

of the colored women would form a tragic chapter of the same story. A delegation of sixty women sent by colored women's organizations in fourteen States arrived in Washington several days before the convention. They requested an interview with Alice Paul so that they might take up with her the question of the disfranchisement of the women of their race. They were told Miss Paul was too busy to see them. They said they would wait till she had time. Finally, grudgingly, she yielded. The colored women presented their case in the form of a dignified memorial—which read as follows:

We have come here as members of various organizations and from different sections representing the five million colored women of this country. We are deeply appreciative of the heroic devotion of the National Woman's Party to the women's suffrage movement and of the tremendous sacrifices made under your leadership in securing the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.

We revere the names of the pioneers to whom you will do honor while here, not only because they believed in the inherent rights of women, but of humanity at large, and gave themselves to the fight against slavery in the United States.

The world has moved forward in these seventy years and the colored women of this country have been moving with it. They know the value of the ballot, if honestly used, to right the wrongs of any class. Knowing this, they have also come today to call your attention to the flagrant violations of the intent and purposes of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment in the elections of 1920. These violations occurred in the Southern States, where is to be found the great mass of colored women, and it has not been made secret that wherever white women did not use the ballot, it was counted worth while to relinquish it in order that it might be denied colored women.

Complete evidence of violations of the Nineteenth Amendment could be obtained only by Federal investigation. There is, however, sufficient evidence available to justify a demand for such an inquiry. We are handing you herewith a pamphlet with verified cases of the disfranchisement of our women.

The National Woman's Party stands in the forefront of the organizations that have undergone all the pains of travail to bring into existence the Nineteenth Amendment. We can not then believe that you will permit this amendment to be so distorted in its interpretation that it shall lose its power and effectiveness. Five million women in the United States can not be denied their rights without all the women of the United States feeling the effect of that denial. No women are free until all are free.

Therefore, we are assembled to ask that you will use your influence to have the convention of the National Woman's Party appoint a special committee to ask Congress for an investigation of the violations of the Susan B. Anthony Amendment in the elections of 1920.

Miss Paul was indifferent to this appeal and resented the presence of the delegation. Their chance of being heard at the convention was gone. A Southern organizer told the one active supporter of the colored women—a white woman and a delegate from New York—that the Woman's Party was pledged not to raise the race issue in the South; that this was the price it paid for ratification. But no such sinister motive is necessary to explain the treatment of the colored delegation; they were simply an interruption, an obstacle to the smooth working of the machine. Their leading members were not allowed to ride in the elevators of the Hotel Washington where the convention was held, until finally they made a stand for their rights. And only by the use of tactics bordering on Alice Paul's own for vigor and persistence, did their spokesman—the delegate from New York—get a moment to present a resolution in their behalf—a reso-

lution which was promptly defeated and which left the question precisely where it stood.

The attitude of Alice Paul and her supporters toward these disturbers of the peace—Negro women and birth control advocates alike—was the attitude of all established authorities. "Why do these people harass us?" asked Miss Paul. "Why do they want to spoil our convention?" The answer, that never occurred to her, was this: "For the very same reason that made you disturb the peace and harass the authorities in your peculiarly effective and irritating way: because they want to further the cause they believe in."

In the lobby, among the futile opponents of the machine, there was much discussion of the cause of their leaders' hostility to all that was new and clear-cut. The great fighting issue was gone; if the organization was to continue it must turn its attention to other issues and work for them one at a time or several together, not only in Congress but in the States. Would the leaders evolve out of their vague program an issue which they could again attack with military precision and on which they could hope again to raise their disciplined volunteer army? Would they justify their tactics, as they had so often done before, by the brilliant success of their results? Or were they only greedy of power, eager to hold the final decision close in their own hands, unwilling to trust to the desires of their followers? Or were they, perhaps, only half awake to the fulness of life? Absorbed in a task of immense proportions, for years they had forfeited, as soldiers must, the common enterprises of life—love, marriage, children, the economic struggle. Had they thereby lost touch with the plain demands of modern women who are more interested in their opportunities for personal expansion and economic freedom and the right to bear children when they choose than they are in the presence of women in the councils of an unborn or dying league of nations? The opponents of the machine never decided those questions; the Alice Paul legend hung too closely over them and its phrases sounded in their ears through the closed doors of the convention hall.

The Days

By DAVID ROSENTHAL

The days come upon the world
Like wolves;
Yet there is no armor
Against the days.
There are doors of iron
Against the fists of wind and rain;
There are walls
Against the storm;
But where shall the stones and hills run
When they are besieged by the days?
Where shall a man hide?
In a deep cave?
In a house of stone?
The days will slink in
And open their mouths
Like wolves;
For wherever a man is
There is a hungry day eating him.

