

## PRELIMINARY.

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Citizens,—

Before entering into the subject matter, allow me to make a few preliminary remarks.

There reigns now on the Continent a real epidemic of strikes, and a general clamor for a rise of wages. The question will turn up at our Congress.<sup>1</sup> You, as the head of the International Association,<sup>2</sup> ought to have settled convictions upon this paramount question. For my own part, I considered it therefore my duty to enter fully into the matter, even at the peril of putting your patience to a severe test.

Another preliminary remark I have to make in regard to Citizen Weston.<sup>3</sup> He has not only proposed to you, but has publicly defended, in the interest of the working class, as he thinks, opinions he knows to be most unpopular with the working class. Such an exhibition of moral courage all of us must highly honor. I hope that, despite the unvarnished style of my paper, at its conclusion he will find me agreeing with what appears to me the just idea lying at the bottom of his theses, which, however, in their present form, I cannot but consider theoretically false and practically dangerous.

I shall now at once proceed to the business before us.

<sup>1</sup>This paper was communicated to the General International Congress held in September, 1886.

<sup>2</sup>The "General Council" was the executive of the Association.

<sup>3</sup>The delegates from the I.W.M.A. to the Congress.