
an Imperial Rescript

Editor's Note: This verse, written in 1890, apparently was inspired by an International Labor Conference called by Germany. There had been complaints that foreign labor was undercutting the level of wage rates in Germany; and the purpose of the Conference was to set a floor under wages — a world minimum wage.

RUDYARD KIPLING

NOW THIS is the tale of the Council the German Kaiser decreed,
To ease the strong of their burden, to help the weak in their need,
He sent a word to the peoples, who struggle, and pant, and sweat,
That the straw might be counted fairly and the tally of bricks be set.

The Lords of Their Hands assembled. From the East and the West
they drew —

Baltimore, Lille, and Essen, Brummagem, Clyde, and Crewe.

And some were black from the furnace, and some were brown from
the soil,

And some were blue from the dye-vat; but all were wearied of toil.

And the young King said: — “I have found it, the road to the rest
ye seek:

“The strong shall wait for the weary, the hale shall halt for the weak:
“With the even tramp of an army where no man breaks from the line,
“Ye shall march to peace and plenty in the bond of brotherhood —
sign!”

The paper lay on the table, the strong heads bowed thereby,
And a wail went up from the peoples: — “Ay, sign — give rest, for
we die!”

A hand was stretched to the goose-quill, a fist was cramped to scrawl,
When — the laugh of a blue-eyed maiden ran clear through the
council hall.

And each one heard Her laughing as each one saw Her plain —
Saidie, Mimi, or Olga, Gretchen, or Mary Jane.

And the Spirit of Man That is in Him to the light of the vision woke;
And the men drew back from the paper, as a Yankee delegate spoke: —

“There’s a girl in Jersey City who works on the telephone;
“We’re going to hitch our horses and dig for a house of our own,
“With gas and water connections, and steam-heat through to the top;
“And, W. Hohenzollern, I guess I shall work till I drop.”

And an English delegate thundered: — “The weak an’ the lame be
blowed!

“I’ve a berth in the Sou’-West workshops, a home in the Wandsworth
Road;

“And till the ’sociation has footed my buryin’ bill,
“I work for the kids an’ the missus. Pull up! I’ll be damned
if I will!”

And over the German benches the bearded whisper ran: —

“Lager, der girls und der dollars, dey makes or dey breaks a man.
“If Schmitt haf collared der dollars, he collars der girl dermit;
“But if Schmitt bust in der pizness, we collars der girl from Schmitt.”

They passed one resolution: — “Your sub-committee believe
“You can lighten the curse of Adam when you’ve lifted the curse of Eve.
“But till we are built like the angels — with hammer and chisel and pen,
“We will work for ourselves and a woman, for ever and ever, amen.”

Now this is the tale of the Council the German Kaiser held —
The day that they razored the Grindstone, the day that the Cat was
belled,

The day of the Figs from Thistles, the day of the Twisted Sands,
The day that the laugh of a maiden made light of the Lords of
Their Hands.



Comedy at the Bargaining Table

SVEN RYDENFELT

When the publishing firm of Natur och Kultur, in Stockholm, recently brought out a Swedish edition of F. A. Harper's Why Wages Rise, they asked Dr. Rydenfelt, an economist at the University of Lund, to write a supplement for the book in which he would test its thesis against Swedish experience. This article is extracted therefrom.

CHANTICLEER in Edmond Rostand's animal play loudly announces every day at dawn the break of the new day. Shortly after the cock's crowing, the sun rises. The interesting thing about Chanticleer is that he firmly and completely believes that it is his crowing that makes the sun rise.

In his study, *Why Wages Rise*, Dr. F. A. Harper examines this Chanticleer attitude displayed by

American trade unions. They firmly assert that their deep-toned pressure at the bargaining table, in conflict with employers, forces higher wages — and, consequently, a higher standard of living. But Harper shows convincingly that increased productivity is the basis for the rising wages. He also refutes the claim of the unions that reduction of the working week from 70 to 40 hours is their achievement.

How does Dr. Harper's thesis agree with Swedish experience concerning wages and productivity?

Some understanding of the cause of growth in the wages of Swedish workers may be gained from the investigations reported in Professor Svennilson's classical work, *Wages in Sweden*. He thus