

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 3, NO. 310.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1903.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

GET READY,—TO RESIST OR SURRENDER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WESTERN and Eastern papers of recent dates have been containing little items of news that looked ominous for the workingmen,—at least to him who had eyes to see. These items had a curious twirl about them, that peculiar twirl noticeable in straws, bits of paper and rags on the street when a storm is on.

It will be remembered that, simultaneously with the molders' strike and boycott against the Dayton National Cash Register Company, Gompers' *American Federationist*, organ of the A.F. of L., was advertising the concern's goods as "union-made," notwithstanding the molders were affiliated with the A.F. of L., and that the excuse given by Gompers and his pals was that "he had a contract" to publish the adv. The first twirling straw that came down the road appeared in the Dayton *Daily News* of last April 30, informing the public, i.e., seeking to allay capitalist apprehension was that—

"President Patterson [of the National Cash Register Company] and President Gompers are intimate friends."

The second twirling straw appeared in the St. Louis *Chronicle* of May 2. It was a report of a meeting "to prevent labor troubles." The report lays stress on the circumstance that—

"When John Mitchell arose to address the meeting, Senator Hanna and Mr. Cleveland applauded vigorously; and Mr. Mitchell just as warmly applauded the words of Mr. Cleveland and Senator Hanna."

A third twirling straw is from the Chicago *Times-Herald* of May 3. It is a special

from Dayton, of the previous day, and sets forth that—

“At a regular meeting of the assemblers and adjusters last night a resolution was passed agreeing TO COMPLY WITH ALL THE REQUESTS THAT THE NATIONAL CASH REGISTER COMPANY HAS ASKED UP TO DATE. The union had made a request for an increase in pay of from 30 to 35 cents an hour with a nine-hour day. By the action of the union last night both the request AND THE LIMIT OF OUTPUT HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN AND THE AMOUNT OF WORK MAY BE INCREASED.”

That straw more than twirls: the storm evidently draws near. And now comes the latest straw—hard to tell if it is not yet the storm itself. It is a news item in the New York papers of yesterday. It is a dispatch from Chicago, variously headed “An Industrial Conference,” “Problems Now Affecting Capital and Labor to Be Discussed and Solved.” The information is to the effect that ex-President Cleveland, Senator Hanna, Gompers of the A.F. of L., Mitchell of the miners’ union and other birds of similar feather are to meet under the auspices of the National Federation. Secretary Easley gives the plans that the Federation has in contemplation. He says:

“Among the plans the federation will propose is one that manufacturers of a certain line of goods shall be induced to agree, where the demand of labor is sufficiently insistent, TO A GRADUAL REDUCTION OF WORKING HOURS OF HALF AN HOUR EACH YEAR, INSTEAD OF ONE OR MORE AT A TIME, in return for the agreement by unions NOT TO RESTRICT PRODUCTION.”

If this is not the storm itself, it at any rate conveys exact information on the quarter that the blow is coming from, and its prospective severity. It also enables an approximate estimate to be made in advance of the casualties in store for the workers.

Reductions of hours of work have been materially neutralized by increased intensity of labor. Eight hours, with improved machinery, together with the thereupon possible stricter shop regulations, consumes, in most cases, more of the worker’s life-tissue than did longer hours before; nor does the wage, even if increased, make up for the increased consumption of tissue. There has been a positive deterioration of the working class, along with these reductions of time under continued capitalist conditions. This notwithstanding, such reductions of hours have caused temporary inconvenience to employers: they required re-adjustments. In view of this, the storm that the above

twirling straws are heralding, and which the Civic Federation “plan” quite clearly indicates, is nothing less than a conspiracy on the part of the “Captains of Industry” and their “Labor Lieutenants” to flim-flam the workingmen as never before. The capitalists are to be saved all inconvenience: the reduction of hours are to be only half an hour each year, and, “in return” for this alleged boon, the workers are to agree—, i.e., whipped into agreeing with the aid of the whip held in the hands of the gentlemen, who run the alleged “voluntary” associations known as fakir-ridden pure and simple unions—NOT TO RESTRICT PRODUCTION.

The approaching storm portends increased intensification of labor, with the resulting increased slaughter of the working class. It denotes that the age when the workingman should be taken out and shot,—he being too worn out to be of any further use to the employer, and too poor to take care of himself—will be brought down below the now proverbial age of 42.

And that sort of storm for the workers is what the Gompers-Mitchell panders harmonize on with the Hanna-Cleveland debauchers of society.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded December 2006