

an open political coup, a federal home-rule scheme for the empire, with a federal imperial council and equal taxation and representation throughout. But he knew that Canada and Australia would never consent wittingly to abandon any of the powers of self-government which they had won, in return for a perpetual minority position in an imperial council, a position which would leave them helpless to prevent them being dragged at the tail of the huge "unfree" empire. Last summer he learned what he might have known before, that all the exuberant vapour of colonial jingoism during the Boer war would not yield by precipitation a single pint of financial aid in the form of military and naval contributions. The only way was to fall back upon the familiar business method, and offer the colonies the sacrifice of British free trade as a bribe to induce them to consolidate the empire. He trusted to be able to conceal from his countrymen the "sacrifice" he was asking them to incur by inflaming their combative passions against Germany, the United States, and other "rivals" and "unfair competitors." So, likewise, he hoped to deceive the colonies into a belief that they might advantageously enter upon tariff arrangements with Great Britain and one another, without impairing in any way their valued liberty of self-government.

A FEDERAL CUSTOM COUNCIL.

Now Mr. Chamberlain, the Times, and the entire body of preferential tariff-mongers, are perfectly well aware that the effective working of a system of such tariffs among the members of the empire must involve a surrender of some considerable amount of political independence on the part of the colonies. To leave to every colony the right to chop and change at its own free will a tariff delicately adjusted to the needs of the other parts of the empire would be quite impossible. A system of preferential tariffs would require the maintenance of a federal customs council representing the interests of the empire as a whole, with right of veto upon the arbitrary action of individual colonies, where such action was prejudicial to the interests of other members of the union. Such a council would be a very important political body, and its formation, and the powers it wielded, would be in themselves a substantial diminution of the liberties of the several colonies. Mr. Chamberlain, of course, was not such a fool as to breathe a word of his hope that such a customs union, once

founded, would gradually lead to a reversal of the liberative movements of the last half century, and would bring back the colonies to heel under an imperial federation which would make them helpless thralls of a perpetually predominant partner.

But though Mr. Chamberlain breathed no public word of this, it is quite evident that he has been urging it privately upon the cabinet, and has sought to win over by means of it some of his free trade colleagues. This will account for the blunt suggestion of the Duke of Devonshire that the colonies might be asked to surrender some of their freedom of action in "fiscal, commercial, and industrial legislation."

SIR WILFRID LAURIER'S WARNING.

Unless the colonists are utterly blind they must perceive that such surrender of their liberties is inseparable from a preferential tariff scheme. If they do not yet perceive this truth, it is because the matter has gone no further than a one-sided offer on the part of individual colonies. When a number of these schemes come to be welded into the unity of an imperial system, the truth can no longer be concealed. The colonists will then to a man endorse the words which Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who has more than an inkling of Mr. Chamberlain's real design, addressed the other day to the Chambers of Commerce congress at Montreal:—

If we are to obtain from the people of Great Britain a concession for which we would be prepared to give an equivalent, and if we are to obtain it also by the surrender of some of our political rights, for my part I would simply say, let us go no further, for already we have come to the parting of the ways. Canada values too highly the system which has made her what she is to consent willingly to part with any portion of it, for whatever consideration, and even for the maintenance of the British empire, I think it would be a most evil thing if any of our colonies were to consent to part with any of their legislative independence. Nor do I believe that, in order to make such an arrangement of a commercial nature as I spoke of a moment ago, we should be called upon to make any sacrifice of dignity or independence.

Colonists who are at all versed in modern history will be aware that a customs union, involving a system of interstate fiscal arrangements, is a first step along the road to a political union involving progressive encroachments of the central on the local governments.

Life is too short for one moment of drudgery.—The Straight Edge.

THE PROGRESS OF LABOR UNIONS.

Address of William Prentiss at Chicago, Labor Day, Monday, September 7, 1908.

