

IN A TOBACCO STEMMERY

The Workers' Condition in Its Nicotine and Acid-Poisoned Atmosphere.

Louisville, Ky., Sept. 8.—Louisville has the largest tobacco stemmery in the world. It is situated at Twenty-fourth and Main streets, and is generally referred to by Socialist speakers as "the industrial penitentiary at Twenty-fourth and Main."

Thinking a "write-up" of the factory might be of interest to The Daily and Weekly People, a few days ago I paid the factory a visit, met General Manager Eddy and explained to him that I would like to see the general methods employed and the workings of the factory from the inside. He very readily assented and called the superintendent, a Mr. Manson, to conduct me through the various departments.

We visited the fifth floor first, where we found the tobacco broken and assorted into grades. After this preliminary work the tobacco was fed into large revolving cylinders about thirty feet long by thirty inches in diameter, called "steam boxes." This is done to put the tobacco in proper order for the stemmers on the floors below. In the cylinders the tobacco is dampened and warmed, so that one operation of the stemmer will remove the stem without breaking it and causing the stemmer to lose time.

The heated and dampened air issuing from the mouths of the cylinders into the stemming departments on the floors below is so charged with nicotine and poisoned acids from the tobacco that in passing in front of one of them I was nearly stifled from the inhalation of a breath of the polluted air.

This same air passes out into the stemming departments, and in a diluted form is breathed into the lungs of the stemmers ten hours a day. But the superintendent assured me that the tobacco stemmers' occupation was quite healthful and the stemmers were practically immune from contagious diseases.

One department is occupied by men and another by women, and these are again subdivided into whites and negroes. When the tobacco is stemmed and ready to leave the stemmery department it is piled into a funnel-like opening into a long cylindrical pipe line and blown by an electric fan through this pipe line into another department to be gotten ready for repriming.

Here in the priming department we found automatic machinery at work that enabled three men to "fill and prime" as the superintendent explained it, "half a dozen hogheads, while by the old hand method they were getting ready to prime one."

As we passed through one of the men's departments, my attention was especially attracted to a little delicate, pale-faced boy, apparently about twelve years of age.

"What is the age of that boy?" I asked. "Fourteen," answered the superintendent. "The factory inspector was in here the other day. It's true we have a great many children in here under the legal age limit, but we have permits from the county judge. The foreman over there (beckoning) has over forty permits now on file granted by the county judge at the request of parents."

"Don't you think," said I, "these children ought to be out of here and at school?" "Yes, I do," he answered, "and if their parents would save their money, as they should do, instead of squandering it for drink, they could support them out of their own wages instead of sending them here. I don't care to be quoted," he said, "but I give it as my opinion that at least 90 per cent. of the parents who send their children here waste their wages for drink."

It is an interesting and thrilling sight to observe this big army of stemmers at work, all ages from thirty or forty down to twelve, and all colors and sexes being represented. You will see the large, the strong and robust (they are newcomers), and you will see the small, the delicate and the weak. You will see many, especially among the younger white girls, whose expressions are haggard and worn, whose eyes are almost expressionless and sunken in their sockets. The glow of health has forever departed from their young faces. The stemmers sit at right angles in rows all the way across the rooms. The tobacco is delivered to them in small stalls or boxed-off partitions, and here the stemmers bend to their daily task, and they work as never chattered slave worked under the observant eye or the keen lash of his master. They work, men, women and children, as if the loss of a moment of the work of twenty-five men. By the old method he said it would require, perhaps, two or three weeks, depending upon the condition of the weather; while, where the new machine is installed, the tobacco will be dried and cured in first-class style in twenty-two minutes, rain or shine.

This new machine will render a double service; it will largely increase the profits of the Continental Tobacco Company and will possibly help the twenty-five men it knocks out of a job to do a little thinking. Bad and unhealthful as are the conditions obtaining in this great tobacco factory, the plant is immeasurably superior in its sanitary conditions and arrangements to any factory in the city owned and operated on a small scale. The apartments are large, the ceilings high and the ventilation as good as could be looked for in a prison of this kind. The floors, aisles and passageways are kept clean. I noticed no signs of expectation on the floors or in the aisles.

