

**THE BOYCOTT ABANDONED.**

(By James W. Van Cleave.)

In "American Industries" for February 15, 1908, I wrote about "The Doom of the Boycott," using as a text the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the Danbury haters' case. Today my theme will be "The Boycott Abandoned." Confronted by the punishment prescribed by the law which he and his associates have violated, the chief of the American Federation of Labor announces that he and his order have given up the boycott.

"To Organized Labor and Friends" is the title of an article in the Federation's organ, the American Federationist, in which the head of that organization makes a tearful surrender of a vice which threatened to land him and his associates in the penitentiary, and which may, even yet, reach out for him and them. He points out that under the Supreme Court's decision the boycott in the Danbury case was a conspiracy in restraint of interstate trade, in the meaning of the Sherman act, and that its perpetrators are liable under the law for three times the damage that their crime inflicts. Then he adds:

"Under this decision the publication of a 'We Don't Patronize' list in the American Federationist, or any other publication, makes the organization and the individuals composing it liable to monetary damages and imprisonment. This being the case I feel obliged to discontinue the 'We Don't Patronize' list.

"This course I pursue upon the advice of the legal counsel of the American Federation of Labor as to the far-reaching character of the decision of the Supreme Court. . . .

"I would fail in performing my duty, though it is a painful one, did I not point out that under this decision each and every officer and member of every labor organization becomes liable for any violation of the decision by any one, not only as to his organization, but individually to the extent of whatever his possessions may be.

"I think our men of labor will agree with me that I have no right to expose them to the heavy penalty for disobedience under this decision of the Supreme Court.

"I will say briefly here, as I do more fully editorially, that while obeying the decision of the court, I feel most deeply that never in the history of our country has there been so serious an invasion of the rights and liberties of our people."

Readers of American Industries will notice, from the lines which I have just quoted, that the head of the American Federation of Labor dislikes the Sherman act. But this is no new mood for a criminal to be in.

"No man e'er felt the halter draw

With good opinion of the law."

This is just as true now as it was a century ago when those lines were written. If the federation's chief steps into any lockup or penitentiary in or around his home town of Washington, D. C., he will find that every one of its inmates feels, in respect to the particular statute which hit him, just like he feels toward the Sherman act. In regard to the specific enactment which locked them up, all the occupants, black and white, of cells in Sing Sing, Joliet, and the rest of the jails of the United States, are ready to cry out in chorus with the federation's boss that "never in the history of our country has there been so serious an invasion of the rights and liberties of our people."

But while rejoicing, as every honest and public-spirited American will rejoice, at the justice which has at last overtaken the federation of labor's law breakers, let us take measures to head off their conspiracy to evade the law, or to give them a free hand to perpetrate their crimes under the cloak of a new enactment which the courts might not be able to reach and nullify until the plotters had inflicted serious damage upon employers and upon the country.

On the same page of the American Federationist from which I have just quoted, there appears these words: "Labor demands relief at the hands of Congress; demands it NOW."

This means what careful newspaper readers have learned from other sources, that the American Federation of Labor is pushing bills in Congress to relieve the labor unions from penalties for wrong-doing imposed by the Sherman act. The labor trust is endeavoring to get legislation which will exempt it from punishment prescribed for all other sorts of

trusts, industrial and commercial.

Here is a conspiracy which the American people must combat and kill. The average politician is a coward. His cowardice is particularly abject when an election is just in front of us. The Federation of Labor, under the autocratic and vicious bosses which it has had for many years, has had a large experience in working on the baser side of human nature. That organization, at this moment, is swinging its club over the heads of the president and Congress, in an attempt to force them to do its bidding. The American people must take steps immediately to defeat this plot.

A proviso was put in the original draft of the Sherman act in 1890 which would have exempted the labor trust from the penalties imposed on the industrial and commercial trusts. The demagogic provision was killed in the conference committee between the two houses on the ground that it was special legislation. As such it would be declared unconstitutional by the courts, and the whole law would fail.

