

## YES, HE HAS NO COMMON SENSE

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ing them how they may enter the Kingdom of God.

"I can't say that the audiences are not enthusiastic," he told me, "but they applied the wrong points. The fact that the A. Nash Company is not a union shop seems terribly significant to some employers, until they learn that it isn't an anti-union shop. What right would I have to object to my fellow workers want to join a union?"

"They ask me if I would let agitators. We have been increasing the force so fast that there is nothing I know of to keep them out. I have heard it said that a certain union had planted a number of members occasionally inside of our organization. I don't know and I don't care. If they do get in they seem to stay; I don't hear of anybody quitting."

"No. I have no objection to the unions. So long as industry is a fight, both sides are bound to organize. I'm all for the unions under those conditions, but I'm not for the fight. We don't have to defend ourselves from each other when we are doing to others as we would like to have them do to us."

"Is it true," I asked, "that some of the union shops pay a higher scale for certain kinds of work than you do?"

"I don't know," he said. "I hope so. We aren't paying very much attention to the wage question in our establishment. Whenever there is together and decides what to do with an increased profit, the family gets it. Sometimes they raise their wages and sometimes they decide to give it to the public by putting better material or more time into the suits."

"You mean that they refuse wage increases?"

"Let me tell you," he said, "one of the first experiences we had. When the company notified the employees that there was a surplus to be divided, the highest-paid help got together and petitioned us not to distribute it as we had thought of distributing it, giving each employee a certain percentage on actual earnings but to distribute it equally among all. That meant that these highly-paid men and women voluntarily refused large sums of money, so that the unskilled, the beginners, and the old women whose earning power had long since waned might all receive \$91 apiece. In some cases this represented more money than they had ever owned in one time in all their lives."

"But it wasn't the \$91," he hastened to add, "it was the spirit behind this distribution. That was something you could feel all through the shop. The spirit of Christian brotherhood."

"Were these highly paid employees all Christians?"

"Yes, all Catholics and Protestants and Jews and people who professed no special creed. They were just living the teachings of Jesus, that is all."

"Which is why Mr. Nash simply cannot be understood. Also, why visitors to the Nash factory are generally nonplussed. There are no scriptural texts on the walls. There is no hymn singing hour, no prayer meeting, nothing to denote that this is an unusual factory. There is not even any complex system of welfare work to spy on the employees and say how they shall spend their time after working hours. There are no time clocks here, but otherwise it is just like other factories except for a spirit which the others lack."

**Pants and Vests all the Year Round.**  
I went through the various rooms. Some of them were on piecework, some on a weekly wage. I couldn't tell the difference. All of them were working fast, but nowhere could I find a face that was drawn and tense. They looked as though they actually enjoyed making pants and coats and vests. They work, I was told eight hours a day, five days a week, but they work the year around. Some transformation, it must be conceded, from the old rule of overtime during the rush season and unemployment for the rest of the year.

"Do you think this scheme would work with the damned aliens and Bolsheviks in our shop?" Mr. Nash is often asked.

"It won't work with aliens," is his answer, "and it won't work with those who are damned. It will work only with brothers and sisters in the human family."

"So long as we look upon people as alien the best we can hope for is to bargain with them. When we see them as brothers and sisters, the problem vanishes. We don't try to bargain any longer; we just see how much we can do, and the law of love does the rest."

"Are you sure that your success will be permanent?" I asked him. "Perhaps the story itself has just advertised Nash clothes so extensively that thousands of people who have bought a suit out of curiosity will find they can do better eventually by patronizing firms that are more businesslike."

"Perhaps," he said. "But what of that? I can think of lots of things which are more important than my financial success. Can't you?"

Listen, folks! Did you ever hear anything quite so unreasonable?

—Colliers, The National Weekly.

## SET A MILLION CHILDREN FREE

Continued from Page 1.

work, and a compulsory education or a new child labor law, either of which would work to the same effect; to keep every boy and girl in school until the age of sixteen. He has no sympathy with child labor. He doesn't want it any more than you or I do. "Labor is scarce right now," said Mr. Hawes, "but the mills could make the adjustment very quickly to such a change."

