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WILL REMAIN AS IT IS.

According to the Associated Press dispatches of July 12 the petition of the Portland Chamber of Commerce sent to President Roosevelt asking for a modification of the Chinese exclusion law will fall upon barren soil. In a conference with Samuel Gompers and James Duncan, president and first vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, at Oyster Bay, the president assured them that there would be no change in the present law, and that he was as vigorously opposed to the admission to this country of Chinese coolies as they could be. The president was informed that an impression had been formed by many people that the administration, in its recent order, was in favor of letting down the immigration bars. The president answered that no such construction properly could be placed on the order.

Mr. Gompers urged upon the president the desirability of an intelligent, practical and humane consideration of the general question of immigration by the people and by Congress. The people of this country and the whole civilized world are entitled, he maintained, to such a consideration of the problem.

After the conference Mr. Gompers gave out the following statement:

"We directed the president's attention to the interpretation placed by some persons on his recent order, issued at the instance of the American Asiatic Association, concerning the admission to the United States of Chinese. By many of our people and by many Chinese that order was looked upon as a letting down of the immigration bars, so far as the Chinese are concerned. The president assured us that no proper reading of the order would warrant such interpretation and that nothing was further from the intention than that such an impression should be gotten from the order. His determination is that both skilled and unskilled Chinese laborers shall be excluded from the United States, and he says that the law will be rigidly enforced."

"His order related only to the so-called exempt class—merchants, students, travellers, and the like—who heretofore have had difficulty in gaining admission to this country because of the many fraudulent certificates issued to them and to coolies who are not entitled to certificates in any event. We went over the entire matter thoroughly, the conference being thoroughly satisfactory to us."

"The president suggested that in the course of five or six months we again bring the matter to his attention in the light of the experience of that length of time in working under the order."

"The president says that he is determined that the diplomatic and consular representatives of the United States in China shall perform their duties thoroughly and impartially and that the law as to the issuance of certificates to members of the exempt Chinese classes shall be complied with absolutely. He added that any officer of the United States who issued a false certificate would lose his official head the instant his misconduct was discovered."

"We also discussed with the president the eight-hour law and the difficulties which we had encountered in securing its enforcement on government work. We instanced violations of the law and requested him to consider them. He asked us to present the facts in a formal document, he refusing to take up the subject at once. Meantime he expressed himself as being in entire sympathy with the law and insisted that it must be observed. We pointed out to him that the officers of the war department under whose direction much government work is done were not inclined to insist upon an observance of the law, and many of them had declined to regard it as their duty to bring suit to compel its enforcement. The president agreed with us that the government officers ought to see to it that the eight-hour law was obeyed."

"Our talk with the president was most satisfactory. We discussed generally the conditions and interests of labor, considered the subject of more rigid regulations for the exclusion from this country of vicious and illiterate immigrants and talked of some legislation along these lines which we regard as desirable."

FITTING REBUKE.

Amongst men of "high estate" labor unions are frequently ridiculed and berated, when there are none there to defend, which is a cheap pastime at the best. But occasionally an enemy and backbiter is brought to brook, and when he is, it is usually at a time when the rebuke is fitting and sharp. This occurred recently at a banquet given in Honolulu on the evening of July 3.

Congressman Hepburn of Iowa and Commissioner General of Immigration Frank P. Sargent figured as the principals in a very interesting "tilt" at a banquet given by commercial bodies of Honolulu to Mr. Sargent. Union labor was the cause of the differences between the two gentlemen, and during the course of their speeches Sargent replied rather pointedly to statements made by Hepburn regarding labor.

It was while replying to the toast of "The President" that Congressman Hepburn took occasion to make remarks which drew forth a reply from Sargent. "Gentlemen," said Hepburn, "the office of President is a great one. Great questions have to be solved by him and his advisers, and in no period of our history has these questions been more complex. Are we to allow an interest in this country—a labor interest though it may be—to rewrite the constitution of the United States, or are we going to adhere to our belief that all men have the right to the pursuit of happiness, embodying as it does the right to make contracts, to control labor, embodying as it does the right to select one's own employees and the amount of stipend and the duration of the hours of work. Are we going to say that certain gentlemen who claim to be the special guardians of labor shall determine and make it their right that no American citizen without the card of some union and who pays tribute in the form of a tax to labor organization shall work?"

Mr. Sargent replied to the toast, "Our Guest," and he lost no time in taking up the gauntlet thrown down by the congressman from Iowa. "You have been told," Sargent said, "of the dangers to the constitution and to our political system arising through labor. I was, for sixteen years, what is known as a labor agitator. For sixteen years it was my business to voice the opinions, the necessities of the laboring men of the United States and to endeavor to protect their interests and elevate them. It was my business to meet the presidents and directors of the railroads of the United States and endeavor to convince them that they were paying too big dividends to the stockholders and too little salaries to the men who enabled them to pay the dividends. During all that time it was my good fortune to convince those representing the control of the railroads that all that labor wanted was fair treatment and a fair share in the profits of their labor. When, at the instance of the President of the United States, I changed my employment, I did not change my friendship for or the advocacy of the rights of labor."