I would be unjust to my feelings if I failed to express my high appreciation of the great favor shown me by the laboring men of Chicago on this day specially dedicated to Labor's cause. I congratulate Labor's leaders, and that vast army of organized toilers, on its splendid showing in Chicago to-day. Not only this. I congratulate the working men of our country and our country itself upon the great progress Labor has been making during the last few years. Many, very many thousands of working men and women never before organized, have been successfully organized and added to the Grand Army of Organized Labor. Labor's battles for better pay, better hours and better conditions were never so numerous and never so successful as they have been during the last two years.

And again, our country is to be congratulated, and the workers of America are to be both congratulated and complimented upon the fact that these battles have been peaceable battles, conducted almost wholly without violence, and upon a higher plane than such contests were ever conducted before in this or any other country.

It is not claimed that Labor has been without faults, or that no mistakes have been made. To declare it would not be true; to expect it would be absurd. When the recent and rapid organization of so many is considered, their vast numbers and inexperience, the wrongs which many of them have heretofore been subjected to almost without hope of redress, the inherent defects of human nature, and the score and more other difficulties in the way of harmonizing so many elements and interests, the marvel is that so few mistakes have been made. Of one thing I am certain: The wage-earners of this country as a whole were never so highly respected as now. And they are respected because their conduct has commanded respect. They have not bowed before power and begged so much as of yore; they have respectfully complained and respectfully demanded more often. They have stood upon their rights, erect as men, and met employers face to face. And more than all, no man has been asked to stand singly and alone. Brothers have stood at his side, and around and about him; thousands have stood as one. To this fact more than to all other causes combined is this marvelous progress due.

Yet, while much has been done, much more is yet to be done. Labor's warfare is not over; it has only just begun. Labor and its friends have much to be

thankful for to-day; but they have duties yet to perform as well. The unprecedented progress of organized labor of late has aroused and alarmed its foes, and the forces of organized greed have combined to check it, if not to destroy it altogether. One of the chief means being used to this end is and has been to place organized labor in an unfavorable light before the public, and to deprive it of that sympathy so needful to its continued success. It so happens that during the past year I have been made acquainted with a number of disputes between working men and their employers, and in that way have learned much that I would not have otherwise known. This came about chiefly in matters of arbitration. While this occasion will not permit of detail or much allusion to particular cases, certain things have impressed me as being largely responsible, not only for much of the trouble between employers and their men, but for the unfavorable impression sometimes created as to the action of Union men.

The impression has gone abroad that Union men habitually violate their contracts with employers. Well-meaning people, knowing nothing of the facts but what they gather from the daily papers, accept this as true without further investigation. I notice in this morning's papers that some of the preachers yesterday could find little else to say about the labor question except to assume that Union labor habitually violated its contracts, and proceeded to lecture labor upon the subject.

There may be isolated cases of violation of contracts by Union men, but if there are such they are extremely rare, and generally speaking this charge and impression is absolutely untrue. My observation has been that trouble over these contracts arises in large part from the way they are entered into. Very often when they were made the parties did not stand upon equal terms, and the men were cruelly overreached. I know a case of this kind, and yet the men have honestly and bravely stood by the contract, notwithstanding its injustice.

With some of the newer Unions, advantage has been taken of inexperience, and contracts signed that were never understood by the men. Shrewd business men with years of experience and behind them able lawyers, have been pitted against working men without any experience in such matters whatsoever. In this way so-called contracts have been made where the letter and spirit were not in harmony. Contracts entered into in this way are not in equity and good conscience,

contracts at all, and are sure to lead to dissatisfaction and trouble.

I know of another case where the employers insisted that the contract which was in writing should continue for a certain period not mentioned in it, and the men insisted that it had expired and demanded a new contract. It was published in the papers that the men refused to live up to their contract, when in fact the employers were insisting upon something that was no part of the contract.

No one knows better than Union men the importance to them and their cause that they live up to their contracts, and I venture the assertion that if an inventory were taken of all the contracts claimed to have been violated either by employes or employers, and a careful investigation made of the facts in each case, the men would be found to be less at fault than their employers. There is a plain and simple remedy for all this, and that is that all contracts be honestly and fairly entered into, and that they be rigidly lived up to by both parties, in spirit as well as in letter.