What Wage Reductions Mean

By GEORGE SOULE

IF I were an employer announcing a wage reduction at this moment I should feel a little embarrassed. It is taken for granted that I should be a just employer, wanting to do the best possible thing by my workmen, and that I should be well informed. My information would show me that during the rise in the price level from 1914 to 1917, the average wage did not rise as rapidly as the cost of living. In these three years the wage-earners were, on the whole, able to buy fewer things than they had bought before the war. During the same period, however, my profits and buying power had increased enormously—even after the inroads of taxes. Perhaps I was abstemious, perhaps I invested the greater part of my profits in my own or some other business, but the chances are I loosened the purse strings a little. During short periods in 1918 and 1919 some of my employees—but not all—possibly did reach and surmount the price level. Yet their advance was not comparable to the rise in business earnings, which were piled up in unparalleled profits and surpluses. Now the cost of living has gone down a little from the peak of last July, but not more than 15 per cent. The earnings of labor have automatically been reduced by the fall in over-time and full-time employment. No workman is now as well off as he was in 1913 unless his income amounts to twice as much as it did in that year. Yet I am going to him with, perhaps, a 20 per cent wage reduction. I am about to push him down again below his pre-war level. By doing this I admit that in dealing with my workmen it is a case of "heads I win, tails you lose." They lost coming up by being late, and they lose going down by being early.

But it was taken for granted that I am not only well informed, but also just. Why, then, do I enforce this premature wage reduction? Let us assume that my policy in not raising wages more rapidly from 1914 to 1919 was necessary. But why do I compound the injustice now?

There are, doubtless, many ungenerous employers who are reducing wages merely because unemployment gives them the opportunity. For them there is no excuse, and the remedy is the simple one of a resistance as strong as organized labor is able to muster. But I am not in that class. What other reason can I give? My workmen point to their wages and the cost of living. They point to my former profits and my surplus. And they ask me to explain the discrepancy.

In the first place, I demonstrate that my former earnings do not help me now. I spent them as they came along. Part went into my salary and the other executive salaries. Part went into taxes. Part went into dividends paid to my shareholders. Some, perhaps, went into loans to finance my customers—especially customers abroad who are taking a long time to pay. It is quite possible that a large slice went into stock dividends—that is, that I issued new capital stock and gave it away to myself and to other owners on the expectation of continued large earnings—and this part now represents a liability instead of an asset. Part went into new plant and machinery which is now lying idle and must be carried on my books at a loss for awhile. And part went into surplus. Profits, as such, have largely vanished with the collapse of business. Even my goods on

hand, which I have called an asset and reckoned as profits, have shrunk so much in price that my profits are less than I thought. I cannot pay new wages out of past profits.

But what about my surplus? If I have been wise, a large share of my earnings were not spent, but "saved." Yet the surplus does not consist of gold dollars in my safe, or in the safe of a bank. Of course I wanted to draw interest on it, and so I used it to buy stocks and bonds, mortgages or other commercial paper. The interest which I derive from these sources may be large, but most of it, in the shortage of present profits, must be applied to the payment of interest on my own bonds and loans. Not until after all other demands are met can it be used for wages. And the surplus itself cannot be converted into currency without selling the stocks and bonds in which it is invested. But the market is now at its lowest ebb for years. If I should sell now, I would lose enormously, and since my first duty is to the owners of my company rather than to its employees, I do not sell unless I must in order to meet absolutely necessary expenses and keep out of bankruptcy.

The only other way I can get money—aside from present earnings—with which to pay wages, is to borrow it. But the rate of interest is high, and the chances are that I have already borrowed to the limit in order to meet the demands of my creditors, whose claims of course come before those of the workers. And so the banks will not let me have any more money. Therefore there are only two choices before me, aside from failure. One is to shut down entirely and pay my workmen nothing. The other is to reduce wages.

There is no flaw in my logic. It is the logic of present facts. Why, then, should it embarrass me to explain it to my employees? Because in doing so I have demonstrated that industry cannot be operated without injustice to the wage-earner. Those who are not responsible for the management of industry suffer most from its mismanagement. I have proved that the rights of all the various classes of owners come before the subsistence of the worker. The earnings of industry are salted away in such a manner that the workman cannot get at them. My profit has shrunk, to be sure, and it shrank before I cut wages. But the extra stock which I issued has to be protected. The owners of the surplus have to be protected. The holders of bonds and loans have to be protected. There is no protection left for the worker. Only he has no legal claim on me—except for yesterday's wages. He has not capitalized his earning power. Others have capitalized it, and others own it. I cannot fire my stockholders and bond-owners and banks, but I can fire my workmen. I cannot lower the interest on my loans, but I can lower wages. Wages represent the most liquid element in the situation.

When I lower wages, then, I make one of two damaging admissions. The first is that I am a reckless autocrat. The second is that the system of production and distribution is arranged in such a way as to bilk the man who works but does not own, in spite of anyone's good intentions. Can I blame him for protesting with all his might? He protests often without knowing why he suffers—he judges simply, according to the obvious results. In this case he is likely to lose, because at the moment I happen to be stronger than he is. When he does know what is the matter, will he not protest in such a way as to eliminate the favored classes in business? If I wish to avoid that probability, it is up to me to devise some way of making the earnings of labor a first charge on industry.