

"LABOR"

As the Laborer Sees It



This is the Intensely Human Statement of a Plain Working man—a Trades Unionist and the Father of a Large Family. The Editor Has Associated With Him—at Work—Practically Every Working Day for the Past Eleven Years. He Values the Contribution All the More Because of his Knowledge of the Man and His History.

READERS of this magazine would hardly suspect from reading its editorials and leading articles, that the editor was gifted with much of what is known as the sense of humor. But he assuredly has his flashes of the ridiculous, and one of his comical ideas leads him to believe that a plain working man could write something interesting about Labor. Why, everything about labor has been written, and now labor has to work so that there may be less labor.

These are only a few ordinary words—by an ordinary working man, one who likes to work, and play and live; who likes to earn his pay and to receive it, and rejoices when the whistle blows at noon on Saturday, for then he knows there is a day-and-a-half ahead of him.

At home, as the spirit moves him, he will grumble and growl and act the capitalistic employer to his soul's content—with this difference: the principal part of the pay for services rendered is not in money but in love. And oh! the willing hands he can employ, the contented workers he bosses, the ingenuous atmosphere of co-operation he finds, just because the understanding between employer and employee is perfect.

The employee in this case knows exactly the extent of the employer's finances, and the employer is in no fear of impossible demands being made upon him.

On Sunday afternoon, the children having gone to Sunday School, he finds his quiet hour and sits down to enjoy a smoke—and to think.

Unrest everywhere! Prices of the necessities of life beyond his purse! Half educated boys want to leave school; younger ones want to go to school. Then the question of education crops up. Are our present methods of education in public schools right or are our children taught to honor wealth as the one and only way to command the esteem of their fellows?

Is eighteen the proper age for children to leave school, and if so how, without assistance from outside, are the majority of working men going to keep their children at school until that age; and should Civic, Provincial or Dominion Government give that aid?

Are the salaries of school teachers such as to entice men and women of sterling worth and special fitness for their job to come forward and help in building up Canada of the future?

Is it possible that in our cities such conditions as these exist?

"It is a common practice with parents in those parts of the city where the

homes are small and the families large, to have their children reared on the street. As soon as the babe is born it is sent out in a baby carriage or child's express wagon on to the street, and is cared for in school hours by a child too young to go to school, and after school by an older child.

The Kindly Plan

*The curtain closes on the piteous past,
The havoc, and the horror, and the hate:
To-morrow nestles in the arms of Fate:
Time's grand kaleidoscope is shifting fast!
We need of faith as well as toil and prayer,
Envisioning the glory yet to be;—
Heroic hope that conquers gaunt despair;
And crowns the freedom that is richly free:—
The gracious, princely act, the kindly plan:
The mutual help, and trust of man in man.*

Frederic Irving Taylor

"Once the babe is old enough to walk, he is turned out of the wagon or carriage to make room for another addition to the family and made to toddle on the sidewalks and streets from early morning till late at night, where he associates with all the boys and girls of all ages in the neighborhood, all of whom are being brought up in the one community herd on the street."

Is it true that obedient children to-day are rare? Are they wiser in sin at sixteen than their parents at thirty? What are the parents' responsibilities if such is the case?

How far is the Government responsible in its slackness in prosecuting abortionists and permitting the sale of poisonous drugs to prevent the processes of nature? There is the finding of murdered innocents in the sewers and the purlieus of our cities, tales of "illicit love," "affinities," "soul mates," and the unspeakable tragedies of the divorce court. What is the cure for all those "diseases"?

Are the children of to-day getting a square deal alike from capital and labor in the exceedingly bitter and senseless fight now being maintained by those two parties who ought never to have been out of harmony?

Will the next generation grow up believing that there is no such thing as co-operation possible between the two; that the fight must go on until one or other of the contestants is master and dictator of the situation?

The men who advocate a better distribution of wealth and that labor is entitled to a just share of the proceeds of production, are at least honest enough to come out in the open and declare their opinions.

We may not agree with them, but how many of their bitter opponents are honest enough to come out and state frankly their opinion and desire, namely, that the poor should remain poor and the ignorant remain ignorant so that profits shall not be disturbed?

Real men there are in the ranks of employers, as well as in the ranks of labor, but the "reds" on both sides have locked horns, and until they are separated, unrest and dissatisfaction will be the lot of both employer and employee.

The real labor man, believing that co-operation is possible, is more than willing to meet the employer who is of the same mind; but the employer will have to make the first move for the reason that, in the past, the labor man has had to fight, and fight hard, for practically every inch of improvement in his condition that has come to him.

The "square deal" all round is what is wanted. A real partnership with both parties, realizing that industry is a responsibility not to be reckoned in dollars and cents but by the welfare of the community, the welfare of the state, and the good of the great world of humanity at large.

Neither capital nor labor have a place anywhere for "reds" who believe that force is the only means whereby a solution of their difficulties may be attained.

Collective bargaining must be recognized on the one hand, and sympathetic strikes forbidden on the other. And just at this point this working man is roused from his pipe-dream, for he had gone to sleep and dreamed his waking thoughts.

The happy voices of the children home from Sunday school have awakened him, and once again the world is bright. Hope springs into new life at the sight of those dancing eyes! The world is a good place to live in after all! The working man is blessed in that he usually has a large family. If at times it is "hard sledding" to get all he would like for his growing flock, he still has pleasure in the knowledge that at least he can plant some seeds in their young minds—seeds that may help in the future to make this world something he but dreams of at present; to make Canada in very truth the Canada of his dreams—

*"Where man to man
The world o'er,
Shall brothers be
For a' that."*