

"SHALL WE IMMUNIZE AMERICA AGAINST BOLSHEVISM?"

W. Jett Lauck, Secretary of National War Labor Board, Proposes a Conference of Business and Labor Forces to Organize "League of Industrial Democracy" and Write "New Bill of Economic Rights"

BY CHARLES PATRICK SWEENEY.

WASHINGTON, D. C.—In varying shades of intensity the minds of men all over the earth are focused upon the politics of industry. In Russia an economic experiment staggering in intensity writes in a welter of blood and famine. Wretched and disorganized Germany struggles to re-establish a sound national existence, and in the effort the dominant emphasis from all sides is upon the degree to which the workers shall control industry and share in the distribution of produced wealth. Southeastern Europe rampantly overthrows every existing authority and institution in a great class war, the cry being "the world for the workers." Convolutions, all of them economic in their broader aspects, shake the old world to its foundations. Only in England has reason kept pace with passion. And even there an industrial revolution unparalleled in British history is taking place; in peace to be sure, but still taking place.

And what of America? Are we here to see a duplication of the events now threatening to scuttle Europe? Or does a distance of 3000 miles render us immune from the influences of these social and economic enormities? Are we to go on as we have in the past or is there a spirit for a change, for reforms, or readjustments for a new deal in the relations of employer and employee? If so, how is it to be met in order that we shall avoid the waste of industrial warfare or a destructive period of bitterness and discontent? Or, indeed, is it possible that even as this is written industrial relations in America are undergoing a transformation and that we alone among the great industrial nations are destined to write the new chapter of industrial history under peaceful skies and in a spirit of harmonious co-operation?

Veterans of Labor Campaigns. These and related questions are forming the basis of much utterance in the United States just now. Theories vie with theories in a cross current of efforts to guide the course of industrial events. But there are a number of men who deal from day to day with the facts of American industrial life, whose business it is to meet and attempt to solve the complexity of problems arising in a land of 275,000 industrial employers and 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 industrial workers, who see passing events in their relation to one another and to the whole of the economic fabric, and it is with these men that the country might well examine the industrial state of the nation.

One such man is W. Jett Lauck, secretary of the national war labor board. Mr. Lauck's life has been spent in the industrial equation. As secretary of the war labor board he has handled virtually every strike of importance and industrial dispute in the country since the board was formed in April, 1918. The war labor board, by the way, kept busy during the war, handled 1236 controversies, involving more than two million workers. So great was the confidence of the country in this body that with less than a half dozen exceptions no strike lasted more than 48 hours. Mr. Lauck during the war was connected with the wage-adjusting board of the emergency fleet corporation, which instituted the system of industrial relations in the shipyard industry, and dealt with the industrial relations matters of the aircraft production board. Prior to the war he was managing economist in connection with industrial relations, director of industrial investigations for the congressional immigration commission, director of the conditions of labor in American industries. "The Immigration Problem," "Wages in America," and "The British Industrial Experience During the War," the last named document of invaluable assistance in steering our own industrial course after the war, are some of his work. He was chosen secretary of the war labor board, composed of employers and labor representatives, because so far as a man can be impartial he was considered to be impartial. In his office in Washington he has directed the work of the board's large force of administrators, examiners and investigators scattered throughout the industrial sections of the country.

Mr. Lauck's position, therefore, is one that lends a unique importance to certain things he has to say about the present and the future of American industry.

Attitude of the Workers.

He finds undeniable indications in America of widespread dissatisfaction among the workers with the conditions in our present system of industrial relations. At the moment, however, he characterizes the attitude of the workers as a condition, as he puts it, of waiting expectancy or suspended animation, based on the hope of the workers that the signing of peace and the return of President Wilson will bring something akin to an industrial inventory, a new deal for the workers corresponding to the spirit of the new age, a new understanding to accord with the as yet unuttered determination for a change. This desire for change, Mr. Lauck says, is not concerned primarily with wages and hours, important as they loom upon the industrial horizon, but has to do most of all with the abatement of the right of arbitrary decision by employers in the matter of vital interests of the workers and the extension of a measure of self-government to industrial life. In other words, as clearly as this psychological attitude of the workers may be defined, the workers want a voice co-ordinate with that of the employer in the determination of wage rates, hours of labor and other conditions of employment. They do not care about running the finances of a corporation and much less do they want to interfere with the sheer commercial side of industry. But on questions affecting their own lives and the manner and nature of their employment they would have something to say. Far-seeing employers, recognizing the trend and anticipating the future, are not only granting this voice to their workers, but are encouraging a universal application of the first step in industrial self-government, collective bargaining, which means in lay terms the workers elect committees of their own number to deliberate with management on questions affecting the relations of the two, and through the workers lay all grievances before the employer for adjustment. "A very simple process," says Mr. Lauck, "one of extreme importance to workers and, unfortunately, one which many employers even now continue to resist as an invasion of their right of property and direction."

