

### THE PERILS OF TRADES UNIONISM.

A portion of an address delivered by Hon. Clarence S. Darrow before the Henry George association of Chicago, June 25, as reported in the Chicago Record-Herald.

Trades unionism is an artificial institution, built by man to counteract some natural law. When opportunity was plenty there was no need for trades unions, but when the country became settled, and monopolies fenced in large portions of the earth, and began the traffic in men, then trades unionism began to grow here, as it did in Europe. Trades unionism is in the air, the people have caught it, and many men are joining in the movement who know nothing about its usage or what its functions are. Many men join unions who do not believe in the principle, because they think they can get on better with their fellow workmen.

Every step in trades unionism has followed the steps that organized capital has laid down before it, and it is fundamentally monopolistic. In the United States there are millions of workmen who have no other thought than how to get more wages, and they care for nothing else in trades unionism.

No thinking man will deny that the workmen are not getting anywhere near the wage they should get in comparison with the amount of their production. But wages are not measured by money, but in the necessities and comforts which are obtained.

Trades unions must find out why wages are not increased, instead of seeking arbitrary methods of raising wages in one craft, without relation to any other craft or to their fellow men. The mere question of raising wages accomplishes nothing in the end, and is burdensome. It is simply a weary traveling around in a circle. Not only that, but the raising of wages is often mischievous, and interrupts the economics of the business world, and leads to nothing. If the carpenter secures an increase in his wage, then the grocer, because he has to pay the carpenter, will demand an increase, and soon the miner will need an increase to meet the demand of the grocer. So it goes on until it gets back to the carpenter again, and no one has benefited, for no one can get more comforts and necessities for their money.

Whatever is accomplished by labor in raising wages is done with endless pain and trouble, and then they get only a fraction of what they expect, and the capitalist, with a stroke of the pen, can increase the profits twice as fast to keep up with their raise, and by a simple stroke of the pen. The burden falls

on the middle class, the large majority have no way of increasing their wages or their labor, and in this mad rush the middleman and the consumer is forgotten, and he gets the worst of it.

I view with uneasiness the friendly feeling that some of the big corporations are expressing for the trades unions. I always feel that trades unionism is safer when these gentlemen are on the other side. When I see men who are in political life like Mark Hanna, and who are also allied with the big corporations, professing love for trades unions, I am apprehensive. When I find men who all their lives have been interested in trafficking in men suddenly coming to love the workmen, I know what it means.

Of course, J. P. Morgan believes in big things. He sees that it is economy to deal with workmen as a body, rather than as individuals. He doesn't care how much he has to pay, because he understands that you can't mark up the price of labor as fast as he can mark up the price of his steel. But the public is really paying for it, and they are getting nothing in return. It is the same in every line where labor and capital are getting along peaceably.

Workmen may organize until the cows come home, but they can never worst the man they are trying to beat at his own game. I sometimes think it would be better if laboring men had tried to decrease wages, for then they would at least have increased the production, and in the general grab they might have obtained a little more. But any movement directed along toward the raising of wages will fail, because if the raise is equal, it will do no one any good, and if it is not equal, then an injustice is worked, because the man who controls the production gets the best of it.

The man who wants to make money is a fool to work. The rule in political economy is, he who does the most work gets the least wage. Any system of business organization which will increase production will benefit the workman, and anything that tends to the equitable distribution of wealth will do the rest. So far as trades unions do these things they are a benefit; so far as they do anything else, they are a detriment. They must turn their attention to the equal distribution of wealth. To do this they must work for such laws and institutions as will accomplish it. When trades unions spend their time tinkering about the question of wages in any craft, or in boycotting this man of that, they are frittering away their time and energy.

Without some movement directed to-

ward taking the natural products, as coal and ore, from the hands of trusts who limit their production, it is impossible to get an equitable distribution of wealth, or to help labor. The salvation of the workman is to take an interest in political action.

So far as laws influence the social conditions—and in this time and country they do to a large degree—the men who believe in the equal division of wealth must direct this almost wasted energy of the trades unions into political channels. But the man who will organize men into an industrial army, and then lead them to that party which makes it its business to exploit men, is worse than a traitor, and there are many of them in Chicago, the hotbed of trades unionism.

If you were to organize every man in the United States, and do nothing but declare boycotts and strikes or raise wages, they would accomplish nothing. They would be a great army going nowhere and doing nothing. For awhile they may build up the wall of wage, but they cannot keep it there. When the bubble of speculation breaks—and break it will—the organizations will melt away faster than they were built up.

There is no effort now on the part of the leaders to bring about any permanent good out of this vast wasted energy. Where can you point to any good the American Federation of Labor has ever done, except agitation, which is a rope of sand, to melt away under the first strain? They represent millions of laborers, but are they bound together to correct any real abuses? They are just an organization, as though that was an end, instead of a means to an end. Now is the time to accomplish something. There never was a time when it was so easy to educate an army of workmen until they have political convictions which they will stick to as their religion, until they accomplish them. If the leaders will do this, then trades unionism will live, but not otherwise.

### TOM L. JOHNSON AT MR. BRYAN'S FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION.

At the Fourth of July celebration at Fairview, Mr. Bryan's home near Lincoln, Neb., under the auspices of the Fairview Jefferson Club, July 4, 1903, after the speech of Dr. Howard S. Taylor, of Chicago, Mr. Bryan introduced Mayor Johnson, of Cleveland, O., as the last speaker.

#### WM. J. BRYAN'S INTRODUCTION.

I am going to pass over the music which you find on the programme at this place, because I want to give the last speaker on the programme ample time and not have him speak while he feels rushed to catch a train. I have

had some experience of that kind myself, and I want to spare him that experience if I can.

