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LABOR OPPOSES WAGE REDUCTIONS

Rise in Wages Not in Proportion To Increased Cost of Living.

In defeating autocracy, labor will not accept wage reductions as its reward, declared Frank J. Hayes, president of the United Mine Workers, in discussing the suggestion that wages must be cut. "Wages have gone up during the war," he said, "but they have not advanced proportionately to the increased cost of living. All authorities agree that there is no likelihood of prices declining for at least a year. But despite this prophecy, councils of employers are now devising programs to batter wages down. It is this scheme that organized labor must combat. We cannot parley, linger, wait. Our forces must be up and doing, not only to thwart attempted reductions but to win additional gains to meet living costs which present-day wages are so inadequate to cope with. "We have talked billions during the war, and as a result commercial leaders who used to think in millions are now planning billion-dollar enterprises. Corners for domestic trade, corners for foreign trade, are the dreams of leaders of proposed gigantic combines to realize their ambitions. And, of course, these leaders point with assurance to their ability to decrease wages to price their production beyond competition. "Labor must accept no reductions. Having patriotically mined the coal, manufactured the munitions, built the ships and offered their sons, that made possible the defeat of autocracy, labor will not accept as its reward a reduction in wages."

UP-TO-DATE PAINT HAS DEADLY EFFECT

Old Fashioned Way of Mixing Paint Less Poisonous To Painter

Under old conditions, a painter could work for 30 years and keep in fair condition, but now the limit is 10 or 12 years because of modern paints, say officers of the Painters' Union of New York.

"The old-fashioned way of making paint was with oil and sine. Then white lead was introduced. That though becomes poisonous. But the lead is not the only thing. The chemists have invaded the factory and brought in a hundred substitutes designed to quick covering and drying.

"Five minutes in a room where painters work would be long enough to convince the average man of the poisonous nature of these mixtures. No matter how much ventilation he can get, it is impossible for a painter to stay more than an hour in a place filled with such deadly fumes. The one purpose of the manufacturers is to produce a paint that will give quick results. Sometimes they can get the appearance of two coats with one. Of course, it does not last so well, but that makes no difference.

"Beauty of color and permanence were the qualities formerly demanded in paint. Now everything is sacrificed to speed and present effect. If the painters could choose between the five-day work under present conditions and six days with less injurious paint, they would take the old conditions.

"Dr. Harris, the occupational disease expert, examined hundreds of painters for months. He reported that a large percentage of them were diseased as a result of their work. With the assistance of the health department, the brotherhood carried on an educational campaign. We tried to teach the boys to handle these materials with less injury to their health. Even with this, the toll of those hurt by lead poisoning and other ailments is enormous."

CHILD LABOR RULE STRICT IN PENN. MINES AND MILLS

Saw Mill Must Pay Tax on Profits If Employing Children Under 14 Years of Age.

A saw mill must pay a tax on its profits, under the federal child labor amendment to the revenue law, if it employs children under 14 years of age to work in the woods, but mine owners may employ children under 16 years of age to work in these same woods without paying a tax.

The above summarizes a ruling by United States Internal Revenue Commissioner Roper, in response to a request for a decision by a Pennsylvania mining company. The officials stated that they wanted to employ boys in the woods to stack mine ties, bark, "and other light work," and inquired if the company was liable for the tax.

The federal official held that the boys are not "employed in the mines," although their names are on the company's pay rolls.

Mr. Roper shows, however, that if the boys were employed by a saw mill company, the tax would be levied, as the law applies to all departments connected with the mill.

HOW DEPORTATION RESULTED IN THE STATE OF ARIZONA

In July, 1917, a number of corporations, including the Phelps-Dodge Corporation, the Phelps-Dodge Mercantile Company, the Calumet and Arizona Mining Company, the El Paso Southwestern Railway and others, deported 1,186 striking copper miners and their sympathizers from Bisbee, Arizona, and shipped them into New Mexico. Civil suits totalling \$6,150,000 were filed in the state courts against the corporations and persons concerned. A settlement of these claims has recently been effected out of court on the basis of payment of \$1,250 to married men with children, \$1,000 to married men, and \$500 to single men.

PLAN TO END JURISDICTIONAL STRIKES APPROVED

Members of Building Trades Approve Plan at Annual Convention

A plan to end jurisdictional strikes in the building industry has been approved by the annual convention of the building trades department, A.F. of L. This plan was prepared last March at a conference between officers of the department and representatives of the five national associations of architects, engineers, general contractors, builders' exchanges and building trades' employees and the United States Department of Labor.

A board of eight members will be created, composed of three unionists, from different trades, three employers and an engineer and an architect. When a jurisdictional dispute arises there shall be no lockout or sympathetic strike because of the dispute.

Local unions that fail to accept the agreement or the board's award shall be suspended from their international organization, which shall "proceed at once to man the job and the employer shall co-operate with the international organization in so doing." If an architect, engineer or employer fails to accept the agreement or award he shall be suspended from his organization.

A two-thirds vote will be necessary to make an award, and if this is not possible the matter will be referred to an umpire. If the parties fail to agree on an umpire, the secretary of the Department of Labor will be asked to name an umpire.

No trade union member of the board shall vote on an award in the dispute involving his craft. After an award has been made it can be reopened on the vote of six members of the board. The decisions of the board shall govern architects and engineers in writing specifications and the contractors in awarding contracts.

