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EDITORIAL

## ONE OR THE OTHER,—WHICH?

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**A** DESPATCH from Chicago, published the other day, reported a discussion that took place in the Federation of Labor of that city on the subject of the workingman's life time. One delegate reported that railroad companies and large manufacturing establishments refused to hire a man more than thirty-five years old, and discharged its mechanics at the age of forty-five. Machinists, carpenters, and others told of the subterfuges that mechanics were compelled to resort to so as to conceal their age and thereby secure work: some confessed to having dyed their hair to give the youthful look necessary to get work; others with a tinge of gray in their beards kept clean shaven faces to avoid detection of their age; others who wore glasses left their glasses at home to hold their jobs and thereby hastened the spoiling of their eyesight. And so forth and so on. Finally, one delegate, in grim sarcasm, summed up the situation by suggesting shooting at the age of forty-five as a measure to solve the problem.

That capitalism in America consumes an abnormal amount of human life is well attested. The intensity of labor on the part of the American worker is one of the boasts of the American wage-slave driver, and is the terror of the European working class. There is no country where the cannibal feature of capitalism is as strongly illustrated as America. That the workingmen in the Chicago Federation of Labor must be aware of the fact no one can wonder at, and least of all could anyone wonder at their indignation thereat. In so far there is nothing surprising in the report of the transactions of that body, but what really deserves wonderment is that the report should stop where it did.

When, several months ago, the capitalist press blossomed forth with copies of the forged statistical reports from the Census Bureau showing that the life of the American workingman has increased, the trade journals of the very men who

“kicked” at the Chicago Federation echoed the lie; some even improved upon it, as did the journal of the International Cigarmakers. For a season, there was not one pure and simple trades journal that did not have some article on the subject—all chiming in with the lie about the prolonged life of the American workingman, “thanks” (of course) “to the Trades Union.” That the placemen, who own these journals, should fructify the falsehoods, started by their capitalist actual or prospective paymasters, is natural. But is it equally natural that men who, as those in the Chicago Federation, feel and smart under the truth, should have not a word of condemnation for the journals of their trades, towards which they are forced to contribute, when these journals seek to conceal the truth, and actually publish the reverse of the truth? Surely not.

There is no choice left but to conclude: either the report was censored by the Chicago branch of the Manila press-despatch censors; or—the indignators at the Chicago Federation of Labor simply set themselves up to be hushed.

Which?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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