

mobile than it does to drive a locomotive." He concluded by adding: "I know what I am talking about, because I am speaking from several years of experience in this business."

See the "Railway Age" for October 3rd, 1919, for an account of the testimony of Timothy Shea, acting president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, before the United States Board of Railroad Wages and Conditions. Asked if the question of thrift did enter into the situation, Mr. Shea said he did not think it was possible for working people to curtail expenditures any more; that the men he represents are living "right on the margin" and depriving themselves and their families of the necessities of life.

"Do you represent any men who are buying automobiles and those things?" asked Mr. Morse.

"I do not hear of any firemen, or many firemen, buying automobiles," replied Mr. Shea.

"You would not regard an automobile as a necessity, would you?" asked Mr. Morse.

"Yes, I would."

"Well, I have denied myself a necessity all my life, then," said Mr. Morse, who was general manager of a railroad before becoming a member of the wage board.

No Sacrifices by Organized Labor

"An automobile may be a necessity to any man," said Mr. Shea. "I have an automobile, and it is a necessity to me and my family to a considerable extent. That would apply with equal force to any man, and I think we have reached a period of our life where the laboring man must enjoy some of the necessities and luxuries of life. I do not think the time is at hand when the American working man should be required to make any great sacrifices now. They have made their sacrifice."

The writer does not care to dispute Mr. Shea's testimony; he would only be too glad to approve of the idea if the production of the world to-day were such that it would permit of every fireman and every other man doing like work to enjoy the luxury of an automobile; but unfortunately that is not the condition at the present time.

Now as to the real oppressors of the poor. The reader can draw his own conclusions; the writer is not interested; his idea of sport is a fair "free-for-all," but as the radical labor leader has so much to say on this subject, the writer cannot refrain from pointing out the fact if, through brute force of large combinations, organized labor can increase their pay only 20% above what they are producing, they are oppressing their unorganized brothers to that extent.

The radical will reply that the answer is for everybody to be organized, but that is a fallacy, for with everybody effectually organized excepting the high-salaried officers, there would be left to divide only the \$4 per man that was paid to the high-salaried man, and the wages of the auto-driver would be equal to those of the locomotive driver, and the latter would be considerably reduced from what they are now.

The Real Oppressors

We know that the radical has not got that \$33,200 to two hundred officials out of his mind, so let us take a concrete example. Supposing, for the sake of the example, that brains, energy and ability do not count, and that these men are each getting ten times what they should receive. Then they are oppressing the poor to the extent of the wages of nine times 200, or 1,800 men. But if a million organized railroad employees are getting 5% more than they are entitled to, they are oppressing the poor by a million times 5%, or the wages of 50,000 men. The reader can draw his own conclusions as to who are the real oppressors of the poor.

The sooner labor leaders realize that the industrial workers of the world cannot lift themselves very far by their own boot-straps, the better it will be for the workers as well as everybody else on this earth. At the beginning of the war it was only natural that the law of supply and demand would somewhat increase the price of wheat, meats and materials required for war purposes but all can remember how soon

the labor leader who shouts so loud, about the crime of treating labor as a commodity did that same thing and took every advantage of the law of supply and demand. We saw war munition and shipbuilding workers getting from 75c. to \$1.25 per hour, and five to ten times these figures in some cases where they actually exerted themselves and did piece-work. At the same time other equally skilled tradesmen, such as carpenters or painters, were actually working for from 35c. to 55c. per hour, and to the writer's mind this was the major factor in starting old H. C. L. on his way. Other tradesmen and laborers could not be expected to be contented under the circumstances and the trouble began.

Industrial workers attempted to do the impossible—to get two or three times the value of what they produced—but another natural law took partial care of that hold-up: The value of the measure of "value" depreciated, and the industrial worker, instead of getting what he wanted, only succeeded in getting a relatively small percentage at the expense of unorganized labor and of those straight-salaried men whose salaries did not go up in the same ratio that the value of the dollar went down.

Money is only a medium of exchange, and the fluctuation of its value is incorrectly interpreted as the high or low cost of everything else. Here on the prairie we can build a mile of railroad to-day cheaper than we could twenty years ago if one measures the cost in what we are producing, namely, bushels of wheat.

There is just one real remedy for all this industrial trouble; that is, more production. When the organized industrial workers realize that fact and change their present ideas of getting as much money as possible for the least amount of time and smallest amount of output, to working a reasonable amount of time to the limit of their ability and capacity, the sooner will they be able to enjoy, rightfully and more universally, the privilege of going to and from their labor in their own automobiles.

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Winnipeg, Man., January 1st, 1920.

SEEKS POWER FRANCHISE IN EDMONTON

THAT it is the aim of his principals to construct a model power station in Edmonton as an example to other Canadian cities, is the statement of Robert H. Parsons, of London, Eng., who has asked for a 20-year franchise.

Confirming a cabled offer to the Edmonton council, Mr. Parsons writes: "If any proposition of this nature would be entertained by the council, I should be prepared to return at once to Edmonton and submit a definite offer on the lines indicated. I am connected in a consulting capacity with one of the largest and oldest electrical engineering firms in Great Britain, who will stand at the back of my proposal.

"They are desirous not so much of making profit out of such a contract, as of organizing in the west a model and efficient power station which they can point to as an example when looking for contracts for power and lighting plants in Canada. I need scarcely add that the fullest financial guarantees will be given for the proper carrying out of such a contract, including the return of the plant in first-class condition at the end of the contract.

"From my intimate knowledge of the plant and of local conditions I am confident that I can submit an offer which would be advantageous to the city and I should be glad if you would kindly advise me by cable as to how the council would regard the question of the granting of an operating and maintenance contract."

It is expected that a highway bridge, to cost probably \$200,000, will be built over the St. John river, between Edmundston, N.B., and Madawaska, Maine, this year. The new structure will connect highways recently built in Quebec, New Brunswick and Maine.