The building trades department has named the following unionists as its representatives on the board: W. L. Hutchinson and John J. Hynea, presidents of the international unions of carpenters and sheet metal workers, respectively, and Wm. Dobson, secretary of the bricklayers' international.

BRITISH BOARD OF TRADE EXPLAINS PROFITTEERING PLAN

The British board of trade in explaining the profiteering law, indicates that there will be a central investigation by a central committee into the cost and profits of production and distribution of goods, also a local investigation by a committee, subject to appeal to a tribunal, into complaints of the general public concerning prices charged and profits made in the railway distribution of goods.

Local authorities in London have the option of establishing a local committee. All committees and tribunals established under the act will advise not to take action which will hamper or restrict legitimate commercial enterprise.

U.S. GOVERNMENT TO OPEN NUMBER OF RETAIL STORES

Another step by Washington administration to cut down high living costs, is the opening of retail stores in a number of cities throughout the country to sell household commodities and clothing.

Through the retail stores to be opened by the war department, the army's large surplus stocks of socks, underwear, shirts, raincoats, blankets, gloves, tobacco, soap and other goods will be sold. Customers in the large cities where the stores will be operated will be able to purchase over the counter but the stocks also will be made available to persons in other communities through the parcel post.

Price lists are being prepared and these will be furnished to all post offices for the convenience of the public. While no announcement has yet been made, it is expected that the prices, like those on foodstuffs, now being disposed of, will be considerably below the prevailing market.

Trades union membership in Great Britain during the year 1918 showed an increase of 1,44,733 over the previous year, the total membership reported being 4,532,085. In the United States the American Federation of Labor reported a membership of over 3,260,000 at the close of 1918, a gain of more than 273,500 during the last eight months of the year.

THE PLUMB PLAN AS A CHALLENGE

Strike Accusations Against Labor Representatives Are All False.

Perhaps there is nothing surprising in the fact that the dropping of the Plumb plan for railroad management in the midst of a public consciousness that had apparently prepared itself to see the railroads restored to private ownership has had very much the same effect, as the dropping of a bomb in a crowded city.

All sorts of untenable assertions are being made against the Labor representatives, too often in place of the arguments or facts that might be expected to show the fallibility of their proposal. They are accused of threatening to cause a general strike unless their government ownership plan should be adopted, and many persons seem to have a notion that the railroad strike now in progress is somehow concerned with the railroad ownership controversy; yet the proponents of the Plumb plan have stated explicitly that they were "not thinking of a strike" as a means of compelling congress to adopt their project, rather than they are counting on the education of public opinion and the usual electioneering methods to secure a congress that will favor adoption. As for the present strike, that, of course, is based on wholly other interests, namely, the interest of certain classes of railroad men to put an end to what they feel is an unwarranted delay, on the part of the Railroad Wage Adjustment Board, in passing upon their demand for higher wages.

Similarly it is easy as it is ridiculous to inveigh against the members of the railroad brotherhoods as Bolsheviks, threatening the country with the red terror of Russia, because of their proposition with respect to the railroads. Such statements can only weaken the position of those who uphold private ownership and wish to stand against any radical change. It is only dodging the issue to contend that this is an assault upon the national form of government. It is nothing of the sort. We have here the American democracy, capable of being dominated by whatever groups or classes can manage to swing the greatest political influence.

That one sort of group has been dominant in the past does not, of course, mean that the government is breaking down merely because, as times change, another sort of group comes to exercise dominating influence. And the claim is equally unwarranted that the railroad men, representing five per cent of the people of the United States, are undertaking to thrust their proposal upon the other 95 per cent of the population, as if the entire 95 per cent were definitely aligned against the Plumb plan. Nobody knows at this juncture what proportion of the 95 per cent would vote either way if the opportunity were given it.

Why not, then, look the proposition in the face, and deal with it for what it really is? And what is it, stripped of all disguises, but the long-expected challenge, in concrete form, of collective labor to individualistic Capital?—Christian Science Monitor.

PROFITTEERS USE 'SMOKE SCREENS' TO CONCEAL PROFITS

Fruit Bought by Speculators Before It Had Ripened On the Trees

Unadulterated profiteering is the cause for present prices, declared Wm. C. Colver, chairman of the federal trade commission in a speech in Washington, D.C.

All talk about inflated currency, dislocation of industry because men joined the military service, turning of industrial plants into munitions factories and similar reasons are but "smoke screens" for the profiteer, said the speaker.

"They tell you that industries were dislocated by turning factories and mills over to war production," he declared. "This is not a sufficient reason for the high cost of living. They tell you that the inflation of currency is another cause. But currency in this country is not as inflated as people would have you think. The heavy exports of food and clothes are talked of as a contributing factor. But all of these reasons are not sufficient to account for the present situation. They are being used as 'smoke screens' in the operation of the most completely devised campaign of profiteering any country ever saw."

In January, he declared, as much or more than 80 per cent of packed foods, dried fruits and other foodstuffs had been bought by speculators before the fruit had ripened on the trees. Fish, which would inhabit rivers several months subsequently, were sold before the ice had left their rivers, he declared. In these deals the profits of speculators, who would sell the products not once, but many times, would be paid by the consumer. This profiteering, he indicated, is regarded by experts as one of the basic reasons for the high cost of living.

Superbusiness has discovered a new method of nullifying the Sherman anti-trust law by combining competitive products, such as butter, oleomargarine and a vegetable substitute for butter. These products cannot be touched by the law because it provides for monopolies only in one product.

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