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LABOR AND INDUSTRY

SOME ITEMS OF INTEREST TO UNION WORKMEN.

Success of Direct Employment—The Obnoxious Contract System Cannot Be Compared to the Better Way—Pennsylvania Labor Men.

Direct Employment.

The substitution of direct employment for the contract system in many branches of municipal work has been found in several noteworthy instances to have produced good results in several directions.

One instance is afforded by New York city, where a few years ago Mr. Waring, who was at the head of the street department, undertook the great task of having streets cleaned by men directly employed by the city, instead of letting the job to contractors, and further decided to demonstrate that he could obtain better service and save money by almost entirely discarding machines, and going back to the broom and shovel. Mr. Waring's experiment was derided at the time he commenced it, but before his term of office had expired he conclusively proved that in that particular branch of municipal undertaking there was economy in direct employment and the rejection of the machine.

In his speech before the Commercial club of Chicago, Mayor Quincy, of Boston, told of the progress that Boston is making in the direction of the substitution of direct employment of labor for the contract system. Last year the city established a municipal printing office, which employs from 50 to 100 hands, and has, in the first year of its operation, saved the city over \$11,000, in comparison with the prices which the city was formerly paying for its printing. In the installation of new electrical work and in the making of electrical repairs the city successfully substituted the work of a special department for the contract system, and now has a force of twenty-five to fifty men constantly engaged in this work. Boston has also started a repair department, which will make all repairs or small alterations needed upon municipal buildings, including work in the mechanical trades, such as carpentering, mason work, plumbing, steamfitting, etc. Proper store-rooms and shops have been fitted up for use in connection with this branch of work. "Personally," said Mr. Quincy, in his speech, "I believe that wherever the contract system can be replaced by the direct employment of labor under proper administrative control an advantage will be gained not only in the better quality of work secured and in the greater responsibility for its proper execution, but in the elimination from politics of the demoralizing influence of the small contractor."

Going to England, there is a recent record that contains an argument of equal force. In the parish of Battersea in London the contract for public work is unknown, all of the work of the parish since October, 1895, being carried on by the vestry's own men, whether it is the making of a main sewer, laying of a pavement, or the construction of a public building. Battersea is ahead of all other English communities in this respect, for not even Birmingham, Manchester, or Glasgow have dispensed wholly with the contractor. Battersea is also first to establish municipal workshops, and the building just completed contains shops for carpenters, wheelwrights, wagon-makers, plumbers, blacksmiths, painters, masons, harness-makers and other trades. All sorts of tools are provided. At least 160 skilled mechanics will be employed within doors. Men employed by Battersea work eight hours a day, are paid trade union rate of wages, are entitled to a week's holiday each year, sick pay, and a pension in cases of accident during employment. From October, 1895, to January 1, 1898, work has been done to the amount of \$21,881, and it is noteworthy that this was \$1,858 below the estimated cost.

Union Men for National Guard.

Pennsylvania Grit. Mr. Dolan, president of the Pittsburgh district, United Mine Workers of America, is before the public with a suggestion that is causing many members of that and other labor organizations to realize that this is a time of lightning changes. At present Pennsylvania has, practically, no National Guard, the old commands having enlisted in the volunteer army of the United States. A new guard is to be formed, consisting, like the old one, of about 9,000 members. Mr. Dolan is asking the support of all labor organizations in the state in an effort to induce union workmen to enlist in the new guard. Ever since the Homestead "war" it has been the conviction of many unionists that the guard was the sworn enemy of labor, and that for a unionist to join the same was little less than treason to the cause of labor, and an open act of hostility to fellow-laborers.

But time works changes. Of late it has become clear to many of the most intelligent and zealous leaders of labor that the guard is not necessarily an enemy to any one who is not an enemy to law and order. Mr. Dolan is one of these leaders. He says:

"I know quite well that many organized workmen are opposed to joining the national guard because it has been claimed that the guards were, or had been used to protect the capitalists and down organized labor. The truth of the matter is trades unionists do not want to destroy property. They want to reserve it, and the peace, too. The conduct of miners during the last strike will prove that."

In an interview with Mr. Dolan it was suggested to him that the new guard would be subject to orders and would be required to obey them, regardless of what their own personal feelings were. In this way it would not matter whether the guardsmen were union men or not, as orders would have to be obeyed just the same. In reply to this Mr. Dolan said he had already provided for that, as the soldiers would elect their own officers. These would be union men, too. He believed the organization of the new national guard on the lines embodied in his suggestion would be a benefit to labor and capital alike.

Mr. Dolan evidently has the right idea. To assume, as appears to have been done, possibly unconsciously, by the interviewing party in the paragraph preceding, that unionists in the guard would have to do things not compatible with their duty or inclination as unionists, is a gross misconception of what unionism is. Unionism is preeminently law-abiding; it is simply a joint exercise of legal rights in a manner that experience has shown to bring about greatest and most nearly permanent results. Whenever an organization goes beyond this it is not a body animated by unionism, but a confederacy to promote the temporary good of its members at the expense of invading rights of others. In other words, it is a wrong thing, and can not endure.