"I tell you there are no more earnest supporters of the constitution of the United States and the American system of government than American labor. We need not lie awake nights wondering what labor is going to do. You can be assured that whenever a call comes for a defense of the American constitution and the American system that there will be no speedier or more enthusiastic reply to such

call than that which would come from American labor. The American laborer represents loyalty to the constitution, conservatism and responsible government."

"There are members of congress who are more dangerous and irresponsible than are the American laborers."

This evident stab at Congressman Hepburn caused a mild sensation, but the incident closed by Sargent speaking upon conditions in Hawaii.

LAW IS VIOLATED.

(Continued from page 1)

world's history, in this boasted 'land of the free and the home of the brave,' is an insult to every American citizen."

"As I understand it, the owners of the Portland traction company are absentee landlords, whose only interest in Portland is the amount of money they can take out of it—unlike their employees, who are raising their families and whose every hope and ambition is centered in the prosperity and well-being of their homes. These gentlemen of the East tell the young men who have been born and raised in the West, before they can enter their service they must relinquish an essential right of an American citizen, by demanding they they refrain from joining an organization of their craft; an organization that has done more for the welfare of the street car men, their families, and the traveling public than all of the capitalists combined. If the Portland Railway Company, after receiving a free gift of several millions of dollars from the people of Portland in the form of valuable franchises, are allowed to dictate such terms to their employees, they will in time dictate terms upon which the public may have the use of their cars, on their, the people's own streets."

"The Amalgamated Association is bettering the condition of the street car men and traveling public all over the country. I court an investigation of the street railway service in the cities where the men are organized and subject to the discipline imposed upon them by the organization, and cities where they are unorganized, as they are in Portland."

"Organization amongst the street car workers, as well as all other crafts, brings out the good in men, makes more happy homes, better citizens, and is helping the working people onward to that higher plane where God so ordained."

"Such methods as are being pursued by the Portland traction company can only have one result, and that is, the people will take and operate their own utilities for the good of all. The street cars of Portland will not then be run for the sole purpose of making dividends for the holders of stock. They will be run for the benefit of the people of Portland."

"As I said at the commencement, it is an insult to American citizenship. It is commercialism gone mad. But, look out! they're playing with fire. I do not know of a traction company in any of the cities in the United States, or elsewhere, who have had the temerity to issue blanks of this character to those applying for employment upon their lines."

When asked as to the progress of San Francisco's acquirement of the Geary street traction service, Mr. Cornelius said:

"The public ownership of the Geary street line is an assured fact, and the street car men's organization of San Francisco will give the people of San Francisco the very best of service, and we anticipate the very best of treatment at their hands. When the city operates the line the street car men will be interested with their fellow citizens to make it the best in the country. We believe that we will get better conditions under a municipal-owned road than under private corporation control, because the city will only be interested in giving good service. The matter of dividends will be eliminated. I expect that the earning capacity of the Geary street line will be greatly increased, and what is better than all, in my opinion, the danger of the possibilities of strikes will be minimized. I want to see the Pacific Coast take the lead in the municipal ownership of Public utilities. When the people are alive to their own interests such arrogance as is displayed by the Portland Consolidated Company will be a thing of the past."

"What is the political situation in San Francisco?" we asked Mr. Cornelius.

"I think the city election in San

Francisco on November 7 will result in the return of Mayor E. E. Schmitz with an increased majority," said Mr. Cornelius. "The Citizen's Alliance has thrown down the gauntlet, and organized labor, in my opinion, will defeat any man at the polls who is in any way connected with the Alliance. The merchants of San Francisco who have been paying tribute to the Citizen's Alliance will find after the election that they have been unhooded by the 'Moses' of Colorado, Mr. Herbert George. The labor unions of San Francisco are stronger today than they ever were, and probably stronger than they would have been had it not been for Mr. George, for the working people in times of peace are apt to become passe. Instead, they have been finding their weak spots, closing their ranks and are marching steadily on the upward way to better conditions."

Mr. Cornelius stated that there was no industrial troubles in San Francisco of any consequence except the lock-out of the printers. "While not directly involved, I am indirectly deeply interested in the printers' contention," said Mr. Cornelius. "I look upon the fight as won by the printers. The public and the press are unanimously in favor of them. I look for a speedy settlement. There is one thing sure, and that is, the printers are thoroughly organized, they know why they are organized, and they fully appreciate the benefits of organization; and with such an organization on the firing line every other labor organization stands ready to do whatever is possible to bring them out victorious from the fight. Some printing houses perhaps will have to be taught the same lesson that the Los Angeles Times has so dearly learned, that intelligent organized workers cannot be defeated in their claims for just treatment."

Mr. Cornelius will make a tour of the Puget Sound cities officially, both on this side and in Canada, and expects to be back in Portland in a week or ten days. He is one of the men in the labor movement and at the front who brings credit to its fold.

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