Not that such talk was enough to convince such a skeptic as I was. It took more, but that more was forthcoming.

"Most of the parents regard the children as assets to be used," said a social worker who has no axe to grind. "That you know is the case with some farmers of this country, and it is the case with many of the mill employees, or, at least, with enough of them to give us this child-labor situation. They judge their children by how regularly they turn over the pay roll into the family purse. 'Johnny—he good boy—bring home envelope always,' the mother says, although the case where the family is actually needy, and there is even that kind of a reason for the work of the child, is very rare indeed in this town."

It is greed, not need, that sends a little shaver to the mills. Lack of interest in their schools makes them willing to go—there is a big school problem here as everywhere, but medically and socially even a poor school is a far better place for the child than the factory. If you are a doubting Thomas on that, later on it shall be shown and proved.

There is more evidence to show that I heard the truth from the representative employers. There is at least one mill in New England, probably more, in which there is no child employed. That one is known throughout the world as one of the finest, if not the finest, of its kind. The reason that children are not employed there is not a matter of sentiment, law, or public opinion. They have found that children are not good workers; they don't want them working on their fine cottons, they don't let them work there. It is purely a business matter.

No, the reason why many of the children in Massachusetts are working, when medical science and students of society know they should not be working is because the parents of those children are exploiting them because the Legislature permits that exploitation to go on. A minute minority is forcing upon the great majority the work of the former's children. It is forcing me to buy shirts made by them.

**One of Those Grim Jokes.**  
We know that the Legislature disapproves at heart because it has passed a law for continuation schools, which is a miserable sop thrown to public opinion. The child of fourteen to sixteen is forced to go to a school four hours a week.

If that idea were not so tragic, it would be funny. I went into one of those schools and listened to the children and the teachers. The teachers were doing the best they could. The building was an old hotel, slightly remodelled. But the kids were bored, had forgotten the lessons of the week before; had literally and absolutely wasted their time. This is partly a matter of opinion. But I have discussed it with educators in many parts of the United States, men who know their business if anybody does, and they agree with me that four hours a week for forty weeks at fourteen and fifteen years of age is a grim joke—just the way death is a grim joke to the fellow who meets it in his prime. Even half time—the way the kids in Wisconsin, who work in Wisconsin box, candy, knitting works and other factories, are compelled to attend—is little better than a hoax on the public, which supports these part-time schools.

**The Law and The Facts.**  
We have heard more than enough about Massachusetts, so much perhaps that good people of that law-abiding State (where a child does have to go to school four hours a week, where he does have to be a sixth grader before he gets a working permit, where a medical certificate, of doubtful value of course is required) will spit. They were chosen to talk of spite. They were chosen to talk of only because they were among the best. A greater percentage of the kids are working than in most States, and that percentage has increased in fruits and vegetables much as door in other States, yet the laws are fairly good and those they have are well enforced.

The percentage of children working is worse in Rhode Island. It is worse in South Carolina, and North Carolina. There are more of them working in Pennsylvania, a larger State, than in Massachusetts. New York has some seventeen thousand, New Jersey is worse now than it was in 1910.

This is factory work and mechanical pursuits, mind you, that we speak of. It doesn't tell the story of violations of the law where enforcement is a joke. It doesn't tell the story of tenement work, or the street trades; it does not tell about the unbelievable conditions in the great agricultural factories, which turn out law, or a new child-labor law, either knobs are turned out of a mill, by machine work. Nor does this tell how thin the census figures probably are, as shown by the fact that the report states that less than 11,000

fruits and vegetables, much as door children are gainfully employed in Wisconsin, although local authorities estimate the figures at from two to three times as high.

But you should have by now a good idea of what this unfairly chosen, hand-picked sample is like. That sample should give you a good idea, if your imagination is working properly, of what is going on in other States where the laws are poor, in States where a twelve-year-old can work eleven hours a day, and be broken in body and spirit before he attains his manhood. Just keep in mind, as you watch Babe Ruth swing at a fast one from the cunning old hands of Walter Johnson this summer that the kids who'd like best to watch, the kids who would like to be out on the old sand lot in school vacation time, slugging at a yarn ball—well, they're inside in the dust and half darkness, watching the shuttles, packing the goods, at whatever their poor unskilled hands can do, from morning to night, all summer long—185,337 of them in factories, ten to fifteen years old, according to the last census.