I asked the superintendent whether it would not materially increase their profits if their plant was situated on a railroad so they could have a switch laid and the railroad deliver the tobacco right into the factory instead of their having to hire a large number of teamsters and wagons to haul the tobacco from the freight depots and warehouses. He answered that it would, and added: "But when we were buying up the various plants we had to take them where we found them. But in the future all plants will be erected with a view to the greatest economy, and they will be placed on the railway, where switches can easily and cheaply be laid right to the factory's door. And it will likewise be a great economy to have the plant for manufacturing plug tobacco situated close and convenient to the stemmery. This concentration will cut out the necessity and expense of employing a large number of teamsters to haul the tobacco after it is stemmed from the stemmery to the plant for manufacturing plug."

I don't want to extend this letter beyond the limit, but I want to add this, as it comes from an employee, or rather an ex-employee of the company. An old man (not in years, but in fact) a few days ago, who was on the tramp for a job, told me he had been working for the Continental Tobacco Company for years, but they had fired him because he was growing old (was now forty-two years of age), and had lost some of his skill and speed. He said they preferred women and children because they were younger and speedier and could do more work. The Continental Tobacco Company had squeezed about all the labor power out of this wretched creature that he was capable of yielding up, had placed it to their credit in their ledgers, and then had thrown the wrecked and wretched husband and father out into the street to find a living as best he might. He was not one of the '90 per cent. who squandered their wages for drink."

As the more advanced capitalist country, in its superior economic development, holds up to the less developed country the mirror of the latter's own future, so likewise the Continental Tobacco Company in the persons of its older employees, with their emaciated, worn-out and exhausted bodies, dwarfed intellectually and stunted physically, with their sallow complexion and expressionless eyes, holds up to its new and fresh employees the mirror of their own future; and also in the persons of its new and fresh employees does the company hold up to its old employees the mirror of their past.

ROOSEVELT CRITICIZED

A New England Wage Worker Dissects His Boston Speech.

President Roosevelt spoke in Symphony Hall, Boston, on the night of August 25.

The Boston Post gives a good summary of his speech. It shows Roosevelt to be a good representative of the capitalist class.

Roosevelt says, according to this summary, "When a great corporation is sued for violating the anti-trust law, it is not a move against property, but in favor of property." How does that strike you?

Roosevelt says nothing about "being in favor" of labor, and yet some workmen applaud him, and say "he is almost a Socialist." Poor, deluded people! Roosevelt sounded the keynote of his class when he said, "in favor of property." What property have the working class for him to be in favor of?

The members of the working class have nothing but their labor-power. This they are compelled to sell, in an already "overcrowded market," at the lowest price they can support themselves upon, and still keep in good physical condition. That is one reason why there is such a large number of children in our various industries. That is also the reason why there have been so many "strikes" this present year.

Roosevelt continues, "I am not saying, that even if we had all the power, we could completely solve the trust question." Why not? Can we take him seriously? When he says "we," he refers to the class to which he belongs. Roosevelt does not realize that there is an irrepressible class struggle; or if he does, he ignores it entirely. His class have "all the power," and it is not their material interest to "solve the trust question," because they use their "power" to "make money," and as "the trusts are the best paying investments," the stockholders receive large dividends.

Besides this they also control the powers of government, and practically are in control of "all the power." Large dividends mean low wages, and low wages mean an empty stomach or a bare back, or both.

It seems that Roosevelt is ignorant of the fact, "that private property in the natural sources of production, and the instruments of labor is the cause of all economic servitude, and political dependence." (Platform S. L. P.) This gives the few (capitalists) the absolute control over the lives of the many (the working class).

Roosevelt seems to think that if a law should be passed by Congress, similar to the one in Massachusetts, it would relieve the situation.

As a citizen of the State of Massachusetts I would say that the law does not benefit the working class at all.

Indeed, Roosevelt does not care for the interest of labor but would protect "property." Property, (or capital) is the accumulated value which was created by and stolen from the working class in the past, and is used in the present system, to force more unjust conditions upon us. This is done for profit (to quote Mr. Baer) "by Christian men upon whose successful management so much depends." Speaking of profit implies wages.