It is more to the point to assume that Mr. Dolan means exactly what he says. And the merit of his suggestion is at once manifest. It shows that he recognizes the fact that a guard, is necessary in Pennsylvania; that when necessity demands the services of that guard, it is highly desirable that the armed power that compels obedience to law and stands to prevent destruction of property and other invasion of rights shall be a power among whose units are to be found men as closely as possible bound in interest and fellowship with those whom they may perchance be called to restrain; that such relation must go far to obliterate the illusion that the guard is a club that "the money power" holds over the heads of toilers, and finally, that a guard, so constituted, would be less liable to provoke resistance than one whose members were, rightfully or wrongfully, regarded as being indifferent to the rights of those whom they are to restrain from unlawful acts.

There is no reason why a unionist should not be found in the national guard of Pennsylvania; there is no reason to suppose that he would not as fully live up to his oath of loyalty to the state as any other man; and there is much reason that he should be found in line, if for nothing else than that his presence there would be evidence of the best kind that the maintenance of law and order is the concern of organized labor equally with all other interests of the state.

Any proper action is to be welcomed that goes to wipe out the idea that in this country there are "classes" and "masses," and that the former lie awake o' nights devising ways and means to still further oppress the latter and shoot them into subjection if they murmur. That there are inequalities and wrongs, no one can deny; but they are being redressed by legal and peaceful means in the hands of those who suffer, and other citizens. Once admit that the few have established in this country or this state institutions whereby they coerce the many, and take from them the power of righting wrongs by lawful means, and you admit that government by the people is a failure in this country or state.

But government by the people has not been a failure, either in this country or state. And if enlistment of unionists in the national guard will open the eyes of some to this fact, who now believe differently, it might be a good thing to make membership in a trades union a necessary prerequisite to membership in the national guard, just for its value as an object lesson.

And for the peace of mind of those who may profess to see "grave danger" in the enlistment of a great number of unionists in the national guard, it may be added that such "grave danger" does not exist, even on the preposterous presumption that enlisted unionists would not obey orders to the letter. When there is necessity for a governor to summon military aid, he calls out the national guard of his state; if that guard cannot or will not suppress the disturbance, the governor invokes the aid of the president, who places at his disposal as many regular troops of the United States army as may be necessary to maintain or restore peace. So, viewed in any light, and even assuming that some very extraordinary presumptions may be true, it still follows that much good may, and no evil can, follow the enlistment of unionists in the national guard of Pennsylvania.

The prospects for an increased export of United States eggs to Great Britain are very good at present.

IT IS BIMETALLISM.

THE WORLD MUST ADOPT THAT SYSTEM.

So long as the Gold Standard is Maintained There Will Be Idleness and Poverty—People May Learn the Lesson by Severe Experience.

Sooner or later a single system of finance must prevail throughout the entire earth. As a base for that system three things are possible: gold, or silver, or both. But silver as a single base seems to have been eliminated as a probability, for not even its best friends ask that it be made the basic money of the world uncombined with gold. The whole controversy is narrowed down to gold or silver. It is in its position of a world problem that the silver question must be considered.

As a whole the financial system of the world is in a transitory state. Today a part of the world is on a silver basis and a part on a gold basis, but this arrangement cannot continue. The keen financiers that are behind the movement to make the whole world come to the gold basis know the injuries the gold standard countries sustain in their competition with silver-standard countries. They propose in their hearts to eliminate this feature by forcing all of the silver countries to come to their way of thinking. In their minds' eye they behold the time when there will be no silver using countries, and when goods can be manufactured no cheaper in Mexico than they can in England. To attain this end they are willing to have the manufactures of their own country suffer for a time, believing the end is not far off. They know that were the present conditions to continue the manufactures of all gold standard countries must little by little decline and manufactures of all silver-standard countries must little by little increase, until the latter would ultimately take possession of the markets of the world.

Their plan of campaign is obvious. It is to entirely destroy silver as a money metal and compress the business of the world to a point where it will rest on the narrow gold base. They believe themselves able to do this, because they know how successfully rich men can work in the dark. They have their myriads of financial agents in all parts of the world. It is not necessary that all of the men that do their bidding be their exclusive employees. In many cases they are the employees of great banking houses and commercial enterprises, but they have received their cue from headquarters and are zealous in their efforts to please the monied men that control those enterprises. Here lies the danger of the situation to the world, for we should not deceive ourselves into believing that it is not possible for them to succeed. They have an army of mercenaries composed of the brightest intellects working continually in secret to attain their ends. They can work for ten years or twenty years or thirty years with no sense of weariness. On the other side the cause of the people must depend on spontaneity. To that cause, waiting year after year is disastrous, for it is difficult to sustain the interest in any cause depending on the enthusiasm of the multitude. It is evident that our interests can be protected only by the unselfish devotion of the leaders, who should never allow the agitation to cease.