Let it be remembered that the labor unions and the agricultural societies agitated in favor of the enactment of an anti-trust law and they were a large influence in securing the drafting of the Sherman act of 1890. But right at the outset the unions, through their demagogic friends in Congress, attempted to shield themselves from the punishment which the law would inflict on all other assailants of inter-state trade. Happily for the country, they were beaten at this game.

The American Federation of Labor is working the old game over again. It is working the game at this moment. The Federation now demands the immunity for its transgressions which was denied to it in 1890.

For many reasons there is a special incentive for the opponents of class legislation of all sorts to be prompt and courageous in attacking these conspirators. Let every one of the 100,000 readers of American Industries write or wire the senators from his state and the representative from his district to stand out against all these attempts to enact class legislation, and to denounce and to defy the men who are attempting to create class distinctions in the community and to sow the seeds of class hatreds. I read this in one of the papers the other day:

"Suppose that Congress should amend the Sherman act so as to grant to the American Federation of Labor the special favors which it demands. The courts would set that amendment aside as legislation for the benefit of a special class, and that only a small class. The court would say that such legislation would be against the public interest, and would nullify it."

This is a dangerous concession. It is worse than that. It is a cowardly surrender to a band of law breakers and social disturbers. If this vicious legislation should be enacted, it would take several years to get it before the Supreme Court. This would cost vast sums of money. It would seriously hamper business all over the country. Business confidences would get another setback, and it would be more serious than that which the money scare of two years ago caused. Respect for all law, good as well as bad, would be diminished by such iniquitous legislation. The demoralization and damage, moral and physical, which would be inflicted on the country before the Supreme Court would get a chance to set this legislation aside as unconstitutional would be incalculable.

It is no part of the function of Congress to pass laws which it knows or thinks to be unconstitutional, trusting to the courts to nullify them before the inflict irreparable harm on the country. Congress was created to pass laws which meet an urgent public need, providing they are in harmony with the organic act.

The legislation which the American Federation of Labor demands meets no public need. Nobody asks for this legislation except the ringleaders of that very small proportion of the working population of the country which is comprised in the labor unions.

A few cowardly and truckling politicians, Republican and Democratic, have either been coaxed or bulldozed into an alliance with the federation's bosses, and are working for the enactment of this special legislation. The fact that the parties are believed to be more evenly balanced in strength than they have been in any recent canvass, have given the labor chiefs their chance to strut and swing the lash and they are making the most of their opportunity.

Some Republican and some Democratic leaders are bidding against each other for the favor of what they call the "labor vote." These leaders are not only false to the interests of the people, but they are astray as to the strength—or rather lack of strength—of the element to which they pander. According to their own confession the labor unions of all sorts in the United States number less than 2,000,000 persons. And these include women as well as men, and children and aliens as well as voters.

On the other hand, the total number of wage earners in the country is 32,000,000, or sixteen times as great as that of the persons enrolled in all the labor unions in the aggregate. And the difference in the intelligence and the influence of these two elements of the working forces of the country is even more striking than is the numerical contrast.

Thus we are confronted with what I may call a new issue of 16 to 1. And it is far more portentous than was that of 1896. The issue of 1896 involved a fallacy, but it was honest. While the men who put it forward were mistaken, they were sincere, and they were courageous. But the issue of 16 to 1 as it shapes itself now carries with it cowardice and dishonor, as well as the basest sort of treachery to the interests of the people.

The issue is even worse than I have described it to be. By aiming to establish a favored order in the community, and that order comprising only an insignificant fragment of the population, it injects the Old World monarchial caste ideas into our civic scheme, and assails that principle of equal rights for all and special privileges for none on which our American system of democratic and republican government is based. This issue is rendered especially perilous because report says some men in high station and of great personal influence in the government are allied with the labor bosses in demanding this anti-republican and anti-democratic legislation.

