

The Commoner

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**OPINIONS BY
PRACTICAL MEN**

**Just What the Eight-Hour Law
Will Do to Business.**

Chas. Perry, Hotel Manager: "Labor with us means service. Our first duty is to our guest. Many emergencies occur in this business—the uncertain arrival and departure of guests—delays and congestion of trains and boats and other circumstances that cannot be met with when the hours of service are fixed by law without an unprofitable amount of labor. Few hotels are financially successful. One of the direct causes being the necessity of carrying an excess of space and help to meet ordinary demands of the traveling public. The stranger's first impression is the most lasting. A city is known by the character of its hotels. The traveler does not compare us with our neighbor, but compares us with the hotels of other places, and if we are lacking in accommodations and service the comparison is bad, comments severe and our city condemned."

Chas. H. Goodrich, Salmon Canner: "An Eight-Hour Law, if strictly enforced, would have a most disastrous effect on those engaged in the business we are. Our product is perishable and unless cared for promptly the result is a waste of food fish which would not only mean a large financial loss to us personally, but a loss to the public generally through an unavoidable loss of food product. We will cite another instance. Our pile driver was 37 days driving one trap. During that time it actually worked not to exceed fifteen days. The rest of the time the men did nothing. This was unavoidable on account of the weather. When weather permitted the crew worked long hours, in some cases fourteen hours. Had it been compulsory to work not to exceed eight hours even when weather permitted it would have nearly doubled the expense. The law would also make double crews necessary on all our small launches and would render many lines of work impracticable altogether."

Mr. H. J. Bailey, Lumberman: "The writer's personal observation convinces him that a compulsory Eight-Hour Law would not only greatly handicap the employer who has to compete with labor across the line in British Columbia, but would act as a boomerang, and strike the wage earner himself like a lightning bolt, for this law would not give him more than eight hours pay for his eight hours of service, which would mean a material reduction in his income, and this in the face of a steady advance in cost of living would constitute an irreparable injury to him."

Mr. H. C. Henry, Pacific Creosoting Co.: "What the operation of this law would cost our company is difficult to say, but for additional clerk hire, supervision, additional equipment and men, delays and difficulty in handling output, it is safe to put this increased cost at from 10 to 20 per cent. We are in competition with plants in other states and British Columbia not subject to such restrictions and would find ourselves unable to meet their prices and keep alive. To the Creosoting industry and the employees of same, the Universal Eight-Hour Law would be a calamity."

W. W. DeForest, Shoe Manufacturer: "We operate our factory almost entirely on a piece work basis. Whenever a department is behind on its product we have the operators work longer and thus give our regular employees the benefit of the increased earnings. This we would not be likely to do if we had to pay 50 per cent extra for the work so done. It is necessary for us to market our product in competition with the East and therefore, there is a limit to the cost of production. We are buying all our raw material at as low prices as Eastern houses, but our labor costs more."

Mr. George Ker, Manager Moxee Company, Supt. 2,000 acre farm, Yakima County: "It would be a physical impossibility to operate our farms and make it pay anything under the Eight-Hour Law. This law does not and cannot be made to fit the conditions of farm management. Irrigators, for instance, work 12 hours a day. The labor is not hard but requires special knowledge and experience. Many of these men have been with us from 12 to 14 years and one man since 1885. An untrained man cannot be put on this job and if we had to double our forces of irrigators, it would be impossible to obtain experienced and competent men. Hop pickers who work on a piece basis would not be induced to harvest hops with only eight hours' work."

Mr. Stanley Coffin, Sheep Grower and former Secretary of the Washington Wool Growers Assn.: "The Eight-Hour Law which will appear on the ballot in November as Initiative Measure No. 13, if enacted into law will put an end to sheep raising on an extensive scale in this state and throw hundreds of men out of employment, as well as destroy thousands of dollars of invested capital."

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**REAL DANGER TO
THE INITIATIVE**

**The Friends of the Principle
Opposing Its Misuse and
Abuse.**

Very many voters in Washington who favor the initiative principle are against nearly all of the measures proposed this year. They believe it is being abused, and say they can see the end of the initiative idea in Washington.

They know that it is being used for legislation that is not necessary; for legislation directed unfairly toward the industries of the state, and at the taxpayers in increased taxation.

It may be well to remember that only 110,110 people voted for the initiative amendment to the constitution. Against it were 46,000, and indifferent to it were 175,000 voters. No one can say that a majority in Washington favored Initiative and Referendum, and it may safely be predicted that a vast majority of the voters of Washington are unalterably opposed to its use for the destruction of industries, the increase of taxation, or as a means of "getting even" with political parties or business concerns.

Ten per cent of the voters may initiate a measure which is just 2 1/2 per cent of the people. A majority of one-third of the voters, or 4 1/2 per cent of the people can enact laws. Added to this is the fact that the Governor's veto power was removed by the constitutional amendment and every measure so passed—good, bad, or indifferent—must remain in force two years as legislative action is also prohibited by the constitutional amendment for four years.

