

# UNJUST TO WORKMEN

Loss Entailed by Injury Should Not Be Borne by Them.

## THE ACCIDENTS OF INDUSTRY

Cost Should Be Charged Against Expense of Operation—Law Ought Not to Suppose That the Toiler Assumes "Risk of Business."

Discussing the proposed plan of the New York Central railroad to pension its employees, the New York American says:

The announcement of the New York Central Railroad company that it is about to introduce a pension system for its superannuated employees will generally be regarded as a good example and a measure of justice that all great employers of labor should follow.

This matter of providing for old age out of a man's surplus of earnings in his working years should be dealt with on a businesslike basis and should not be thought of as having any tincture of condescension or gratuity.

If the New York Central people imagine that they are bestowing favors and earning the gratitude of their employees their false attitude in the matter will induce false methods and vitiate the whole pension scheme.

Workingmen will not welcome the idea of being treated as objects of charity.

If a wornout railroad man is to have as good treatment at the hands of railroad corporations as an old horse gets from a good farmer it will be because railroad employees have, on the whole, won their way to a position where such treatment can be demanded.

It is worthy of remark in this connection that Mr. Adelbert Moot, president of the New York State Bar association, said a sound legal word for railroad and other employees in a speech in Buffalo.

Speaking of the enormous number of accidents to life and limb suffered on railroads and in factories, Mr. Moot said that in a case where the accident is due neither to the special negligence of the employer or the employee, but to the mere inevitable "risk of the business," it is grossly unjust that the injured workman should bear the money loss entailed by the misfortune.

He said that, in spite of the ancient English rule to the contrary, the law ought not to suppose that the "risk of the business" is assumed by the man that takes the job. Such risk and the losses caused by it should be thought of as a part of the natural cost of the undertaking. And it should be charged, not against the workman, but against the business itself.

That is to say, railroad companies ought to make provision for paying, and ought to be made to pay, adequate money damages for all the injuries incurred by workmen in the ordinary course of railroading.

The cost of such accidents should be regarded as a part of the fixed charges of the railroad business.

Pensions providing for the inevitable march of a man's years should no doubt be comprehended under the same rule and the same reasoning.

Following a similar line of reasoning, the New York Times has the following:

There could hardly be a more important task for a legislative committee properly constituted—as to the intentions and capacities of its members, that is—than the investigation of the whole subject commonly described as "employers' liability." Past practice and laws dealing with industrial acci-

dents and the responsibility for them have been and for the most part still are grotesquely unreasonable, illogical and inefficient and, while cruelly unjust to the worker, have been no real protection to the employer, in spite of the fact that he was the one who devised and perpetuated them.

Until very recently the employer's one aim and effort has been to limit his direct liability when he could not avoid it altogether, and in the execution of this purpose there has grown up a great system of precedent and law, with the three foundation stones of "contributory negligence," "the fellow servant rule" and "voluntary assumption of risk." For each of these principles there is something of excuse and even of reason, but as they have worked out in combination the employer pays his money to lawyers instead of to injured workmen, and then he pays it again as a member of the community in which he lives in supporting as paupers the direct and indirect victims of accidents whose claims his lawyers are hired to fight. The liability insurance companies have still further complicated the problem and diverted still more of what may be called the accident fund from its legitimate use.

Now there is a growing inclination to abandon entirely the venerable foundation stones just mentioned and to build up a system of remuneration and support based on the idea that accidents are a natural and inevitable part of every business and that the cost of such of them as cannot be prevented by intelligence and care should be added to and then drawn from the price of that business' output of product. In other words, the consumer is to pay for the men worn out in industry exactly as he does for the machines that are worn out. He does that now in a way, and a very bad way it is, but he is to do it better, more economically and as a matter of natural obligation instead of as a reluctant or extorted favor.

## SEAMEN MAY AMALGAMATE.

British Labor Leader Plans Worldwide Union of Sailors.

Havelock Wilson, leader of the Union of British Seamen, is now in this country to organize American seamen on new lines so as to form an international union of seamen in America and Europe. Addressing a mass meeting of sailors at the port of New York, Mr. Wilson outlined his plan as follows:

"I am sent here at the request of the seamen of Great Britain to make propaganda for the great international federation of seamen. For twenty years the Federation of English Shipowners has kept the British Seamen's union in a state of demoralization; but, determined to improve conditions for the seamen, the leaders have been active in forming branches in Bremen, Hamburg, Kiel, Antwerp, Norway, Sweden and Belgium. Following the example of the British employers, the American employers have been waging an active war against the unions of seamen on the great lakes. Recently many conferences have been held by the representatives of the powerful shipping interests in London for the purpose of giving to the campaign against the seamen's unions international scope and to make the proposed international war as relentless and as systematic as possible.

"The following international demands will be decided on by the proposed great conference of representatives of the seamen of the world to be held in Copenhagen next year:

"First.—Uniform wage scales for long and short journeys.

"Second.—The number of the machinery personnel to be regulated by the amount of coal carried.

"Third.—A representative of the Seamen's union shall be present during the selection of a crew to safeguard the interests of the men."

## WAR ON CONSUMPTION.

Labor Unions and Fraternal Societies Join In the Fight.

According to a recently issued statement by the National Association For the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, three international labor unions with a membership of upward of 100,000 and nine fraternal and benefit organizations with a combined membership of nearly 3,000,000 have during the past year enlisted in the war against consumption in the trades. A year ago only one fraternal organization, the Royal League, and one labor union, the International Typographical union, maintained institutions for the treatment of their tuberculous members. Since Jan. 1, 1909, the following fraternal and benefit organizations have taken up the consideration of the disease and in some instances have decided to erect institutions: Brotherhood of American Yeomen, Order of Eagles, Improved Order of Red Men, Modern Woodmen of America, Knights of Pythias, Royal Arcanum, Workmen's Circle, Knights of Columbus and Foresters of America. The international labor unions which have joined the fight against tuberculosis are the International Photo-engravers' Union of North America, the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' union and the International Boot and Shoe Workers' union.

The first sanitarium to be erected for the benefit of workmen was built by the International Typographical union in connection with its home at Colorado Springs. The International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' union has recently decided to erect a similar sanitarium, and steps are now being taken to open such an institution in Tennessee. The International Photo-engravers' union, while not conducting a sanitarium of its own, pays for the treatment of its tuberculous members in institutions in various parts of the country. The International Boot and Shoe Workers' union is recommending to its members that they ally themselves with the various organizations united in the fight against tuberculosis.

All of these fraternal organizations and labor unions are also carrying on campaigns of education among their members. In this way over 3,000,000 men and women are receiving instruction through lectures, through official papers and by literature expressly prepared showing the dangers and methods of prevention of tuberculosis.

It is a campaign of prevention which will bring to these various unions, fraternal and benefit organizations millions of dollars in the saving of lives and the cutting down of payments for sickness and death resulting from tuberculosis. The recent national fraternal congress estimated that 50 per cent of the death losses from tuberculosis could be saved to the various unions and fraternal organizations of the country.

The National Association For the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis announces that it has rendered all assistance possible to these various movements among the labor men and fraternal organizations and stands ready to co-operate as far as possible with any society of this character.

## Jap Labor In California.

According to the thirteenth biennial report of the bureau of labor statistics of California, extracts of which are republished in a bulletin issued by the department of commerce and labor, there were approximately 45,000 Japanese in California in September, 1908. It is stated that the Japs showed a tendency to increase as a factor in all lines of labor throughout the state, especially in the larger centers of population. The Chinese population also seems to be gradually leaving the agricultural fields and turning toward the cities and towns.

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