Wages represents the one part of the labor for which we are paid, while profits represent the value, created by our labor-power, for which we receive nothing. The more we produce, the less we receive.

Roosevelt favors "government control." Neither government ownership nor control would benefit the working class. The wage system would remain, and it is the cause of the strike. Strikes would be treason against the government. The working class should beware of their "friends."

All the means of production were built by collective labor, and not by "the nation." The capitalists own them, and control the nation. Is our class represented in Congress? If so, how much?

Reform will not benefit our condition. It deals with effects, and ignores the cause. The cause is wage-slavery and it must be abolished. You cannot kill an apple tree by picking the apples. You must cut the tree down, and destroy its root and branch. So with the wage system.

If President Roosevelt could hide his identity, and secure employment in some of our "factory hells of capitalism" and appear as a workman who is compelled to earn his living, then, with the aid of the experience so gained, and a careful study of our official organ, (The Daily and Weekly People) supplemented "by the flashlight of reason, and common sense," then he would have learned some of the economic questions that confront us every day, even in Massachusetts.

"It is not a theory, it is a condition," that confronts us. Perhaps, if the working class studied their condition and did their own thinking, they would see that it is absolutely necessary to establish the Socialist Republic. It is to their interest, and they are the majority. We should rule the land, and thus having "all the power could have efficient control," and would "socialize the trust." That is quite a remedy, when Roosevelt thinks of it. To quote Franklin, "Property is the creature of society, and society is entitled to the last farthing, whenever society needs it." Do we not need it?

Fellow workmen, it is your duty to unite into a class conscious body, politically and economically, and break every chain that holds you in servitude. Join the ranks of the S. L. P., and L. A., and the Socialist Labor Party. "Determine to resist wrong at every step," and emancipate yourselves at the ballot box. You can do it. Break away from superstition, and lay aside prejudice. Remember that our class alone is able to main-

IN RENSSELAER

S. L. P. Meets in Convention and Nominates Ticket—Resolutions Adopted.

Special to The Daily People. Troy, N. Y., Sept. 10.—The Socialists of Rensselaer County, Socialist Labor Party, held their convention here and nominated a complete ticket, besides adopting resolutions on party matters.

The resolutions were as follows: We, the members of the Socialist Labor Party of Rensselaer County, in county convention assembled, do reindorse the platform of the national and State organizations of the Socialist Labor Party, and most heartily endorse the action of the N. E. C. in its magnificent defence of the party at the present juncture.

And we do hereby resolve: Whereas, The Socialist Labor Party of America for the past thirteen years, has continually and fearlessly pointed out to the working class that the correct course for its emancipation from wage slavery is through the ballot; and

Whereas, Knowing that the Socialist Labor Party stands to-day as the only representative of the working class on the political field, and demanding for that class the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class to the workers; and

Whereas, The Socialist Labor Party never withholds a blow at error lest it make an enemy, or compromise the truth in order to make a friend; and

Whereas, As the Socialist Labor Party has had to deal with crooks, freaks and fakirs, who, through their petty interests, have tried to mislead the working class and sidetrack the only working class party, the Socialist Labor Party, so as to lead the workers into the political shambles of the capitalist class, whether it be through the Republican, Democratic or Social Democratic party, or any other party organized for the purpose of graft, stands branded as cowards and truly representative janissaries of the capitalist class; and

Whereas, We, as workmen, who have closely followed and watched the tactics of the several enemies, whether from within or without, most vigorously condemn as traitorous the action of all such petty conspirators, and call on all of the working class to at all times beware of unsuccessful lawyers, disappointed enthusiasts and unsound and unprincipled petty scheming individuals; and

Whereas, The action of Section Allegheny County, in conjunction with Section Providence, and with the aid of the Pennsylvania State committee, a few disgruntled New Yorkers, and all other "logical centers of Socialism in America," be it Northport, Long Island, or Chicago, Ill., who posed as revolutionists, but whose tactics and actions denote them as confusionists and ignoramuses of the most impure and simple type, who tried to mislead the workers, and thereby perpetuate them in capitalism, we condemn as cowardly and traitorous in their attempt to kill The Daily and Weekly People, and call upon all workers who are interested in their own material interest, to repudiate all such freaks and fakirs, and smash their petty ambitions, and for the workers to defend for themselves, and by themselves, an organization that at all times stands first, last and all the time for the working class, the Socialist Labor Party alone being such an organization; and

We further call upon all of the comrades throughout the land to strengthen the striking arm of the party, the Daily and Weekly People, our official organs, by such financial and other assistance as the present times command.

