

LABOR NEWS

THE "PROFIT-VAMP."

(By SEF.)

A few days ago a man who has been both "master" and "man" failed to grasp a deduction to which I had arrived in the course of a conversation, where, as an assumption of justice, I had (as must all who view the subject justly and logically) given workingmen first place in economic consideration.

He accepted the premise that man and his labor power can not be actually separated—they are only separable philosophically—and took as his secondary proposition the stand that "a business man's business is just as much a part of him as the working man's job is of him."

It is just exactly such erroneous opinions, entertained by both labor and employers of labor, that is the soil of all differences that arise between "capital and labor."

Gompers has defined labor as "what we are," and capital as "what we have." That will serve to lead the thinker to realize that "capital" and "labor" are entirely distinct from "employee" and "employer."

The employer is a working man; so is the employee. The employer usually has or controls capital which he reinvests. The employee has no capital invested other than his skill or other capacity to create things or produce stuff—properties absolutely inseparable from him and his life.

The employer collects wages for his labor (if he is on a sound, fair business basis), profit on his wages and profit and interest on the wages paid the employee, besides interest on his investment in plant and equipment.

That, economically, means usury—the compounding of interest on interest—which in the light of justice, ever since the money-lender and the harlot were relegated outside the temple in biblical times, on up the ages till the "Shylocks" of our time have become subject of state regulation of a more or less loose nature.

And now we have the same animal with a diversion of the same instincts that have outlawed the "low downs" of the financial world, in the "profit-vamp," just now subject of much opprobrium and much less official investigation.

To illustrate concretely the difference between the real status of employee and employer (labor power is common to both, remember), the employee invests his labor-power in the boss's business, as does the boss also; but the employee has no interest in the business that his labor-power helps to build up which he can transfer or transmit; the boss has a property right in it with all the prerogatives that attach to the employee's home.

To say "frugality makes bosses of workmen," is begging the question. If every man (3,000,000) in the A. F. of L. would save and take out of circulation 25 cents (coin) a week, in one year \$39,000,000 would be withdrawn from circulation, the equivalent of \$780,000,000 "circulating medium" on the U. S. basis of 20 credit dollars (rich men's money) for every "hard dollar" in circulation.

The "hard dollar" is the vulgar, rosy silver coin (no more gold in circulation) that jingles so ostentatiously on the merchant's counter, (the "4-bit" dollar) as the smelly employee drops it. "Promises to pay" it—shopkeepers, paper money—is the quiet, unassuming invention of the bosses' boss, the financier, the banker, the modern "money changer."

But, back to our illustration. The bookkeeper's labor powers make figures (which are his) and adds, subtracts and multiplies them to represent accounts (money, which belongs to the boss). The fellow out in the factory, print-shop, or what-not, makes the things that the bookkeeper's figures represent, and the boss's or other labor-power under his direction, pilots these on the way to the consumers' door—the fellow who made them or someone else, the majority of whom only have their labor power (their life) to offer for the money the boss collects for them.

And if he don't get enough wages he can't buy his own products. See? And if a boss "can't pay" what labor needs to maintain American standards, what his government and our government declares necessary to the well-being of this country, he is a bad American and a poor business man.

as are those of the boy who breaks a window to hear the glass jingle—and in keeping with their destructive psychology they would now tear down the standards of American labor, for they suggest that the Japs should be sent back as soon as the land is cleared of its timber—as soon as the jobs are gone.

This last (sending them back) is explained by the Jap's frugality. He saves, and goes into business—manufacturing, distribution and banking—for himself. His scheme of cooperation can't be beaten, even by the most penny-ante schemes of con-

sumptive Los Angeles. Labor, of course, first feels the competition of the Cooley, but eventually business becomes "the goat," so there isn't much fear that the short-sighted big lumber interests will put their scheme over.

Since reforestation has been made necessary by the government to save the waterways and to provide lumber for future generations, we need have but little fear that the lumber barons' scheme will materialize to the full of their hopes. But, "eternal vigilance," etc.

Lumber interests, mining, fishing,

hunting and trapping, all belong to the same category—are essentially destructive. They use up natural resources and make no pretext to "replenish the earth." When followed by individuals, these are bad enough in effect, God knows; but when under the administration of corporate greed they strike at man himself in their insatiable avarice, and by any means, open or covert, that will best suit their purposes, as in this instance, by being parties to a scheme to tear out the very hearthstone of the nation that protects them.

It is this same characteristic, lack of public morals, that peoples our penal institutions with men of lesser parts, hence less dangerous to the body politic. We control the one without effort to reform. We punish the individual robber and personal murderer. We should protect the other from himself and posterity from his short-sightedness.

CAR MEN TRICKED.

Fresno—Street car men called off their strike and then called it on when the company gave notice that some of the employees will be paid the old rate.

150 PER CENT NOT GOING. Spokane—A 150 per cent profit is not unlawful, according to a federal grand jury, which has found a department store not guilty of profiteering. The judge assisted the jury in arriving at this decision by his ruling that the store has the right to consider present market values in pricing goods that were bought at a rate lower than the present market prices.

MORE FOR MEN'S SUITS.

NEW YORK—"If retailers figure on the same profit they are now getting, the price of men's clothing will increase just 15 per cent," said

Harry Simons, chairman of the American Clothing Designers' association in an interview published in a local paper.

In the meantime the American Woolen company, known as the "trust," is shutting down some of its mills, operating others on short time and prices paid to farmers for their wool has dropped from \$1 a pound last year to 30 and 40 cents.

PRINTERS RAISE WAGES.

Edmonton, Alta.—Although its agreement does not expire until next October, the Typographical union has negotiated a new wage scale of \$18 a week for night work and \$45 for day work.

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Oregon State Federation of Labor	O. R. Hartwig	Portland, Ore.
Salem Trades and Labor Council	J. N. Ganiard	327 1/2 N. Front
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