

# My Own Shop

## "Putting it Over" on the Rubber Workers

By One of them.

The rubber industry, as you know, is a comparatively new one, having developed within the last twenty years to meet the great demand for rubber tires and other manufactured rubber goods. The rubber barons have also got the most up-to-date and approved methods of putting it over on the workers of any gang of labor skinners I know. I have been up against the game of wage-slavery in many places in my time, but I never saw anything to compare with Akron.

### Prefer American Labor

The rubber barons made the discovery right at the start that the most gullible and most productive kind of labor power obtainable is that which is produced on native soil. So, while they do not bar any nationality, the bulk of their working forces consists of native born Americans, recruited mainly from such states as West Virginia and the Carolinas. These are the boys who fall for all kinds of schemes to get more work of them for less money, and at the same time keep them satisfied, that the "damned foreigner" cannot get through his thick head.

### Piece work and speeding up

Most of the work is on a piece work basis and increased speed is constantly being obtained by various methods. The machine operator in each department who turns out the most work receives a substantial bonus and in addition gets the "honor" of having a sign hung on his machine which states that it is a 100% machine. All the other workers race to catch up and the one who passes the 100% machine gets the bonus and the badge, and so it goes.

Production is also stimulated by getting the workers to buy stock which they pay for on the installment plan. By the time the average one gets fifty or a hundred dollars worth paid for he thinks he is a part of the company and that comfortable thought makes him feel a greater interest in his work.

### Soft Soap

The Goodyear factory issues a factory newspaper three times a week which is given free to employees. It preaches the "one big family" stuff and advises them to save their money and buy stock. It is also used to boost the various welfare schemes which the management springs from time to time for the purpose of soothing the troubled minds of the rubber workers and keeping up their "morale" on the job.

### Goodyear's "Company" Union

I have been reading in the Toiler about the Union and the shop committees and I want to tell you how the Goodyear company is trying to head such things off by fake substitutes. This is what they call the "Industrial Representation Plan". The plant is divided into forty "precincts" and every employee who is an American citizen and who has been at work for six months continuously has a right to vote for candidates for the "Senate" and "House of Representatives". These two bodies have power to pass bills relating to wages, rules, and working conditions. But before any bill can be considered it must first pass both houses. This bars anything of substantial benefit, because the "Senators" and "Representatives" are pretty carefully hand-picked. After a bill passes both houses it goes to the manager who has veto power.

A two-thirds vote of both houses will pass a bill over the veto of the manager, but this is never done because those voting for it are required to record their names and it is well understood that they would be marked men thereafter.

There was a great general strike of the rubber workers here in 1913. It was defeated on account of lack of experience, but it has not been forgotten and the old-timers still talk about it. There is another one coming some day, soon I hope. Then we will kick aside the Goodyear "senate," "house of representatives," "Supreme Court" and all, and register our wishes through our own shop committees and our own industrial union.