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Put the Unemployed On Public Land

Says Secretary of Labor Wilson—If Congress Were to Adopt, With Reference to These Lands, a Policy of Utilizing Them For the Promoting of Opportunities For the Unemployed.

Washington.—In his annual report, Secretary of Labor Wilson says that public employment service of a national character must go beyond merely hunting "manless jobs" for "jobless men." He declares that this latter policy will not affect the causes of involuntary unemployment, which will express themselves "to the great prejudice of the wage workers of the United States and consequently to the harm of all industrial interests."

To remedy this evil, the ex-secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers of America presents a constructive plan, the legislation for which need not be either voluminous or revolutionary, and that "nothing more is required than a judicious utilization of government lands."

The trade unionist develops his plan as follows:

"Title to some of the old public domain still remains in the government. By a recent decision of the supreme court, congress is soon to have the power, and to be under an obligation, to treat with land-grant railroads regarding the terms on which large areas of that domain heretofore granted away may be restored. There are extensive areas of privately owned but unused farming land in most or all of the States which might be acquired by the general government for promoting labor opportunities as advantageously as other areas have been acquired or retained by it for the creation of public parks. If congress were to adopt, with reference to these lands, a policy of utilizing them for promoting opportunities for employment, the benefits of the labor-distribution work of this department, and of States and municipal public employment offices throughout the United States, would be vastly augmented."

For such a policy the homestead laws seem to afford a legislative basis and their history to furnish valuable suggestions.

DISCUSSES COLORADO.

Seattle, Wash.—In an address delivered under the auspices of the Central Labor Union, Rev. H. A. Atkinson, social service commissioner of the Congregational church, said that Rockefeller's grants to the miners of Colorado are not in the language of democracy, and that the time has passed when the workers need to have anything handed them—they are able to take for themselves. He said that the striking Colorado miners were the strikebreakers brought in ten years ago, the strikers of ten years ago were the strikebreakers brought in ten years before that and those in turn had been strikebreakers.

"One necessary condition is that the general government shall retain title to the public lands it already holds. Another condition is that from time to time it shall reacquire title to such lands formerly owned by it but now privately owned, as are held out of use and may be acquired. Still another condition is that the government from time to time shall acquire title to such privately owned lands in different States as may be usefully devoted to the purpose of opening opportunities for employment."

With the above as the basis for his theory, Secretary Wilson provides methods by which inflation of land values may be prevented. He then suggests that the departments of the interior, of agriculture and of labor unify their efforts to "make efficient farmers of inexperienced but otherwise competent workers seeking that vocation."

"Pursuant to such unification," he continues, "congress might provide a 'rotary fund' for lending purposes; that is, a fund to be used over and over again for those purposes, and to be maintained by repayments of loans. Out of this fund congress could authorize the departments named above to make loans, through the department of labor, to settlers placed by this department upon lands set aside for that purpose in accordance with the authorized plan for thus augmenting labor opportunities. Those loans could be safeguarded, without commercial collateral, by resting them upon the best possible basis of industrial credit—ability, opportunity and character—and by establishing in connection with them a system of community credits adapted to the circumstances."

"It is a reasonable prediction that such a policy would develop in country and city an economically independent and socially progressive population. The results would be analogous in out time to those of the homestead laws at an earlier period."

TO STOP FLYING DUST.

Milwaukee.—At a conference of trade union officials and the State industrial commission it was decided that a special commission, consisting of employers and employees, shall be appointed to make a survey of working conditions and recommend remedies. One of the greatest dangers, workers pointed out, is the presence of flying dust, especially in the metal and wood-polishing trades, as present systems are inadequate to protect workmen. One metal polisher stated that of the eighty-nine deaths among the members of his craft last year, forty-one were due to tuberculosis caused by flying dust.

SUNSHINE TUEL'S NAME CONSIDERED

Industrial Commission Awards \$2,393 for His Death.