Principles of His Program.

Nevertheless he sees the tendency toward self-government moving fast and points, on the one hand, to the growth of one union, the machinists, from 150,000 members in 1917 to 200,000 today, and on the other, to such instances of co-operative effort as the federation of the newspaper paper manufacturers and workers into a national industrial council, representative of all the workers and all the employers, for a joint council in all questions of mill administration, the establishment of national uniformity of relations, conditions, discussion of operating methods, etc.; already this council is considering plans for the

establishment of health and unemployment insurance throughout the industry.

"But," says Mr. Lauck, "while we had industrial peace during the war and have had apparent peace since the armistice, those who look beneath the surface see in our current quietude the most ominous harbinger of the future."

"To meet this situation, he continues, 'something big needs to be done. And it is with more than a view to allaying unrest that we must act. The day for mere postponement is past. Our aim should be and must be to remove the conditions which cause unrest and which will continue to exist until they are removed. We have crossed the threshold of a new age, a new spirit is abroad in the world. The necessities demand a general clearing of the minds of men and the establishment of a new understanding. A new bill of rights—a bill of economic rights—must be written. Justice and wisdom both demand it. Once it is written industry in America will go forward in an era of prosperity hitherto unequalled in our history. With permanent industrial peace will come greatly increased production, and that is what we are most concerned about. The one certain method of isolating and removing the causes that threaten industrial peace is for the employers and the workers of the country to meet in a common counsel in what might be called an industrial conference or industrial congress, create an atmosphere for the evaporation of conflicting aims and ideas, and come to agreement upon fundamental principles for the future government of industry as a whole. This I would call co-operation plus sound industrial statesmanship. No sane man will disagree with the wish of employers to be free from bureaucratic governmental interference. None but the most confirmed bureaucratic would perpetuate the forms of government control obtaining during the war. Industry should and will be free to develop on such an admirable basis."

Development will be slow, indeed, until employers reckon with the new psychology of the worker, realize the need for a new basis of co-operation, effort and appreciate the value of his counsel in matters in which he is concerned.

A national industrial conference might be convened under government auspices, called together by the president, for instance, as has already been suggested by some employers and some labor leaders. It should, in the first place, be composed of the most responsible representatives of both the employers and the workers, and should be very highest caliber to represent the public. No section of industrial citizenship should be unrepresented. And, as industry is dependent upon expansion and its forward-looking policies upon the co-operation and sanction of the public, it is dependent upon it, and especially private bankers instrumental in floating large corporations and in reorganizing and consolidating industrial enterprises, should also be represented.

"Inasmuch as they are the inevitable problems confronting industry today or near future, these problems might form the general basis of the deliberations of such an assembly."

"First—Need for the formulation of methods for the universal and uniform application of collective bargaining; encouragement of the establishment of shop and works committees and their federation into district and national industrial boards, representative of employers and employees."

"Second—Necessity for the determination of what shall constitute a proper working day, with due regard to the rights of the workers and sufficient leisure to enjoy family and social contacts, and pursue the higher things of life, and the formation of a national standard of a national uniform workday."

"Third—Provision for guaranteeing every worker a living wage, sufficient to sustain himself and his family in health and reasonable comfort, and the recommendation of legal means for insuring the guarantee, such as the imposition of a 10 per cent net profit tax on corporations not paying a living wage, as has been imposed by congress for the protection of child life, or the enactment of a statute declaring an establishment paying less than a living wage to be a public nuisance."

"Fourth—Adoption of measures to safeguard the rights of women in industry, as to equal pay for equal work, conservation of health and strength, and pensions or payments before and after childbirth; also abandonment by unions of discriminatory practices against women in industry."

"Fifth—Consideration of a far-sighted industrial housing programme, designed to protect by federal law the workers' right to adequate housing facilities and to the establishment of means of affording the worker the opportunity of acquiring his own home, as well as measures for the constant encouragement of efforts toward a general raising of architectural standards with respect to the mills and factories in which men and women work and the homes in which they live."

"Sixth—Recognition of the importance of adult education and material encouragement of measures looking to a union of working class organizations and universities and other educational institutions for the purpose of extending the benefits of higher learning to the workers. The importance of providing higher educational facilities will be seen in the census revelation that only 144 children out of every 10,000 of our population get any continuous

education after they are 14 years of age."