Another erroneous and unfair impression is being systematically spread broadcast which is calculated and intended to injure Labor's cause. I refer to the oft-repeated assertion that organized labor by its demands is checking that wave of prosperity which we have been riding for the past few years. The cry has gone forth and is still going forth, that if labor does not cease its demands prosperity will suddenly end, and that awful pall of financial depression and hard times is flaunted in the face of labor and the timid public. Has the country really been and is it still prosperous? Secretary of the Treasury Shaw, in a public address here in Chicago the other night, said yes to this, and gave it as his opinion that prosperity would continue. I shall not dispute so high an authority as Secretary Shaw, and so will concede that the country has been and is really prosperous, and is likely to so continue. Now, prosperity being a conceded fact, why should not the laboring men and women of the country, who do the work, get their full share of this prosperity?

But it may be claimed that they have been getting it. I deny it, absolutely. They have not been getting their share of the wealth their labor has been creating. Many facts and reasons can be given showing that what I say is true; but I prefer to give as authority Professor John R. Commons, an eminent economist and authority on social

science, an able Christian gentleman who keeps fully informed on these questions. In an article published in the August number of the "Review of Reviews," Professor Commons shows conclusively, not by argument alone, but by giving the facts and figures, that labor has not been and is not getting its share of this prosperity. He shows that the prices of commodities rose earlier and went higher than the wages of labor; that in all cases the rise of wages followed at a distance of one to two years behind the prices of commodities and the cost of living. He shows by high and acknowledged authority that the general level of prices rose 40 per cent. from July, 1897, to November, 1901, and has remained nearly stationary since. He shows that very few Unions have secured advances in wages as high as 40 per cent., and that where large increases of wages took place they were almost invariably in occupations where wages had been seriously reduced during the period of depression. He shows that while in view of the increase in the amount of employment working men have earned more money and lived better than before the rise in prices and wages, still the capitalists have gained both in the increased production and the increase in prices, and that the relative gain of the capitalists is much greater than that of the wage-earner; and he shows that the wage-earner's share of the increased production during this period of prosperity is less than was his share of the smaller production during the time of depression.

Now can any just reason be given why the men and women whose labor produces this vast increase of wealth during these good times should not get their full share of it?

Is it just or fair that they should be deprived of it? Are they to blame for trying to get it? Is it fair to try to array the public against organized labor because they try to get what is their due?

If capitalists may increase their capital by tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars, yea, by millions, during prosperous times, why is it wrong and a menace to prosperity for those who do the work, not only to live better for awhile, but to permanently improve their condition by saving a surplus for that period of depression which sooner or later is sure to come?

Some of the "Captains of Industry" who add millions to their wealth each year, have raised the cry that capitalists would be driven out of business if

Labor did not cease its demands. I have observed that this complaint rarely comes from the smaller companies or firms. Let me state a case that I am personally acquainted with:

Early this spring, when the steam engineers in the packing houses at the Stock Yards asked for an eight-hour day in place of the twelve they were working, and for the Union scale of 37½ cents an hour, it was not the smaller packers that refused. They made no complaint that they would be driven out of business if they complied, but they stood ready to grant all that was asked. It was the great packing houses, those whose annual profits were greater than the entire capital of some of the smaller concerns, that refused. Those whose capital was multimillions and their annual profits millions, were the ones who denied the engineers their most reasonable demands. The smaller packing houses were compelled to join the big ones in this refusal, or take the chance of being driven out of business by the mammoth concerns.

And so I dare say it will be found all the way through. Those who are getting the greatest profits protest the loudest against Labor's demands. They are wholly bent on piling up more millions of capital. The more they get the more they want, and the more intense their determination to pass all others in the attainment of wealth. Men, women and children are lost sight of except as material to grind dollars out of. Justice and humanity are unknown to them, and the laws of the land are sometimes defied when they come in the way of their appetite for more.