Columbus, O.—The name of the victim of a peculiar accident in Monroe County was taken into consideration by the State Industrial Commission last week, when it granted the last death award before Christmas. On Dec. 2, Sunshine Tuel of Fly, Monroe County, was whirled to death when his clothing was caught in the wheel of an engine. The widow and little son, on Christmas Day, received the first check of \$15.34. The total award was \$2,393, which will be paid in bi-weekly installments.

METAL POLISHERS' WEARY WAIT.

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.—President Parsons of the Motor and Cycle Trades' union, which includes grinders and metal polishers, is protesting at the inaction of the wages board that sets wages in this industry. The unionist declares that the board has been sitting for two years, but has not yet made an award. As it is illegal to strike, the union has called a meeting to discuss the question.

SHIP YARD WORKERS STRIKE.

Seattle, Wash.—Low wages is the reason for a strike of 400 employees of the Seattle Construction and Drydock company. One-half of these workers are boilermakers and shipbuilders. The strikers demand higher rates and pay for overtime.

COOKS AND WAITERS WINNING.

San Jose, Cal.—Cooks and waiters are winning their fight for living conditions. In several large restaurants these workers have secured the six-day week and the following minimum wage: Waiters, \$2 per day; first cook, \$18 per week; second cook, \$16. The failure of employers to secure an injunction that would stop picketing was a factor in these settlements.

FASHIONS CAUSE UNEMPLOYMENT.

Washington.—Unemployment is more uncertain in shoe factories than in any other industry, except the men's and women's clothing industries, according to a report issued by the department of labor. Investigations indicate that these seasonal fluctuations are largely due to the so-called "order system," which manufacturers regard as necessary because of the rapid changes in fashion and the uncertainty in regard to the styles which will be used.

Some indication of the instability of the working force among women shoe workers is given by the fact that the number of women employed in the week of maximum employment is only 61 per cent of the total number employed during the year, as shown by the pay rolls.

Of the women who worked 46 weeks or more, all adult, experienced and steady workers, three-fifths earned less than \$500 a year and not far from one-half earned only \$450 or less.

"Unquestionably, however, these earnings," says the report, "exceed those of any other large body of factory workers."

The report says these points stand out prominently as a result of investigations of women shoe workers: The fluctuations make steady employment impossible, and as a consequence of this irregularity of work, the low weekly wage even of steady and experienced women shoe workers, when earnings are distributed over the year.

WELL-KNOWN UNIONISTS DEAD.

Quincy, Ill.—John Campbell, well known member of the Iron Molders' union, died in this city, aged 69 years. In 1888 deceased was elected a member of the executive board of the Iron Molders' International union, and since then has almost continuously held positions of trust in that organization.

Indianapolis, Ind.—Samuel M. Sexton, editor of the Mine Workers' Journal from 1901 to 1908, died in this city. Deceased was an able writer on trade union economic subjects.

TEXTILE WORKERS UNITING.

New York.—President Golden, of the United Textile Workers of America, reports that during the months of October and November 3,793 workers have joined this organization, which is conducting an effective campaign in the southern States.



HON. RICHARD B. WITT
City Treasurer

CHANGE OF VENUE FOR MINERS.

Trinidad, Colo.—Judge Cavender of Leadville has sustained attorneys for the Mine Workers' union that miners indicted on charges growing out of the recent strike should be tried elsewhere. The court declared that conditions existing in this county made a change of venue justifiable. The court complimented the miners' attorneys for the splendid case they presented, and said the State had failed completely in sustaining its point.

POSTAL SAVINGS LARGE.

Washington.—The growth of the postal savings system during the last fiscal year was the largest in the history of the postoffice department, according to the annual report of Third Assistant Postmaster General Dockery. On June 30, the last day of the fiscal year, there were 524,414 depositors who had to their credit in postal savings banks a total of \$65,684,708. This was an increase of about 137,000 individual depositors and more than \$22,000,000 in deposits within the twelve months, the report says.

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