

# Organizing the Steel Workers

Let the Labor world now become properly startled—the American Federation of Labor is going to pull a strike in the near future. It will be remembered that this federation is the same one that used to be a factor in this country some twenty years ago when Labor was young and susceptible . . . And now it is going to pull a strike. Who would have thought it? And in the steel industry, too!

It will be remembered that this same federation divided the steel workers into twenty-four groups four years ago, and so made it possible to lose the strike (at that time) with less friction.

But "no radicals will be permitted to lead this time," which indicates that there will be a strike and that "conservatives" will do the "leading." From this I gather that the dividing of the workers into only twenty-four unions was a step entirely too radical to suit the leaders in the A. F. of L.

I have it straight from the press that the organization drive will be conducted secretly so as to make it seem mysterious as possible—in fact: I see notice of it tucked away in an inconspicuous manner on the front page of the Hearst papers; right in the middle of the page, with a big headline; to make people think that it is an advertisement of Bran-flakes. Yes it will be conducted in "deepest" secrecy; not even Judge Gary will know anything about it.—It will be quite a joke on his Honor to wake up some morning to find out that during the night somebody had organized his men into 57 crafts, wont it? I'll say it WOULD. . . .

But I fear (when I fear, I'm afraid)—I fear the Judge will get wind of it, somehow.—Being a very practical man, and a sound man, he will oppose the organizers, in a mild way; enough anyway to create interest in the move, and guarantee success, or what they call success.—Therefore I am led to believe that it is a mistake to hide the scheme in the newspapers. They should let Gary "in on the facts" because if they don't, and Gary doesn't kick, it will look as if Gary wanted them organized.

About one fourth of his men will join the new federation and that will be enough for all purposes and then they will probably call a strike for an eight hour day. It is understood that Gary personally is in favor of an eight hour day, insofar as he has given it out that his men oppose it. Samuel Gompers and all lesser habitual leaders of labor are also in favor of it. It seems that labor alone is against it.

The men claim they cannot live on eight hours' pay; that eight hours work leaves them too many living-hours to pay for. At forty cents an hour they claim it is necessary to divide the working and living hours equally—12 on each shift. It never occurs to them to organize THEMSELVES Industrially and demand

eighty cents an hour, and then work six hours for \$4.80. This way there would be work for twice as many men, promotion would come twice as quick and panics would come twice as seldom—God knows, they're frequent enough!—No it never occurs to them to do this. They would rather BE organized than Organize themselves.

Judge Gary himself leaves the inference with us that his men are only STATIONED twelve hours and as much as I am disinclined to say so, I must admit that His Honor's words, in many cases, are the words of a Prophet. But if true they would indicate that a great and comprehensive inefficiency prevails at Elbert's works. However, fortunately, (for his peace of mind) it indicates also brilliant generalship on his part. If his men work only four or six hours out of each twelve, as he hints, then they are detained from making their living elsewhere during a part of the "shift." This position of Gary can be then termed an economic extreme and differs from Henry Ford's "short day, triple production and double (going) wages." Gary hints that his works are operating on "half production, double day and single (going) pay." Now there is the two extremes in industrial control, if this is true—I'm not saying it is—I leave that to the reader.

I will rather say it isn't true. I will say that Gary's men get all the exercise they need. I will say they get more exercise than a man gets on almost any other job—the walk alone to and from work, and in-and-out among the miles of "works" to and from the job, is worth every cent of the "single going pay" that Gary gives them. . . . His men last year must have been doing "something" for Gary's books show a profit that staggers me, as "used to big figures" as I am.

His cash surplus is in the neighborhood of 500,000,000 dollars and "he has paid," according to a clipping I have, "5 per cent dividend on 500,000,000 dollars common stock"—solid water.—This would indicate that Gary's men have not been loafing on the job. The real earnings of Gary's "works" are so stupendous that I hesitate to mention the figures—it would cause a revolution.

With the \$500,000,000 cash surplus Gary could hire 375,000 additional men, pay each new comer \$1.333 the first year, cut the hours in half, (to six hours) and still make his profits too enormous to even be mentioned in these "trying times"—(when the few are "trying" to hog it all.)

Gary wants immigration and he must realize that the demands of our exploiters have become so great that the present working class can no longer support them in the style they have become accustomed to—their "thinkers" say that "the men are loafing on the job."—What else can they do to prevent such exorbitant profits? Would they advise us to "root in,"

wrastle and surge, into the collar, on the 1-3 meat sausages we are getting in Gary's camps?

To maintain the present non-producers in all the present splendor it is absolutely necessary to have immigration. But if some of them, three quarters of them, would care to take on a little labor, in a small way, there would be no need for immigration. The need for immigration is because the capitalist system is top heavy. There is one boss for every six men. The "cost" departments are too thickly populated. The office force looks like a "baseball audience" on "ladies' day." But the main reason is: Labor Has Played Out—It takes no further interest in supporting those who get their living by holding Bonds.

This situation cannot be altered by the American Federation of Labor's "unionizing" scheme. No.—The fault is radical and conservatism will not cure it. Castor Oil wont do, it requires Mercury. . . .

The demands of A. F. of L. so far announced: "A living wage"—(that's just what men are dissatisfied with.) "Improvement in working conditions."—(What does it mean?)

"Universal adoption of the eight hour day."—Even John D., the real head of the "steel trust," is in favor of that; Gary isn't against it. "Further restrictions upon immigration."—Only the one big union of all the wage workers has power to restrict immigration—and make it stick. The A. F. of L. never restricted anything.

But this time again the Federation is going to "unionize" the steel workers. Gary and the Leaders will "lock horns" two or three times. The eight hour day will be born (and God knows the Federation needs something in its favor just now) credit for the eight hour day in the steel mills will keep the Federation going a few months longer. Some say that a convention of the A. F. of L. about to be held needs new blood to vote the conservatives into power—but I don't believe it. Nothing can save it. Transfusion of the steel workers blood into the A. F. of L. might be too rich for the "old gentleman."

Taken all in all though, these manuevers will help the Federation for the time being—as Gompers says: "The present is the psychological time for unionizing workers in the steel trade."

Yes, but what in the name of "manganese" has the steel workers done to the Federation, why it should pick on the steel workers all the time?

Yes, the psychological time for unionizing is here and the I. W. W. is the psychological union—Industrial Union No. 440, is the "logical" union for the steel worker. It does its organizing on the job and not on the pages of the capitalist press—make it your business to join tomorrow. Think it over Tonight. T-Bone Slim.