If untold suffering has come to the people by reason of the gold standard being made absolute in a few countries, what will it be when the whole world is forced onto that basis? The process will be slow and the pain excruciating. Year by year the general trend of prices will continue to be downward, especially in the silver countries that now are. So much greater will be their injuries as they are poorer than the countries that more naturally have adopted the gold standard. The few manufacturers that have sprung up in the silver countries will quickly melt away, and widespread and long-continued financial depression will prevail. Civilization will be stagnant for a generation. Only by arousing the people of the silver countries can so great disasters be prevented.

H. F. THURSTON.

MONOMETALLISM.

It is not righteous that men should fatten up their fellow-men under the protection of the law.

Those fortunes are unchristian and hateful which are built upon stock jobbing, upon financial piracy and violation of law, fraudulent capitalization, railroad wrecking, suppression of honest competition, tax dodging and discrimination, unequal railroad rates, oppressive monopolistic rates, exactions from the weak, judicial, legislative, administrative favoritism, and mighty conspiracies of the strong and wealthy.

These are the evils which the great arm of the republic should cripple for its own safety; and each one of these evils has its root in selfishness and greed. Fortunes gained by these means are ungodly. If they are not unlawful,

they must be made unlawful. Progress made with these instruments is toward the brink of dissolution for our commonwealth.

The forces of 1896 were gathered to contest with all these evils. The Democracy is not unequal to the task, nor should it fear that its doctrine of individualism will be perverted.

If all the evils are to array themselves in solid and stolid opposition, how can man withstand them unorganized? The socialistic tendency is one of protection and not of choice, and if assaulting forces are mighty in organization one of two courses is open—either to break their organization or to organize more powerful than they. To regulate organized power is the problem with which we have been dealing.

This falling, the combined power of the right must be utilized, and the only recourse now apparent is the government of the people. If such political method be called socialism it will not threaten unless the enemy can be put down with the present system. To accomplish our ends it will not suffice to make laws. There must be an awakening of the public conscience. We must excite confidence in our purposes, in our methods, and in our deeds.

It is true that we shall still be held up to scorn and derision, but all these forces of intimidation must find us strong and dutiful if the mighty work we have undertaken is to be carried out. We attack those who hold the great forces of civilization, who can indeed make us unhappy, who can degrade us in the eyes of men, and we must have the faith and courage of Christian men to make the sacrifices that are before us.

Something was gained by patience under abuse in the last campaign; something has been gained by our exhibition of loyalty in accepting the results of the late campaign, even though we believed that we had been juggled out of a victory. We have the sympathy of hundreds of thousands who were honestly alarmed in the late campaign by the false cries of our opponents.

The business community is disgusted with the false prophets of prosperity and is now more willing to give us an honest hearing. If our cause is just, time will not weaken it. We can afford to be reviled if we ultimately shall be justified. Glory born of suffering is the highest known to man.

—GEORGE FRED WILLIAMS.

THE GOLD STANDARD.

From the time of Hellogabalus (221 A. D.) silver was refused in payment of taxes, gold being exacted, and finally the aureus lost its weight, and the whole currency fell into confusion, gold itself passing by weight. Diocletian attempted to restore silver, but without permanent success.

Under Julian (360) silver was demonetized and gold monometallism established by law. The effect of this gradual exclusion of silver, which went on growing more and more complete for a hundred and fifty years, was slowly to divide the monetary substance in halves, thereby enormously enhancing the purchasing power of the portion retained.

It is even possible to measure roughly the movement of the Roman gold, since its ratio to silver at different periods is known. The chief difficulty lies with the value of silver, which itself tended to appreciate down to the crusades, although no data remain by which to ascertain that appreciation. Assuming, however, that silver only stood constant, gold certainly rose strongly.

Under Julius Caesar gold stood to silver as 1 to 8.90. Under Domitian, about 100 A. D., 1 to 11.30. Under Constantine, about 300 A. D., 1 to 12.50. Under Theodosius II., about 450 A. D., 1 to 18.

In 476 Odoacer became king of Italy. Therefore, between the beginning and the end of the western empire gold must have very much more than doubled in value in relation to commodities.

Thus year by year prices were artificially forced down and the money lender received a progressively greater share of the product of labor, until at length the life of the Italian farmer became impossible.

The consequence was that land in the European provinces passed out of cultivation, and when the Goths forced the line of the Danube they found the empire a shell. The men who had formerly filled the legions were gone, and their descendants made the cowardly rabble of Rome, who could not be brought to face a foe.

Nothing is more striking than the ease with which comparatively small bands of Germans marched from end to end of Italy or Gaul without meeting serious resistance.

—BROOKS ADAMS.

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BAPTIST—M. E. Weaver, pastor. Regular services, Second and Fourth Sundays at 11 a. m. and 8 p. m.; Sunday school, 10 a. m.; prayer meeting, Wednesday, 8 p. m. All invited.

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