

but upon the attempt to bring the neutral world into the balance against Germany—in case Germany repeats her offense. This they can best do by incorporating the principles underlying the League to Enforce Peace in the proposed settlement of the war. The ignoring of these principles in the treaty of peace will result in the alienation of the neutrals, in the embitterment of the Central Powers, and the attaching of a fatal suspicion to any subsequent effort to form the needed international organization. A league to enforce such a peace would be an association for the underwriting of an unsound security, for the distribution of a poor risk among innocent outsiders. The United States is willing to join a European peace association provided the security is good; but it will hardly consent to buying an interest in the most dangerous international feud in the history of the world.

The Hours of Work and the Efficiency of Labor

ON Saturday, October 28th, the attorney of the Lackawanna Steel Company appeared before the New York State Industrial Commission to plead for exemption from the state law requiring all employers to allow each of their employees twenty-four hours of consecutive rest in every calendar week. He contended that the steel industry is necessarily continuous, that labor was scarce, that the competitors of the Lackawanna in other states were not hampered by similar legislative restriction, and that the financial condition of the company made obedience to the law impracticable. The application was opposed by representatives of organized labor, the Consumers' League, associations of ministers and social workers, and citizens of Buffalo, where the application was made. The most comprehensive argument in opposition was made by Mr. John A. Fitch, the representative of the American Association of Labor Legislation, who showed from the experience of a number of the greatest steel companies in the country that the allowance of one day of rest in seven is entirely practicable, that the Lackawanna Company itself had added approximately one thousand men to its force since August, that the United States Steel and the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company were operating on a six-day week, and that the Lackawanna had not only earned 15 per cent during the first six months of 1916, but that it was "currently stated in financial circles that the company now, in the second six months of the year, is earning at the rate of more than 30 per cent on its stock."

These and other arguments presented at the

hearing by opponents of the Lackawanna Company's application should prove decisive with the State Industrial Commission. But there is another consideration, hardly touched upon at the hearing, which in our judgment outweighs all the rest. One of the great lessons of the European war is that a national view of labor and labor administration is essential to national security. If questions such as this raised by the Lackawanna Company are to be decided by state commissions with primary regard for the momentary advantage of individual companies or upon grounds of local expediency, the interests of the nation will be put in jeopardy and we shall find ourselves thoroughly unprepared to meet such a crisis as would be created by war or, indeed, such as will inevitably be created by the international economic competition that will follow the present war in Europe. For this reason the New York Industrial Commission and all citizens who are seriously concerned with the future economic security of America should study the reports which are being issued by the Health and Munition Workers' Committee of the English Ministry of Munitions.

Before the war England was our great exemplar in the matter of our individualistic attitude toward labor and labor administration. It was a common practice with English, as with American, employers to treat labor as a commodity, to use men up and then cast them on the social scrap heap, to use up men, women and children and then replace them from the twilight hosts of the unemployed. Unlike Germany, England kept no account to show the national cost of this system of labor exploitation and waste. With the war, England's army of unemployed disappeared; she was put to it to find men not only for the military, but also for her industrial service. Possibly her greatest element of weakness was her multitude of men who had been rendered unfit for either service by her long indifference to the problem of unemployment and her long toleration of her individualistic system of using men up and casting their wrecked bodies out upon the public junk heap. It was this, more than anything else, that delayed Kitchener's work and ultimately made it necessary for England to create the Ministry of Munitions with comprehensive powers to nationalize the control of industry, labor and labor administration. It was Mr. Lloyd George, who as Minister of Munitions, created the Health of Munition Workers' Committee for the purpose of ascertaining the conditions under which labor could be helped to reach its maximum output, and the findings of this Committee have a special relevancy to the application of the Lackawanna Steel Company, because they deal specifically with the questions of the relation to maximum output

of the eight and twelve-hour shifts, and of one day's rest in seven. For the Lackawanna Company confessed that it was not only working its men seven days a week, in violation of the law, but that it was working them twelve hours during each of the seven days.

Although the Health of Munitions Workers' Committee do not give final expression to their conclusion, they repeatedly indicate their opinion that for purposes of sustained maximum output, the most effective time schedule is the eight-hour shift. In discussing weekly totals of 70 to 80 hours, they say: "The Committee are satisfied that hours such as these cannot be worked with impunity, and they most strongly urge that every effort should be made . . . to extend the shift system . . . as rapidly as possible." Their objections to the longer day are that, when continued, it produces exhaustion, which in turn either produces sickness or compels the men to slow up and rest during work hours. One of the most interesting findings of the Committee is that "slacking" is nature's invention to protect men from the destructive effects of excessive hours. They quote "the experienced manager of a large shell factory who is 'satisfied that there is a period of slacking, *often quite unconscious*, during a 12-hour shift which is detrimental to output.'" An illustration to which the Committee attaches great significance is this:

In a specific instance, a group of five male voluntary Sunday workers in a certain munitions factory were able in 8 hours (or 7 hours free of meals) to exceed the average day's output of eight week-day men, who work 14 hours (or 12½ hours free of meals). These five men worked, no doubt, at a *sprint*, which could not perhaps have been maintained daily. But there can be little doubt that they could repeat their 8 hours' effort on, say, four days in a week; and, if so, the startling result follows that they could do in those four days rather more than the whole week's work of an equal set of men adopting the other system of hours. . . . Would these five volunteers be *slackers* if they did a full week's work judged by the 14-hour standard, or more, but had three holidays a week (available perhaps for a change of work) and slept longer at night?"