(Signed) Section Rensselaer County, S. L. P. F. E. Passonno, Secretary.

The following is a list of candidates nominated for office at coming election: Justice of the Supreme Court—Victor W. Smith.

Representative in Congress—Lawrence A. Boland.

State Senator—Frank E. Passonno.

Member of Assembly, First District—George F. Bussey.

Member of Assembly, Second District—Charles Brickner.

Member of Assembly, Third District—Henry Slaus.

County Judge—Robert Johnson.

County Treasurer—John P. Gillye.

District Attorney—Samuel P. Shaw.

Acting Superintendent of the Poor—Adam Wilderhuth.

Coroner—Herman Huttman.

NO LAW FOR LABOR.

While a careful study of the statutes of this or any other State makes it readily apparent that the working class counts for nothing in the consideration of our lawmakers, the most convincing proof of the contention that the law is not intended to operate in the interest of Labor is found in a cursory contemplation of some of the customs prevailing in the courts on the trial of cases.

Most people are familiar with the fact that when a case is opened to a jury the counsel for the plaintiff, with a few preliminary statements, informs the jurors of the points he proposes to prove, and then closes with a request for the withdrawal of any juror who is interested in the case. This is a matter of so frequent occurrence that it would be thought that the lesson it inculcates would have a deep and wide effect on those who have been in court either as spectators or as litigants. Yet the reverse is the case, and the members of the legal profession who have figured most in such proceedings are probably the last to comprehend their true import.

The fact that lawyers are inclined to obtuseness on anything connected with their profession is hardly likely to win for them worry or commiseration, as it is too well known that they are generally devoid of sympathy for others. If the failure to accept the actual significance of the challenge of self interest contained in the formal suggestion to jurors so concerned to retire from the consideration of a case, were to begin and end with the attorney class this article would not be written. The instruction to be gleaned in this instance is, however, a loud warning to the working class to trust itself, to depend on itself and to act for itself, but the warning is absolutely unheeded.

One would hardly look to attorneys and courts and judges for practices illustrative of such a potent admonition to wageworkers, but there it can be found. The real purpose of the practise is, of course, to enable an attorney to secure a jury free from bias. The logic of the situation, however, points a deeper meaning. Lawyers and judges, like clerics and moralists, will descend solemnly on the integrity and uprightness of mankind, but when it comes to an action in court no such lawyer would consent and no judge would dare to knowingly permit a juror to sit in judgment who has avowed an interest in the result. Integrity is a nice thing to talk about when out of court, but its value and worth are very much discounted when it attempts to officiate as an interpreter for the Blind Goddess.

The practice and its application is a confession of the fact that self interest controls in court. A juror swears to decide impartially, but no amount of swearing of that kind will be conceded to cloak him with the garb of honesty if he can profit himself by giving one decision as against another. If self interest controls in the halls of justice in the fact of taking a solemn oath to adhere to honesty and fairness, who much more must it have sway outside where there is no public pretense to disregard the promptings of selfishness.

A little incident will make the point clearer. A few years ago a jury heard a case of a boy suing a large corporation for personal injuries. The evidence was to the effect that the foreman of the corporation had been negligent. When the jury retired to assess damage, one member objected strenuously to holding the corporation liable for the acts of its foreman. Questioning revealed that he was a small manufacturer, and though he admitted the foreman was in full control, he did not want to give a verdict against the defendant, for he himself might some day have to pay for similar negligence in his shop. As a result in order to have an agreement the remaining members of the jury compromised by reducing the amount of the damage.