"Seventh—Need for a permanent court of industrial jurisprudence, erected by mutual agreement upon sound principles protecting the rights of employers and workers alike, but above all the interests of the community as a whole; a court of last resort for the administration of justice and maintenance of production in cases where co-operative efforts fail to achieve settlement of controversies."

Industrial Statesmanship.

"I believe that nothing less than broad-gauged industrial statesmanship applied nationally will suffice in this period of transition."

"Once the national mind frees itself from the fears and prejudices of the old order and finds a new basis for co-operative effort there will be a great quickening of the industrial processes of the country. Until then our most obvious characteristic will be the sluggishness. The most disastrous of all the possibilities, it seems to me, is that industrial leaders should seek a solvent in patchwork here and there. Concessions will prove boomerangs."

"The thing for all to bear in mind is that the labor problem is no longer a servant problem. Men are discovering that they are men. And, in the words of Alfred Zimmer, now an official of the British foreign office and one of the most astute of British social scientists, we must see industry not simply as a process of production, but as a form of association; we must realize that the association of human beings for the purpose of industrial work involves what is just as much a problem of government as their association in the great political system which we call the state. A new order of industrial relations will be created; that is the fact which must be admitted. It is for us to determine if it is to be approached in the spirit of the new democracy and therefore inaugurated in peace, or in the spirit of antagonism."

One of the most gratifying facts of the present situation is the manner in which a number of employers, recognizing that a new day is dawning, are on their own account, giving it welcome."

"Probably the summit of co-operative management was reached in the case of the photo-engraving industry in New York, when a new price list was announced to the public by the employing concerns."

Trend of the Times.

"An industrial council is now functioning as the means of closer relations between the International Harvester company and 20,000 workers in the company's plants. Works councils, composed of representatives elected by the employees and an equal number chosen by management, have been set up in each plant for the consideration of all questions, including wages, hours, health, safety, sanitation, education, recreation, etc., and the disposition of grievances, individual or collective. In matters affecting more than one plant the general industrial council is consulted, in which every 100 workers or fraction thereof is represented by an elected delegate, all traveling expenses, etc., paid by the company. To aid in carrying out the plan of self-government the company has established a department of industrial relations, giving special attention to matters pertaining to labor policies and the general well-being of industrial workers."

"The so-called Rockefeller plan of industrial representation has now obtained for a year in the plants of the Standard Oil company of New Jersey, with great benefit to production and apparent satisfaction to the workers. During the year 30 conferences were held by the management and the workers' committees. Wages predominated among the subjects under discussion, being 38 per cent of the total number of topics, which was 119. Other topics were working conditions, 10 per cent; hours, 8.5 per cent; sanitation, housing and social questions, 3 per cent each. A similar plan is well established in the operations of the Colorado Fuel & Iron company, the head of which, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., advocating greater participation of labor in industrial management."

"Only the day has passed when the conception of industry as primarily a matter of price was the basis of the struggle. To cling to it is only to lay up trouble for the future and to arouse antagonisms."

"Plans similar in their broad outlines to those established in the Harvester and Standard Oil plants have also been adopted by the Bethlehem Steel company and about 20 other large concerns. In 266 other plants, 61 groups of plants the shop committee, or collective bargaining, system has been instituted by the war labor board, in accordance with its principle of mutual cooperation between the voice in decisions affecting their interests."

"These are some indications that the human factor in production is being recognized in something like accordance with its real importance; and, in some cases, by the very same men who



W. Jett Lauck, secretary of the national war labor board, who proposes national conference of economic interests to solve industrial problems of the hour.

related to the point of armed conflict the determination of their workers to have a voice in management only a half-dozen years ago. Then strikebreakers armed guards were employed, and the human problems of industry were settled by force and in blood, or lawyers were retained to pro-

ceedure injunctions, etc. More recently employers are observing that money thus expended would have been better spent in scientific investigations of their operating methods and in the application of measures designed to harmonize the psychological elements of the working group with the processes

of production. Progressive employers now enlist the services of industrial research experts or industrial counselors and give close ear to their reports and recommendations. By the same logic they call in the doctor ever so often to examine and report upon the state of their own health."

Analogy to French Revolution.