It is upon a mass of such evidence that the Committee base their opinion that, for the sole purpose of maximum output and disregarding all ordinary ethical considerations, the eight-hour shift is the time schedule best calculated to safeguard England's industrial security now and hereafter.

By a similar process of induction, and guided by similarly exclusive considerations of England's best national interest, the Committee was led "strongly to hold that if the maximum output is to be secured and maintained for any length of time,

a weekly period of rest must be allowed . . . the discontinuance of Sunday labor should be of universal application and should extend to all classes of workers." They confine their exceptions to this rule to emergencies—repairs, tending furnaces and the like—and where for such emergent reasons men are employed on Sunday, they find that maximum output demands that men so employed should be given a corresponding period of rest during some other part of the week.

We are living at a time when all parties are appealing to all citizens to purify their American allegiance—are appealing to labor especially to put national ideals above considerations of individual or class interest. Is it conceivable that in making this appeal we shall remain indifferent to the industrial crisis that confronted England at the outbreak of the war because of her age-long failure to regard the problems of labor and labor administration from a national instead of from a narrowly individualistic and provincial point of view? Unless the Lackawanna Steel Company is actuated by purely selfish motives and is indifferent to all considerations of national interest, they should withdraw their application for exemption from the law requiring them to give their employees one day of rest in seven, and they should immediately consider the national importance of substituting the eight-hour for the twelve-hour shift. If this is too much to expect from a company doing a war business in steel, surely a state industrial commission should not be tempted by considerations of local and temporary expediency to abrogate a law that is a first step toward national industrial preparedness. In the interest of our national economic health and security, the New York State Industrial Commission should deny the ill advised application of the Lackawanna Steel Company.

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What Remains of Child Labor

THE scattered attacks that for more than a decade have been made against the exploitation of children are gathering in one concerted drive and the beginning of the real battle is in sight. The territory of childhood is the prize. Shall it be occupied by freedom and health and intelligence as the culture bed of a real civilization, or shall ignorance and a short-sighted industrialism hold it in the interest of social penury?

Recent events testify to a new alignment. Ten years ago business interests with wealth and power were protesting against any restriction on the labor of their small employees. Their plea was always in the interest of the children! The perils of idleness, the absence of schools, the poverty of the home, these were the dismal, dominant notes in their persuasive appeal. The agents of organized relief zealously engaged in hunting jobs for the children to solve the riddle of the family budget, and like Saul of old truly thought they were doing God's service. Public-school teachers—official agents of a "democratic" educational system—gaily clipped off the backward, unpromising twigs in the interest, of course, of educational efficiency, and sent the failures to the limbo of unskilled labor. Everybody was satisfied with the combination. The cry of hunger was stilled. The supply of cheap labor was fed. The class-room was pruned of dolts and laggards. The children were stunned into the contentment of industrial inefficiency.

But the awakening has come. We are demonstrating that child labor does not solve the problem of poverty, but rather complicates it. Our school men are learning that the school must digest the laggard, not eliminate him. Juvenile-court records show with uniformity that the jail and house of correction are recruited from unskilled and neglected childhood. Business is discovering that child labor does not pay—that the most wasteful and extravagant kind of labor is the inefficient hand guided by the untrained mind.

Child labor is a national outlaw. Congress has said so by a decisive vote. In fixing his signature which made this act a law the President said: "I want to say that with real emotion I sign this bill because I know how long the struggle has been to secure legislation of this sort and what it is going to mean to the health and to the vigor of this country, and also to the happiness of those whom it affects. It is with genuine pride that I play my part in completing this legislation. I congratulate the country and felicitate myself."

What then remains? Is not the task achieved? Is not the yoke of industrial bondage lifted? Have not the children been set free? No. Our work has been a failure if American intelligence thinks it finished. It has only begun. What has been accomplished is rudimentary. Here is the beginning of the chapter—not the end. How does it read?

First: A written law is a prescription, not a recovery. Congress has not abolished child labor but only made it possible for you to do so. Responsibility is laid on you, on every citizen, to see that this law is enforced in your community. It is a duty you cannot delegate. The public-spirited man of business who has been annoyed by the guerilla warfare of his unscrupulous competitor may now defend himself. The citizen who has found local administration of the child-labor law bound by graft and politics may now bring his complaint before the United States Department of Labor. The discouraged factory inspector whose faithful attempts to prosecute have been paralyzed by petty courts dominated by powerful local interests will now lay his case before a Federal Grand Jury. These are your weapons.

Second: Assuming that this law is effectively enforced, how far does it reach? Only 150,000 children will be affected. The other 1,850,000 children are left untouched. No federal law can reach them. They are the wards of the several states: the young hawkers of news and chewing-gum on our city streets; the truck-garden conscripts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Colorado and Maryland; the sweating cotton-pickers of Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas; the 90,000 domestic servants under 16 years of age in our American homes; the cash-girls in our department stores.

Only one state has thus far passed an adequate law to regulate street trades. The delusion that every small street peddler is supporting a widowed mother dies hard. Street trading in our large cities is the primary department in the school of vice. That school must be closed. The place to begin is in your city.

From the sugar-beet fields of Colorado, from the berry fields of New Jersey, Maryland and Delaware, from the onion beds of Ohio, from the tobacco fields of Kentucky and from the hot cotton fields of Oklahoma and Texas, the cry of the children ought to make itself heard. But they are mute. They have not tasted liberty. Without complaint they step into the ranks of the 5,000,000 illiterates to grope blindly through a land of plenty.