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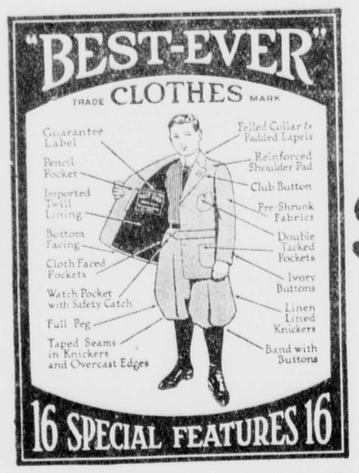


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# The LABOR JOURNAL

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# Let Labor Day be a Day of Protest Against Lawson Sentence

### Unjust Court Decision Far Reaching and Must Be Reversed

(By E. P. Marsh, President Washington State Federation of Labor)

Some of the strangest chapters in American history are being written in the state of Colorado. The unbelievable greed of the Standard Oil interests, the absolute domination of the civil and military authorities by 26 Broadway, the heroic struggle of those miners to achieve a measure of industrial freedom, form a drama the like of which America never saw before. We thought when the rifles of John D.'s hirelings flashed at Ludlow and defenseless women and children died, that the last infamous chapter had been written. Terrible as was that measure it still pales beside the travesty on justice which condemned to a living death, John R. Lawson. I make this statement advisedly. In theory democracy rests upon the foundation of obedience to law. That the passions of men may be restrained, that the strong shall not prey upon the weak, that the humblest citizen may feel the protecting arm of law thrown around him, we have built up through the centuries a judicial system. When those who have sworn to uphold the law, to deal justice, deliberately trample all the principles underlying legal procedure under foot, what greater crime against human rights and human liberty can be committed?

There is no escaping the indictment brought before the bar of public opinion against Standard Oil as a result of the Lawson trial. Frank P. Walsh, chairman of the Industrial Relations Commission, than whom no abler, more fearless tribune of the cause of humanity has appeared in public life during the memory of this generation, probed to the core of the Colorado situation and fixed the blame for the whole rotten mess at the door of 26 Broadway.

No matter what the type of man who defies the right of organized capital to enslave the toilers, be he ultra radical or ultra conservative, that man is marked to be broken and crushed, his power to rouse and unite his fellows ended. No man who knows John R. Lawson could call him "radical," not in the sense that he would take the life of any man, harm a hair of his head. Lawson fought a system, not individuals. Dealing daily with men whose primal instinct was to strike out an injustice with the only force they knew anything about, physical, his counsel always to his people was to refrain from physical violence of any sort. In the blackest days of Ludlow he sought constantly to restrain his people from violence, appealing with all his powerful personality that reason and patience should guide him. He believed that the law of physical force reacted in the end upon those who invoked it.

**LAWSON'S REAL CRIME (?)**

Standard Oil never tried Lawson for murder, that was a subterfuge; Lawson was tried upon the charge that he led an organized resistance against the tyranny of a great financial institution, a resistance that threatened a continuation of unholy profits. Let us get that clearly in our minds and each succeeding scene of the great Colorado drama stands out in bold relief before us.

The organized labor movement of Colorado and of the nation has taken up the case of John R. Lawson and has appealed it to the court of last resort in this country, the conscience and the brain and the love of liberty of the American people. The legislature and the courts of Colorado in this travesty on justice went through the pretended forms of legal procedure. The organized labor movement of America seeks to vindicate the principles of law, the principles that guarantee the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of justice, and that vindication must come through a reversal of the sentence of life imprisonment upon John R. Lawson.

Throughout the United States next Labor Day it will be a day of protest against the shameful part played by Standard Oil interests in the annals of legal procedure. Through the active work of the United Mine Workers, the organization primarily concerned in the Colorado situation, "Lawson protest speeches" have been arranged for in many cities. Organized labor proposes to lay bare the whole hideous conspiracy on that occasion and let the American people look upon the structure that has been builded under their noses. John R. Lawson is the medium through which labor speaks to America. Lawson is big enough, self-sacrificing enough to take his medicine calmly—and it is an awful thing to be forever shut away from God's sunlight, to look no more upon the flowers and the green sward, never to clasp again the hands of loved ones or look into the eyes of those who we called comrades—if through that sacrifice he could bring one step nearer the day when his people should be free men and women.

Lawson must not be called upon to make that sacrifice. In this case justice and right can be vindicated only by a decision from the higher courts giving Lawson back to his family, to his organization and to society.