As I stated before, working men are not free from faults, and it may be conceded that in isolated cases they may have asked more than could be reasonably granted in the particular case, yet there is nothing more certain than this: When this period of industrial activity (prosperity, if you please) has passed, as it will soon or late, and that period of depression shall have come again, it will be found that for every extra dollar that has been left to gladden the homes of the laborers who did the work during prosperity, hundreds of extra dollars will be left with the few who had the capital. The number of millionaires will have been largely augmented, and other millions multiplied; and the great mass of those who did the work that made the millions will still possess as their only capital their ability to toil when they have the opportunity.

I said a moment ago that labor's warfare had only just begun. By that I do not mean strikes or a warfare of physical force of any kind. On the con-

trary, I believe, as I hope, Labor's physical contests are nearly over. Born myself to toil and struggle, and always in sympathy with the toilers of the world, my more than fifty years of experience and observation have suggested to me some things as being helpful, if not essential to labor's successful struggle.

Organized labor should not only continue its campaign of education among all classes of workers, but it should widen its scope and take into its school the entire community. That not clearly defined, rather timid, but all powerful something called public opinion should be educated. It should be kept fully informed as to the aims and purposes of Labor as well as its actual doings. Capital never loses sight of the public. Its side of every contest with Labor is presented to the public view in its most favorable light. Labor can learn lessons of wisdom from Capital in this regard. Labor should spare no pains or effort to give the public the truth, and the whole truth. Justice to the public, as well as to Labor, demands this.

The question whether Labor should go into politics, often arises, and is not easily answered, if Labor's real good is considered. Politics in the sense that it is usually understood, could be of little value to Labor's cause.

The kind of politics so common nowadays—the kind that is simply a struggle to get the offices where a few favorites or fortunates may hold good jobs at the public expense, where platforms are made to catch votes and to be disregarded or forgotten after election, or where the party is in the control of a machine held together by the power of spoils that neither regards the welfare of the people as a whole or even the rank and file of the party itself—could only be harmful to Labor, as it is destructive to good government. Labor should shun that kind of politics, and beware that it never unwittingly drifts into it, or is led into it.

But laboring men should never forget that they are citizens and voters, that a portion of the sovereignty of our common country rests in each one of them; that if government of the people, by the people, for the people, is to finally prevail, it must come through those who do the work. To control the government, make the laws, interpret them, and enforce them, is a mighty power.

A class of men who think much and work but little with their hands, have never lost sight of this fact. They have known and still know how valuable a privilege it is to make, interpret and enforce the laws. To this

knowledge on their part, and their skill, persistence and practicability in applying it, is chiefly due the colossal fortunes in a few hands. The ballot is the most powerful weapon that could possibly be given to a free man in a republic. If used honestly, intelligently and persistently, there is nothing in human affairs that the ballot may not accomplish.

How much longer will those who do the work of the country and constitute the great majority, continue to permit a small minority "who toil not, neither do they spin," to make, interpret and enforce the laws of our country? Answer this question correctly, and I will tell you how much longer the few will continue to live in luxury, affluence and waste, and the many continue struggling for the right to live and breathe and think as men.

The working men of the cities should come in closer touch with those outside of the cities; not only with those who dig wealth out of the bowels of the earth, the miners, but with those who cultivate the soil, the farmers who produce wealth off the surface of the earth. In short, those who toil and do the work in every part of our country should learn to know and understand one another better.

The working men of the cities already know the power of organization and united action; they should help to teach the lesson to their brethren in the rural districts.

Nowhere does Labor ask for favors. It stands upon its right. It bases its demands upon the solid rock of justice. It asks no more than this, and would not get it if it did. Labor's struggle thus far is to get a larger share of what it earns. The great body of working men and women cannot hope to get all they earn for a long time to come. That is the ideal toward which they are slowly moving; but society must be educated and radically changed before this ideal can be reached. Meantime the working men and women must unitedly continue the struggle. They must teach and they must learn; they must wait and they must hope. And now in earnest admonition let me conclude:

This above all: To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

The industrial communion we now enjoy with the Syrian damsels who pack our dates and figs, the Dakota farmers who raise our wheat, the