"The development of industry in this country," he said, "has gone along quantitatively, standard lines of output, with the purpose in mind of eliminating individual skill and training. The machine has become paramount and the worker subordinate. The mining machine, for example, has supplanted the pick miner; the automatic loom takes the place of the weaver of skill and experience; the bottle-blowing machine is doing the work once performed by the highly specialized glass blower; the molding machine displaces the old-time hand molder. With the elimination of the requirements of individual skill the bargaining power of the craftsman has disappeared. For instance, a Slav immigrant, who never learned a trade, can be advantageously employed within two weeks after his arrival in this country at the side of and on an equality with a man who has spent years at the work. I know a man who was a skilled maker of trousers before the machine supplanted the craftsman; he is now a common laborer. This man has been literally forced to seek employment in a steel mill, where his work as an unskilled laborer yields

after a strong plea for lower heels on women's shoes, said that many girls who appeared to be bowlegged since the short skirts have brought out the lines were not in reality bowlegged at all, but appeared to be so because of the high heels they were wearing. From all points of view, the recommendation of the modified flat heel. All authorities agree that once a woman has known the comfort of sensible shoes she will continue to wear them, and more women who would ordinarily wear the high-heeled shoe are forced to put on the flat heels in going about the duties their war work imposed in the last three or four years than ever tried years before. The wearing of sensible shoes like that of many of them will be willing to go back to the old, stilted, curving, uncomfortable style."

These former war workers, who were forced to see the light by finding that the high-heeled shoe was "no go" in the life of a healthy, active woman trying to have a part in the affairs of today, came from everywhere and from all walks of life and they are going back to where they came from carrying the gospel of the common-sense shoe."

About the middle of April a report came from Vassar that that institution had taken a stand against the high heel. The students themselves warmly indorsed the change to the common-sense idea in footwear that, it is said, any girl appearing in high-heeled shoes is to be arrested by a campus policeman and the shoes taken off of her feet."

Miss Leona Hope, of the University of Chicago, in an address before the Chicago Women's club sometime ago, proverbs:

He that examines every bush will hardly get into the wood.—German proverb.

a larger income than he could now make at his trade. The advent of the machine means that labor can hope to bargain successfully only en masse, as it were, without regard to specific tasks, and that the unionism of the future will be industrial unionism. Probably it would be more clearly expressed by the American Federation of Labor in each industry will be paramount. Thus the present craft unionism, and unduly will, needs the necessity of reshaping and reforming themselves to meet the changed conditions confronting them. That this has been fully realized by the American Federation of Labor is indicated by the present and highly successful campaign to form a federal or industrial union in the steel industry. This I believe, certainly is true; that labor will be more highly organized under the new order than it ever could be under the old."

Mr. Lauck finds an interesting parallel in the French revolution and the great war. "The great war," he said, "marks the beginning of a new, if not revolutionary, era in its bearing upon industrial relations and conditions. The significance of the French revolution was political. It marked the beginnings of political democracy. After a century's experience with political democracy the workers of the world seem to have reached a decision that political democracy without a corresponding measure of economic rights and freedom is a delusion. At any rate, in one way or another they are reaching out for means of adjusting economic institutions of democratic ideals. They are seeking a new basis of industry through political action. The effect by either method is toward industrial democracy. This is the really labor problem will hereafter consist in the development and adaptation to our political institutions of industrial constitutionalism and industrial judicialism in the effort to realize industrial democracy."

Industrial Democracy.

"While political democracy has achieved realization only through generations of slaughter, industrial democracy, at least so far as the United States is concerned, we may hope to become a fact through peaceful co-operation of the forces which, if we were to cling to conflict as the means of progress, would be at war with each other for the next twenty-five or fifty years, i. e., the employers and the workers. To make this possible the gospel of production must supplant the rule of profit as the impelling motive in the direction of industry, and ignorance and indifference must be increased to the world. Under such auspices the industrial machine will tend more and more to operate from top to bottom for the single purpose of serving mankind, freeing itself with advancing frequency from every restriction and condition detracting from the highest possible volume of output. Importance attaching to class distinctions in industry—that is to say, owners, directors and the managers as distinguished from men—will then fade into the background. The fact of partnership, each man with an equal voice in decisions affecting his interests. What conflicts occur will be incidental and not epochal."

What should be borne in mind by employers and workers alike is that industrial democracy is not a mere slogan, but a highest possible production on the basis of absolute justice to all hands, is an evolutionary process, measured only in terms of progress, by the speed with which conflicting attitudes are evaporated in joint council and mutual understanding."

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HEELS HOLD WOMEN BACK

(Continued From Page 1.)

small, pinched up and deformed. I have seen many women in this country

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These are some indications that the human factor in production is being recognized in something like accordance with its real importance; and, in some cases, by the very same men who

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