Before introducing him I wish to express the gratitude which the Fairview Jefferson club feels for the kindly interest in this meeting that has been manifested by so many. I also wish to express the thanks of the club to the Monroe club of St. Joe, Mo., which has kindly lent us this tent. We needed it because we have not enough shade here for such a large meeting; and then, too, I thought Tom would feel at home in a tent (laughter and applause). I should like to stand before you, the members of this Fairview Jefferson club, which has worked so diligently in the preparation of this celebration; but the large crowd—the crowd larger than we anticipated — has compelled them to devote themselves to the care of those who have come. Therefore, I cannot stand them up here and show you the ones to whom you are indebted for this programme to-day.

I am glad, my friends, on this occasion to present a man who is worthy to discuss public questions in your presence. A man who in public office has given an exhibition of those characteristics that make the ideal public servant. When by your partiality I was permitted to study public questions at the national capitol, I became acquainted with Mr. Johnson. He entered congress at the same time and served during the same period. He has since then become the chief executive of a great city, and I have found that whether he spoke for the people as their representative in the national Congress or acted for them as the mayor of a city, he was the same plain, honest man. I am glad that we have a man who furnishes a type of an official that we might well wish was more numerous in our nation. A man who has the brain to see, a man who has the courage to do, a man who has devoted himself to the betterment of government and to the securing of great reforms. My friends, I am glad that Ohio can present to the nation the example of an incorruptible and fearless public official, who can neither be driven by threats nor bought by money to turn from the path of duty. (Voice: "Amen!") That's right. The nearest church to this ground is a Methodist church, and the word "amen" is a familiar one. I take great pleasure in presenting to this audience the Hon. Tom L. Johnson, of the United States. (Continued applause.)

TOM L. JOHNSON'S SPEECH.  
Mr. Bryan, my fellow-citizens, ladies and gentlemen: I am far from home,

and in a strange country in a way. From our home place by the great expanse of waters, I was suddenly transferred into your green fields; and I realized when I saw the native turf here and the rolling ground, what a great place it must have been for the Indians of old times, and how naturally they must have resented our driving them out of such a fair land as this. But all feelings of strangeness have passed away. When I came into this tent this afternoon, I felt at once so much at home that now I can almost imagine myself in an Ohio campaign, with Mr. Bryan helping us, as he always has, to win our battles.

This is Independence Day! We have listened to that great document, the Declaration of Independence. Its principles of equal rights for all and special privileges for none, are of universal application, from the smallest local government to the widest scope of national government. It has often been discussed wisely and well, but there is just one thought that I want to call your attention to. One of the many gems in that old paper is the declaration that governments are instituted among men to secure certain rights for all. Let me ask you to emphasize the word "secure." You will notice it is not a declaration that grants rights—not a declaration that gives rights from above; it is a declaration that secures rights. It recognizes the truth that every man, woman and child has these rights from the fact that they were born on this earth. They are rights which spring from within and go out; they do not come down to us from any social contract, nor from any king or potentate. My friends, that to me is the thought that is greatest in that paper, the thought that it is the duty of government to secure to men the rights that they possess by nature. Governments are instituted among men for that purpose.

Now, the inquiry is this: Has our government been administered in the interest of securing these rights to men, or is there some ingenious way, some underhand trick, some device that is not always seen, something that is hidden below the surface, by which the sacred rights that the government should secure to all have been deferred and kept away from the many, and, instead, certain privileges and advantages have been vested in the few? I make the charge that most of our laws do this.

There are laws that we make to govern our cities and States and nation, laws for making certain great improvements, laws for punishing crimes, which carry out the spirit of the Declaration of Independence; but most of

the time of your legislative bodies, whether the national assembly, the State legislatures, or your city councils, most of their time is spent, with the aid of the ingenuity of the shrewdest, most corrupt and best paid set of men on earth, in devising plans for creating law-made privileges at the expense of all of the people for the benefit of the privileged monopolists of this country. (Applause.)

I cannot imagine that it is in the interest of all the people, and that we are securing their rights, when we build great navies and organize great armies. So-called statesmen tell us these are to protect us from the outside world, but they use them to enslave people who have as much right to be free as we have. (Applause.)

I don't believe when in the quiet of a room in Washington, somewhere in the capitol, or in a hotel, a number of men who control the destinies of this country by representing—not the Republican masses, but the Republican machinery—when they concoct bills to subsidize great ship lines now owned by wealthy people who are enjoying other great privileges, I don't believe when they propose thus to take your money to subsidize ship lines, that they intend to secure to us rights. Such laws are intended to rob us of rights.

I do not believe that State legislatures, when they make tax laws under which farmers and home owners and mechanics and men owning small shops pay five times as heavy taxes as are paid by the great steam railroad corporations of the State—I cannot believe that that is in the interest of securing rights. In the state of Ohio we have a great railroad interest which is in partnership with certain leaders in the Republican party, certain men who use the Republican party and its machinery to protect the railroads from paying their fair share of taxes. My friends, the greatest privilege that the steam railroads, and the street railroads, and other monopoly interests in the State of Ohio—the greatest privilege they own, is the privilege of making other people who live in Ohio pay their taxes.

Similar evils are perpetuated by our city legislative bodies. You will find that the time of all these bodies is taken up largely in serving the interests of privileged people. They are especially guarded and protected, and not always I am sorry to say by Republican legislative bodies. Some of our so-called Democratic bodies have been guilty.

Don't imagine that I accuse Republicans alone. I am not here to plead in the interest of corrupt Democrats and