sure that we are now to enjoy a new era of good feeling in all our war industries.

### Collective Bargaining Recognized.

"In this speaking tour we were not to touch upon the question of the closed shop versus the open shop, yet union recognition to the point of actual collective bargaining is something that the government insists upon as a necessary corollary to industrial peace and efficient production. When in the history of the world did any government go farther than this to advance the interests and rights of the workingman? You may be sure that the workers appreciate this and that they are going to give every ounce of devotion and energy there is in their hearts and bodies to provide loyal support to a government that means so much for the best interests of labor.

"How different under the autocracy of Germany, where the Hindenberg bayonet prods starved and burdened labor back to its tasks in support of kaiserism and all the repression and despotism that typifies that tyranny!

"It is plainly noticeable, too, that in those plants where there is the closest relationship between the management and the organizations of the men, there you find the plants securing the cream of the skilled men of the country and the work going forward free from industrial disputes. It is all the same—working or fighting—for such a democracy, and where such conditions prevail there is never any need to question the loyalty of the men, the quality of their service, or the spirit in which they work.

"Such a country, with such conditions and such standards, is worth a life time of devotion from any man, and this devotion is being given without stint or reserve by every true American workman—native born or naturalized—who has any real conception of his duties, rights and opportunities; and I found few indeed who have not this realization.

### Cleaning Out the Slackers.

"Occasionally slackers and enemies have been found, and always these have been doing incalculable harm. But the strong arm of the government, aided by the loyal workmen, will soon ferret out all of this element and place them where they will do no further harm.

"I was glad to note that the unions in San Francisco were preferring Charges against every member who was heard to utter disloyal sentiments, and where found guilty these men were being expelled. During my stay there, three members of the Musicians' union were shot one afternoon by an alien enemy that the union had expelled for disloyalty. That deed, however, only acted as a stimulus to other unions to speed up the cleaning out process. Now, if some one among the non-union elements of the country will only do as much in the way of cleaning out the traitors among the non-unionists, we will soon have the country rid of this gentry.

### The National Capital in War Times.

"The situation at the capital in these days of national stress is wonderfully interesting. The city is so full of people that it is exceedingly difficult to get the most meager hotel accommodations. Reservation had been made for me in advance at the old National hotel, a hotel that is advertised as having been made famous as the death place of Henry Clay. I remembered, however, that history records that Henry Clay lived to a ripe old age, so decided to take a

chance on the place for the three nights that I would be there.

### Wilson a Strong Man.

"The work of the house of representatives did not impress me very greatly at close range, nor does it seem to impress anyone much, judging by the general expression of opinion. In the senate there are some strong men and—others that are not so strong. On the whole, after looking over the national legislative body, one thanks God that we have a strong man in the presidential chair.

"From the press, and from the general expression of public opinion, one gets the impression that Washington regards Wilson as easily the leading figure in the great world war. The Allied nations all stand back to give our president the first expression in answer to the proposals of the Central powers. At home he is the leader of national thought and national initiative.

"The strong men that he has selected for the departments, and for all war activities, are doing a wonderful constructive work, the bickerings of some small men in congress to the contrary notwithstanding. I was in Washington just after Senator Chamberlain and Colonel Roosevelt had made their futile attempt to discredit the splendid work that has been accomplished in organizing and equipping our great army in such short time.

"Senator Chamberlain had just been compelled to apologize to Secretary of War Baker for talking in the senate about some things connected with the war department and the raising of the army that he knew nothing about when he made his speech that raised such a storm throughout the nation. People were laughing and saying that Chamberlain should have seen Secretary Baker for these facts before he made his speech and then it would not have been necessary to make an apology after.

"No harm was done, however, for it enabled the secretary of war to show to the country the bigness of the work that had been done, and the excellence in which it was done; and at the same time it enabled him to make a vigorous correction of the few isolated errors that the opposition had been able to emphasize into what they seemed to hope would be a national scandal.

### Administration's Labor Policy Wins.

"The labor policy of the president and his secretary of labor is of wonderful depth and significance. Here he has established an industrial democracy that makes our fight for world democracy substantial and real. There is to be no sham about it; no kaiserism in industry—but the real right of labor to industrial recognition and expression. This has brought to the support of the nation the fervid loyalty of every leader in the American labor movement, with one possible exception—and that one seems to stand out all the more prominently because of his lonesomeness. He will come in time, or be removed by his membership who are among the truest and most loyal of American workmen.

"At first this labor policy seemed to get the bitter enmity of the big employers, but the very correctness of the president's position, aided by the force of public opinion which has awakened to the justice of labor's necessities, is bringing these powerful factors around to a graceful acceptance of the new order of things.

"I predict that we are going to enjoy immediately the most wonderful team work between the employers and the workmen of the entire country because of the splendid understanding that is coming about through the administration of President Wilson and his administration. Out of its war necessities, and under the leadership of this far-seeing mind, the nation is being born to a new industrial consciousness.

"The American citizen—and especially the wage working American citizen—who, realizing the wonderful advancements that have been made and that are possibilities of the future, does not work and fight with his every ounce of energy and mind for the successful outcome of this war and the winning of universal democracy, is indeed a poor specimen of man. But American manhood is responding; will continue to respond in increased ratio, and the year 1918, I am sure, will be the greatest year in American history.

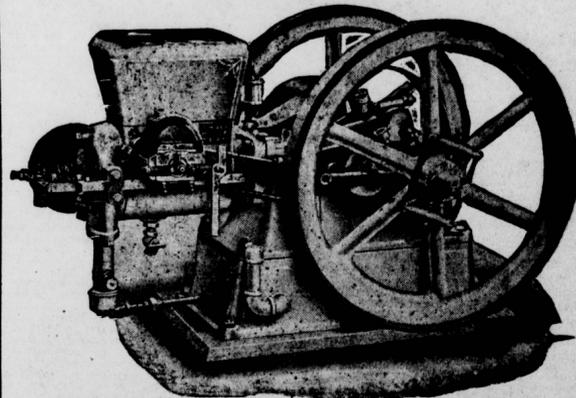
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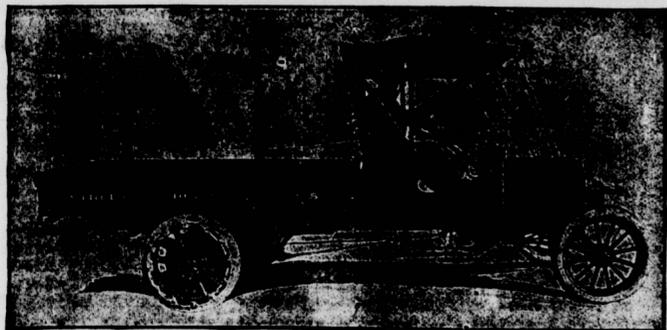
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