This seemingly natural custom in the challenging of jurors is a striking illustration of the simplicity of reasoning by those of the wageworking class who still believe there is such a thing as law for Labor. As jurors are selected because of their qualification as taxpayers their interests as a consequence are akin with all others who are in the same category. A wage-worker who comes before a jury for a verdict is of a class that is not on the property list. If the litigant's case is one that comprises a controversy with another one of his class he may possibly be given fair consideration, but if his action in any way or manner involves a question that tends to establish a rule detrimental to the interests of property holders, the jury will be biased and its decision will be tinged with some regard for the person with self. If a juror can be swayed from justice by the fact that he is directly concerned in the result of a case, he will also stray from rectitude in a proportionate degree by the fact that he may benefit himself indirectly by the verdict to be rendered.

The law as made bears hard upon Labor and again the law as practiced gives Labor the last consideration. For this enactment and this practice the lawmakers are to blame, but Labor puts the lawmakers in office and by its vote retains them there or replaces them with others equally culpable. If Labor is satisfied with this condition of affairs well and good, but if it is disgruntled and inclined to resentment it should select its lawmakers from its own class, and these should be such as are rid of all nonsensical hopes of justice from property holders or the employing class.—Strikers' Call and Textile Workers' Advocate.

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BUFFALO, N. Y. Section Erie County, S. L. P. meets first and third Saturdays, 8 p. m., in Florence Parlors, 527 Main, near Genesee street. Everybody welcome.

PIONEER MIXED ALLIANCE, L. A. 345, S. T. & L. A., meets every Tuesday, 8 p. m., at headquarters, 119 Eddy street, San Francisco, Cal. Free reading room. Visitors are welcome.

SECTION CHICAGO, S. L. P.—Headquarters 118 Fifth avenue, (third floor front). City Central Committee meets every Tuesday at 8 p. m. State Committee meets every second and fourth Thursday at 8 p. m. Visitors welcome. W. Berns, Org., 12 Wilmut avenue.

SECTION CANTON, O. S. L. P. meets second and fourth Sundays at 2 p. m., in Union hall, 118 North Piedmont street. All are welcome. Discussion invited.

SECTION SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, S. L. P.—Headquarters, 1514 First avenue, near Pike street. Meets Wednesdays, 8 p. m. S. T. & L. A. meets Mondays at 8 p. m. Wm. H. Walker, Financial Sec'y, 733 Fifteenth avenue.

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SECTION ESSEX COUNTY, S. L. P.—The County Committee, representing the Sections, meets every Sunday, 10 a. m., in hall of Essex County Socialist Club, 78 Springfield avenue, Newark, N. J.

NEW JERSEY STATE COMMITTEE, S. L. P., meets every third Friday at 8 p. m., at 93 Prospect street, Jersey City. Secretary, George P. Herrcraft, 93 Prospect street, Jersey City.

NEW YORK MACHINISTS' LOCAL 274, S. T. & L. A., meets every first and third Tuesdays at 8 p. m., at 2 to 4 New Reade street. Secretary, Ed McCormack.

SECTION HARTFORD, S. L. P., meets every Wednesday, 8 p. m., at S. L. P. hall, 892 Main street.

S. T. & L. A. LOCAL No. 307, Hartford, Conn., meets every second Thursday at S. L. P. hall. Visitors are welcome.

SCANDINAVIAN SECTION, S. L. P., Branch 1, meets second and fourth Sundays of each month at 10 o'clock a. m., at 235 E. 38th street. Subscription orders taken for the Scandinavian Socialist weekly, "Arbetaren."

SCANDINAVIAN SECTION, Branch 2, meets first and third Sundays of month at St. Louis hall, 443 Atlantic avenue, Brooklyn.

SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY CLUB, 14th Assembly district. Business meetings every Tuesday evening, 8 p. m., at club rooms, southwest corner of 11th street and First avenue. Pool parlor open every evening.

SECTION LOS ANGELES, S. L. P., headquarters and free reading room, 205 1-2 South Main street. Public meetings every Sunday, 8 p. m., 107 1-2 North Main street. The People agent, L. C. Holler, 205 1-2 South Main street.

NEW HAVEN, CONN., SOCIALIST LABOR Party meets every second and fourth Saturday evenings, at S. L. P. headquarters, 349 State street, Ernest T. Oakley, Organizer, 17 Wooster Pl. Westville branch meets every third Tuesday, at St. Joseph's hall. Visitors welcome.