This plain statement of actual facts and figures should cause the real friends of the initiative principle to hesitate and ponder, and vote against all measures that are unfair to either labor or property. Reduced earning power is a tax on labor; increased taxation is a burden on property, and added cost of production is a tax upon the living of every man and woman.

The real friends of the initiative principle are now demanding that the law be protected from those who would use it as a club against business and industry. Like every other new piece of governmental machinery, it is not "fool proof" and unless it can be made so by the people of Washington who want fair play and decent taxes it will be discarded. The right way to protect it is to vote down every unworthy and tax-eating measure.

The initiative principle was never intended for the base use to which it is now being put. Its friends should be careful.

**COST OF FEEDING
STOCK PROHIBITIVE**

**A Cattleman Tells What the
Eight-Hour Law Will Do to
His Industry.**

"The impracticability of the eight-hour law, as proposed by Initiative Measure No. 13, is probably illustrated most clearly by its application to the cattle business," said Jas. J. Wiley, President of the Rainier Cattle Grazing Association, an organization of about 100 cattle men of the Yakima country.

"In many of our operations it would be impossible to comply with the provisions of the law, but we would be subject to the penalties just the same as no exceptions are made to fit the various conditions of the different industries and occupations.

"For instance we could not supply extra crews for the three eight-hour shifts during a day while our stock is being driven from one grazing location to another. Our outfits are hired for a season and paid by the month. The men are always on the job. Often for several days at a time they have practically nothing to do even though on duty, while at times they have to work from 16 to 24 hours without rest.

"During the winter season the cattle are placed in feeding lots and one man will feed a herd, working actively at feeding times in the morning and evening and taking things easy during the middle of the day, but technically employed all of the time. This work is not severe and does not overtax the endurance of the employee, but it requires that he be always on hand throughout every day of the winter season. This law would require four men to do the work of one. Two for each week day and two more for Sunday. This would make the cost of feeding prohibitive.

"The law lacks common sense in its failure to consider and provide for different conditions in different kinds of employment and can result only in harm to employers and employees alike. The cattle men will vote against it to a man."

Sixty-Nine to One.
In two days 237 farmers and fruit growers of Wenatchee valley, representing 12,841 acres of land, signed a vigorous protest against Initiative Measure No. 13, the compulsory Eight-Hour Law. In Cashmere, said to have the largest grange in Washington, a meeting was held at which seventy fruit growers were present. By a vote of 69 to 1 resolutions were passed denouncing the Eight-Hour Law as destructive to industry and opposed to every principle of personal liberty.

**QUESTIONS FOR
THE EMPLOYEE**

**They Must Be Answered By
Every Worker in Wash-
ington.**

Do you believe YOUR employer can pay as much for Eight hours' labor as he now pays for nine or ten?

Is the industry in which YOU are employed of such a character that it can, with a compulsory eight-hour day, compete against similar industries in states not having such laws?

If your employer cannot compete in the open market and sell his product how would YOUR EMPLOYMENT be affected?

If YOUR particular industry could survive this law, is it FAIR TO OTHER WORKERS to vote it upon industries which could not?

The Farmer MUST harvest grain when it is ripe. Fruit is perishable and MUST be marketed in season. A COMPULSORY EIGHT-HOUR day will increase the price of every food product. How will that affect YOUR living expenses?

If you earn LESS and pay MORE for food are you benefited?

If you are SICK or INJURED and a nurse is required for yourself or family, can you afford THREE instead of ONE?

Do you want the state to HAVE SUPERVISION OVER YOU and say that you SHALL NOT use your own labor to bring the best results to yourself?

Remember that nearly ALL products of Washington must compete with those of British Columbia and those of other states where the cost of production is not increased by such laws.

If you do not care how YOUR employer and his business will be affected by this law, it is important that you investigate and see how YOU will be affected in earning capacity and in your ability to pay the INCREASED COST OF LIVING.

President Gompers, of the American Federation of Labor, denounced this sort of legislation as "dangerous to the laboring man," and says in the July American Federationist: "If there were a movement to establish an eight-hour day throughout the land the Federation would oppose such policy."

The report of the State Labor Commissioner shows that NINETY-SEVEN per cent of the men regularly employed in Washington would have their EARNING POWER REDUCED by this law and their living expense increased.

Less than THREE PER CENT of the people of Washington have asked for this law. Were YOU consulted about it?

It Means More Taxes.

Washington now collects \$31.44 for every man, woman and child. Every taxpayer wants a reduction rather than an increase. Yet practically every one of the proposed initiative measures means increased taxes, directly or indirectly.

The proponents of No. 8 to abolish employment agencies say it is a corrective measure. For one minute grant that it is. Those who vote for this measure are naturally in favor of free public employment agencies—they would not leave the working people without a medium to assist them in procuring employment. Abolishing employment agencies—the good with the bad—means that the state will have to carry on the work.

On the basis of Illinois' experience, 13th annual report, pages 7-8, it will cost the state of Washington not less than \$200,000.00 to do the work now done by the employment agencies. Illinois maintains a number of free employment agencies and it cost 71 cents for each position or job secured, and yet by the official report the fee agencies do 83 per cent of the business.

Unless you are prepared for increased taxes you will vote NO on Initiative No. 8.

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