The crisis demands immediate action by Republicans and Democrats and men of all parties who want to defend the American system of government as it was handed down to us by the fathers. Let us say to Congress, "Don't be cowardly!" "Denounce and defy the element which demands the privilege to disobey laws which all other persons are compelled to observe!" "Be honest, courageous, patriotic Americans!"

**A WIT AND WORKER.**  
(Continued From Page 1.)

The bad leadership that has led the fraternal organizations along unlawful and disastrous lines. Taxation and autocratic sway by the leaders has put unionism in a bad way. A trades union is a mighty poor political machine. As such it cannot be successful, and it becomes doubly disastrous to the organization when men and not measures are advocated. Taxation without giving an account of expenditure is another bad feature of unionism. It seems that one Philips, a member in good standing of some union, has dealt a body blow to the grafters who are collecting the McNamara defense fund. This man has made the claim, it is reported, that a large sum of money, some say nine and others seventeen thousand dollars, is as yet unaccounted for and has never found its way to the defense. This is having a very bad effect in union circles, and, instead of making a public investigation of what is public rumor, the leaders of the unions are attempting to discipline Philips for making the statement, and all proceedings are behind closed doors. In other words, they would stifle the story by stifling Philips, whoever he is. The story is current in all unions in the city and is being commented on everywhere.

**Blown In the Bottle—None Other Genuine.**  
The Brotherhood of Independent Mechanics has established a lodge at Oakland, and the organizers are at work in San Francisco. F. W. Phelps of Seattle, formerly of the Brotherhood of Engineers, is the grand master of the order.

In Oakland the lodge instituted is now running full blast, with 170 members. There is another lodge in Los Angeles and a number of lodges are being rapidly instituted in California. The new order appeals to mechanics, as it is opposed to strikes, boycotts and picketing.

But, now comes the pinch. The trades unions look askance at this

organization, as they do at the Free Workers' organizations and the Uplift Clubs of Chicago and New York. They cannot understand why members of trades unions should break away and join the new orders. The Independent Mechanics are meeting everywhere with signal success, and this is especially galling to members of the old violence-loving institutions. The Independent Mechanics make arbitration and common sense a basis for all settlement of their troubles or grievances with employers. They go happily along in the idea that capital is at one and in harmony with labor, and that this is the only road to industrial peace, and that anyone teaching that capital is naturally at all times at war with labor is traitorous to labor and capital's best interests.

The jealousy of the new order is so strong in San Francisco and Oakland that the trades unionists have undertaken violent tactics against the organizers and officers. A brick was thrown at one man in a street car by a union hoodlum, and in another instance recently seven men attacked one of the officers. Evidently it is the idea that only certain kinds of men are to be allowed the right to organize into fraternal brotherhoods for self improvement, and such men must have somewhere about their person the bed bug stamp of the violence-loving Olaf Tveitmoe, or some other high chief of militant hoodlumism.

**ROOSTER AS A RAT KILLER.**

A large game rooster owned by William Reachard of North Codorus township, Pa., is attracting attention all through the neighborhood by its proficiency as an exterminator of rats and mice.

The lanky fowl stalks for hours through the corn fields, watching for the rodents to run from beneath shocks of fodder, their favorite haunt. Once in the open, the chase has only one termination in all cases, the rooster easily overtaking and killing his prey by shaking it like a terrier.

Reachard also declares that the fowl, in its keenness for the sport, often watches rat holes in the barn like a cat until its victims appear.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

**HAD A FULL COURSE.**

The sign in front of a Harlem restaurant attracted the eye of a farmer, and he went in. He had a raw, a fry, a stew, a pan roast, a broil and a steam-on-toast. When he got through he laid a quarter on the cashier's desk, only to be told that he was shy a dollar and a quarter.

"No, by jing," said the farmer. "A quarter's right. Doesn't your sign say, 'Oysters in every style for 25 cents?'"—Lippincott's.

The policy of this paper expresses the sentiments of ninety-two and one-half per cent of the working class.

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