

Republican Party On Spot On Labor Question--Willkie

This is the fifth of a series of seven articles by Wendell Willkie on the position he believes the Republican party should take in 1944. This article deals with labor.

The problem of labor today is surcharged with emotion and dangerously sharp cleavages. Men more zealous than wise are trying to label the Democratic party the exclusive friend of labor, and the Republican party its inveterate enemy. The source of this theory is not difficult to discern. Labor leaders feel that before the advent of the present administration labor did not get a fair break, and that previous Republican administrations gave consideration solely to a business point of view. Today, on the other hand, many industrialists believe with almost fanatical intensity that the present admin-

istration sees everything exclusively through the eyes of labor, and plays politics both with and within labor.

There is considerable truth in the viewpoints of both.

However, nothing inherent in the nature of the two parties justifies the roles that propagandists have sought to assign them. Assuming that there are in the Republican party a few nineteenth century industrialists who still believe that labor is a commodity, every one of these has his Democratic counterparts in the Smith-Connelly who devote their energies to bating organized labor.

Labor's Position Different
But the Republican party has allowed itself to be put on the spot on the labor question. It

has done so by failing to appreciate sufficiently that for labor essential content of freedom is different in today's industrial society from what it was in the agricultural society of an earlier age. Men no longer able to own, or to aspire to own, small businesses and farms have sought new solutions for a need which all Americans must respect—the need to control for themselves the circumstances which dictate their working lives. However much the present administration has bungled the problem, it has taken cognizance of this historic change.

A 1944 republican platform should acknowledge the necessary requirements for the protection of labor under conditions existing today—not yesterday. Some of them are: The continuance and improvement of a federal wage and hour law, and federal regulatory machinery for its interpretation and enforcement. However, it should be remembered that no law, sponsored for business or labor, is a good law which creates in the mind of either the justifiable belief that fair and impartial treatment cannot be obtained under it. Compulsory social insurance must be broadened in its base and progressively expanded.

Repeal Coercive Laws
Coercive legislation such as the Smith-Connelly act which is both unwise and unenforceable should be repealed. For labor's inherent right to strike, which it has voluntarily abandoned during the war, is the basis of all its rights and must not be outlawed merely because the ad-

ministration has created an atmosphere in which strikes are inevitable.

Industry must convince labor that it is prepared permanently to accept the basic principles of collective bargaining and unions must be reassured that the period of transition to peace will not be used as in 1919-20 to destroy the organizations they have built. Labor also has aspirations which are not only just but indispensable to the health of a society marked by wide economic fluctuations. For instance, an annual wage to those who work in plants with long seasonal or periodic shutdowns seems fair and necessary. And our post-war economy must be built on a high wage level if we hope to furnish a market for the goods of an expanding peacetime production. Our wheels can keep turning only if our workers can keep spending.

Co-operation Bring Results
Labor-management co-operation has proved fruitful during the war. The more it is continued and developed after the peace the less necessity there will be for government intervention in industrial relations. It is time for both labor and management to grow up, to recognize each other as essential factors in the same basic enterprise—United States industry—and to settle their affairs among themselves without recourse to government.

Now that labor is reaching maturity all labor leaders must recognize what some leaders are saying—witness the recent statements of Mr. Thomas and Mr. Dubinsky—that labor must become responsible, must drive from its midst the racketeers, adopt democratic procedures and account for its funds and activities both to the public and to its own membership. And if the reluctant few refuse to follow democratic procedures than under appropriate legislation such matters must be regulated.

Finally, and basic to the whole question of labor in a democratic society, in addition to its part in American industrial life, labor must be made an essential part of government, with a real labor representative in the cabinet. Like other economic groups, it must share in the determination of government's fiscal, domestic and international policies. Thus it will share the responsibility for the results.

Severe Stresses Coming
The coming days of demobilization will be difficult, particularly difficult for labor. Millions of men and women will have to take up new forms of work in new localities. Returning soldiers, will properly feel that they should have equal if not preferential opportunities for jobs. The adjustments of our economy to a peacetime basis will bring a multitude of stresses and strains, and labor is fearful that it alone will be asked to bear the sacrifices. That must not be.

Every thoughtful American knows today that a strong labor movement is one of our greatest bulwarks against the growth of fascist tendencies and consequently is necessary for our democratic way of life. The republican party must demonstrate visibility and tangibility that it appreciates the contribution of labor to our economic well-being. It must have no doubt that it understands that labor has legitimate grievances, and justifiable aspirations toward a more secure place with larger participation in our modern industrial life. Above all, the republican party must demonstrate that it can produce a constructive, just and humane labor program.

BOSTON DOCTOR HEADS MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
Chicago, June 16—(U.P.)—Dr. Roger I. Lee of Boston was named president-elect of the American Medical association today and will become president of the association a year from now at the association's next meeting.

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Believing it to be the inalienable right of every boy and girl to see a circus at least once a year, the Medford Mail Tribune has arranged a special treat for all the boys and girls in Medford, next Tuesday and Wednesday, when Clyde Beatty and the famous Russell Bros. circus comes to this city for a two-day engagement.

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NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR RATION BOARD

Volunteers for the gasoline panels of the Medford war price and rationing board are needed at once, according to officials of the board. It was stated today that unless more volunteers are secured who will be able to keep regular meeting schedules, as well as those who will come in for special occasion, there will be a disastrous delay in getting out third quarter gasoline rations for trucks and cars in this county.

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