On this coming Labor Day, when we turn our thoughts to the great problems of life which so vitally affect labor, let us not fail to voice our protest against industrial wrong as typified by the Lawson case. Labor must and will be heard.

# LABOR

By Berton Braley

Out of chaos, out of murk
I arose and did my work;
While the ages changed and sped,
I was toiling for my bread.
Underneath my sturdy blows
Forests fell and cities rose.
And the hard, reluctant soil
Blossomed richly from my toil.
Palaces and temples grand
Wrought I with my cunning hand.
Rich indeed was my reward—
Stunted soul and body scarred
With the marks of scourge and rod,
I, the tiller of the sod,
From the cradle to the grave
Shambled through the world—a slave!
Crushed and trampled, beaten, cursed,
Serving best, but served the worst,
Starved and cheated, gouged and spoiled,
Still I builded, still I toiled,
Undernourished, underpaid,
In the world myself had made.
Up from slavery I rise,
Dreams and wonder in my eyes.
After brutal ages past,
Coming to my own at last,
I was slave—but I am free!
I was blind—but I can see!
I, the builder, I, the maker,
I, the calm tradition-breaker,
Slave and serf and clod no longer,
Know my strength—and who is stronger?
I am done with ancient frauds,
Ancient lies and ancient gods—
All that sham is overthrown,
I shall take and keep my own.
Unimpassioned, unafraid,
Master of the world I've made!

—La Follette's Weekly.

# Industrial Relations Committee Reveal the Causes of Industrial Unrest---Workers Themselves Must Apply the Remedy

Last week when the Associated Press carried reports that the conservative elements of the United States Industrial Commission had "squelched" Walsh and the other members of the committee that wanted a report "with teeth," it began to look as tho the people were to be cheated. It was reported that Expert Investigator Basil M. Manley had prepared a report that was said to fairly bristle with unpleasant facts, but that the "financial" members of the commission, led by Mrs. Harriman, had successfully prevented its publication.

But those of us who have watched Walsh should have known that he would have found a way out of the difficulty and that he and his militant backers would have their way. Then came the announcement that the Manley report was the one that was ordered printed and will form the report of the commission to Congress. This has been accomplished only after one of the hardest fought battles that has marked the sessions of any congressional committee.

Through it all Chairman Frank Walsh has been the one dominant figure; the one rock that the opponents have crashed against with their waves of criticism and through it all he has stood staunch and firm. The success of Walsh in forcing the acceptance of the Manley report by the commission is a clear-cut defeat of the Rockefeller influences that have striven to have the report contain only a glittering mass of generalities.

The Manley report declares the following to be the condition of labor and industry in America:

One-third of the millions of workingmen in the country are poverty-stricken.

Thirty-seven per cent. of the wives and mothers of workingmen are forced to do hard work themselves to help keep the wolf from the door.

Five hundred dollars per year is the income of half of the wage-earning fathers.

Less than $15 per week is the wages of two-thirds of the adult male workers.

Nearly half of the women workers earn less than $6 per week.

Three or more persons occupy every sleeping room in 37 per cent. of the workers' homes.

Babies of the poor die three times as fast as those of the rich.

Nearly 20 per cent. of the school children of this country are underfed and undernourished.

One out of every twelve corpses in New York is buried in the potter's field.

Economic pressure forces two-thirds of all children to leave grammar school before graduating and only 10 per cent. finish high school.

Farm tenancy is increasing at an appalling rate.

Workers in the basic industries are out of jobs one-fifth of the time.

There are forty-four families with incomes equal to the earnings of 100,000 workingmen.

The (rich) 2 per cent. of the people, own 60 per cent. of the nation's wealth; 65 per cent. own les than 5 per cent.

Industrial conditions are responsible for our biggest crime problems.

Labor and living conditions in this country are such today that immigrants come only from Italy, Russia, Austria-Hungary and other "backward" nations of Europe.

**THE HISTORY OF IGNORANCE OBEYING ORDERS**

Militarism (in 1914) cost the United States, in time of peace, the equivalent of throwing all the bonds, stocks, mortgages, and all the books and buildings and all property of ALL kinds belonging to Harvard University, into the ocean every twenty days.—(From Kirkpatrick's epoch-making book, "War, What For?")