Moreover, it might be worse, as it was a century ago in England, and America—yes, as it is right this minute in the State of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

That great State has a governor who is ranked as one of the most far seeing progressives. We have no idea of saying for one moment that Gifford Pinchot is responsible for the fact that the boys are still working illegally, underground in the Pennsylvania fields, but what we do call to attention is the fact that an electorate which put in a man of that type is the same electorate which permits the damaging work to go on. It is no backward community. It is one of the greatest in the United States.

What is going on there is cold fact. It is all down in the United States Department of Labor, Children's Bureau Bulletin No. 106, published last year (1922). The total extent of it is not known. The investigation, by trained persons, taking months to complete, was confined to a very small area in Schuylkill County, the Schuylkill district. Right there

57 per cent of the boys of the district, from thirteen to sixteen years of age, had commenced work.

Since the investigation was made, some improvement has been recorded, at least in the actual territory covered by the Government work. In Shenandoah the mine owners now demand a church certificate which states that the boy is sixteen. They are quite particular about this formality, but it is, on the whole, merely a form. It did not prevent Edward, fourteen, from going to work on the night shift (3.30-11.30) during the month of June, 1923, after the school superintendent had refused a working permit to him. Union officials and townspeople stated that a large percentage of the breaker boys are under sixteen; many of them look it, certainly.

It is not illegal for a fourteen-year-old to work in the Pennsylvania breakers. Some of the mine operators seemed to think they were working under the last Federal child-labor law which was declared unconstitutional under a year ago. So they were being courageously careful that their official records will look all right. Even the inspectors of the Bureau of Labor and Industry of the State, charged with enforcement of the law, are quite vague about what the law is, if their signed reports are truly indicative. The new secretary of this department, hopelessly handicapped by the size and character of his force of inspectors, is very much interested and eager to make what improvement is possible in a chaotic and muddled situation. The laws aren't so bad, and Dr. Royal Meeker may soon have them better enforced, but that is still a hope and a promise not a reality.

To the Federal inspectors some children reported that "they began to work with no certificate (a certificate is required by law) other than a 'work paper' bought from 'the squire' for fifty cents." No central authority seemingly had been charged with the duty of enforcement and inspection. There has been a humorous legal mix-up among the bureaus.

But let enforcement go hang for the moment. What gets the man who sees this thing going on is the fifteen-year-old breaker boys. Ask any number of citizens if children are still working in the breakers in the

United States, and they will practically all say no with great finality. They are wrong. You can see them any day in the Shenandoah district. And what is this: nice clean, easy work that teaches a young fourteen-year-old racial discipline.

The Children's Bureau, dealing in facts, not in sentiment, reports it as follows: "These boys worked in the constant roar which the coal makes as it rushes down the chute, is broken in the crushing machines, or sorted in the shakers. Black coal dust is everywhere, covering windows and filling the lungs of the workers. The slate is sharp, so that the slate pickers often cut or bruise their hands; the coal is carried down the chute in water, and this means sore hands for the pickers. The first few weeks

after the boy begins work, his fingers bleed almost continuously and are called red tags by the other boys."

Two Million Sub-Citizens.  
That's the kind of coal you and I burn in our furnaces. It is anthracite. The boys who pick out the bad stuff, the slate, for you and me work on the average eight hours a day at it. A few work as much as six hours a week. There is more money in it for them if they are big and can lie about their age, defeat the sixteen-year-old law and work underground. But none of them ever amount to much. We can't expect much of them as citizens, even less, perhaps, as individuals.

This mine job is perhaps the worst thing for children there can be—

especially because in that industry home conditions are so frightfully bad. One of the houses in which the families live in that district is a tenement, so ugly, so crowded, so animal, that it is known locally as "The incubator."  
Doesn't it sort of give you stomach-ache? It does mine—Colliers, The National Weekly.

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