**EMPLOYMENT PLAN URGED**

PHILADELPHIA.—At a conference in this city organized labor, aid societies and the state department of labor and industry joined hands in recommending a state bureau of employment. An official of the Federation of Italian Societies said such a bureau would prevent exploitation. "It is nothing uncommon for a contractor to force a man to wait five days for one day's pay," he said. "I have known poor Italians to make three or four trips to Germantown from the Italian colony to collect wages for a few hours' work."

Prof. Wilts, of the University of Pennsylvania, said:

"Big business today is represented by superintendents and foremen, who, as a rule, are the most inhuman institutions in our American life. As a result, we have thousands of men shifting from one job to another, which means economic loss and much human suffering."

President Maurer, of the state federation of labor, supported this claim, declaring that employers vest too much authority with subordinates.

# TRADES COUNCIL NEWS

Credentials were received from Plumbers and Steam Fitters' Union, Local No. 265, for Brother William J. Smith, who was elected delegate to the Council, succeeding Brother J. F. McDonald.

Brother M. T. Alliman, having become an employer, offered his resignation as Secretary of the Council. The matter was laid over for action next Wednesday.

Labor Day Committee reported that all arrangements had been made for a big celebration at the City Park next Monday.

## Origin of Labor Day

The initial action taken to establish our Labor Day, setting apart one day in the year on which to review the activities and beneficent influence of Union Labor, occurred at the afternoon meeting of the third day of the fourth annual session of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada, October 9, 1884, the convention being held in Schloesser's Hall, Chicago. The resolution creating Labor Day was introduced in the convention by A. C. Cameron, a delegate from the Chicago Trades and Labor Assembly, and was as follows:

"Resolved, That the first Monday in September of each year be set apart as a laborers' national holiday, and that we recommend its observance by all wage-workers, irrespective of sex, calling or nationality."

William J. Hammond, of New Orleans, representing the International Typographical Union, was president of the convention. The accredited delegates to this convention numbered only twenty-six.

The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada met in annual convention at Columbus, Ohio, December 8-12, 1886, and there joined forces with what was called the "Trade Union Conference," and "American Federation of Labor" became the official title of the organization. At this session the legislative committee, in its report to the convention, said:

"At the fourth session of the Federation a resolution was adopted making the first Monday in September of each year Labor's national holiday, and recommending its observance by wage-workers generally throughout the country. This met with a response that exceeded the most sanguine expectations. In our great manufacturing and distributing centers, thousands of workingmen marched in procession and participated in the festivities of the picnic grounds, where the most skilled mechanics and workers in professions and laborers united in a common celebration, exchanging friendly fraternal greetings while listening to the champions of Labor discussing the economic and political questions of the day. The good effects of this are so well understood that we recommend its more general observance still until it shall be as uncommon for a man to work on that day as on Independence Day."

## *Founders of Labor Day*

According to Terence V. Powderly, for many years head of the Knights of Labor, Labor Day had no "father." There has been a friendly controversy in labor circles as to who was its founder.

"The man who named the day was Robert Price, a coal miner," said Mr. Powderly. "This occured in New York City Sept. 5, 1882. The general assembly of the Knights of Labor was meeting in New York. Matthew McGuire, secretary of the Central Labor union of New York, invited the general assembly to review a parade of workingmen. As general master workman, or head of the organization, I placed the invitation before the general assembly, and it was unanimously accepted.

"We went to the reviewing stand. Bob Price, one of the workers of the Knights of Labor, sat near me. He was a big fellow, standing six feet three inches. Next to me on the opposite side was Richard Griffith.

"As the parade was passing Price leaned over to me and shouted to Griffith, 'This is Labor Day in earnest, Uncle Dick.'

"That was the first time I had heard the expression 'Labor Day.' The same evening we discussed informally the advisability of having a day set apart every year to be observed as Labor day. Other conferences followed. A decision was reached that it would be an excellent thing to have a day set apart, and the first Monday in September was agreed on as the day.

"The first bill introduced on the subject was by Edward F. Riley, a member of the New York state senate, on Jan. 4, 1887. The bill was passed by the legislature and approved by the governor May 6, 1887. Meanwhile I sent copies of the bill to the governors of all the states and to prominent members of the organizations who were members of state legislatures.

"State Senator J. J. Daly of Oregon introduced a bill on Jan. 17, and it became a law in that state Feb. 21, 1887. Oregon, therefore, was the first state to pass a law creating a labor day. Other states followed. The federal law was not passed until 1894."


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