

May Day in the Rubber Industry

By ISRAEL AMTER.

AMONG the industries that need organizing, the rubber industry is prominent. Altho the American Federation of Labor has been trying to organize the 139,000 rubber workers in the United States, it has succeeded in organizing only about 300.

The rubber industry is practically a one-town industry, being concentrated in Akron, Ohio. There we have the gigantic factories of Goodrich, Goodyear, Firestone, Miller, Seiberling and many other smaller plants. All of them employ tens of thousands of workers, who are working under "modern conditions." What does this mean?

There is practically no skill in the rubber trade any more. The work has been so subdivided, that, with the addition of modern machinery, any worker can be broken into the manipulations with a few hours' training. Speed-up is the order of the day, and cuts are ever present. "Efficiency" methods, which have come into vogue in the last ten years, but which have been refined in the past two years, reign here supreme.

THERE are 18,000,000 autos in use in the United States, and these vehicles are part consumers of the 900,000,000 pounds of crude rubber used in the United States annually. Altho the production of rubber goods is more stable than that of autos—this being due to the fact that when new automobiles are not put into use, the

old ones continue to consume rubber tires—nevertheless there are fluctuations in the trade. At the present time there is an overstock of rubber tires, due to the inclement weather.

The rubber industry shows the tremendous concentration of industry prevalent in other industries. And it is marked also by absentee ownership. In addition we find a linking up of some of the concerns of the rubber industry with other industries, which lead directly to Wall Street. Thus the Goodyear Rubber company is under the domination of Dillon, Read & Co., who recently bought out the Dodge Bros. Co. of automobile fame. Dillon, Read & Co. are located in Wall Street, and are part of the financial concern that is now financing Germany, thru a loan of \$100,000,000.

THE rise in the price of rubber due to the monopoly which England practically has on the production of raw rubber, led the rubber concerns to raise the price of manufactured products. The result was that in spite of the price of raw rubber—against which the rubber manufacturers and Secretary of Commerce Hoover hypocritically howled and which they threatened to break by reprisals and by the production of rubber in other parts of the world, notably by the Philippines, Hawaii, Liberia, Arizona, etc., the manufacturers still did not suffer in their own pocketbooks.

The following table shows the development of the industry:

Company	Sales		Profits	
	1925	1924	1925	1924
Goodyear			\$21,000,000	\$12,161,000
Goodrich	\$136,000,000	109,000,000	12,744,000	8,522,000
U. S. Rubber.....	206,000,000	172,000,000	17,309,000	8,368,000
Firestone			12,800,000	9,000,000

If one compares the sales, one finds that Goodrich sold 25 per cent more goods in 1925 than in 1924, but earned 50 per cent higher profits. U. S. Rubber sold 16 per cent more goods, but earned 100 per cent higher profits. Goodyear increased their profits by 75 per cent, Firestone by 50 per cent. All the protests about the monopoly of rubber by Great Britain—as if the United States does not monopolize on cotton, copper, etc.—mean nothing. They were merely a cloak to cover up the highway robbery which the rubber companies are practicing on the public—and the workers.

The workers earn \$5 to \$550 a day. There are many young workers and many women. There is close watching in the factories, to prevent the workers from talking or taking any steps toward organization.

NEITHER Goodyear, Goodrich nor any of the other companies, however, can prevent the workers from organizing. There is a movement on foot to organize the entire rubber industry on an industrial basis. This work is being done in addition to the organization work undertaken by the A. F. of L. The experiences of the strike of 1923 have not been forgotten, and the workers are learning new methods. The Goodyear company may

have its Welfare Association, with its senate and assembly, but the workers know that it is a fake. These company unions have brought no benefit to the workers, nor have they blinded them to the fact that having no power, these "legislators" are only means whereby the bosses can get suggestions for improving production at no expense to themselves, without doing anything that will in the least harm the bosses or help the workers.

The workers have learned to hate rubber, with its cuts, speed-ups, spying, etc. Once they are organized, these workers, a great part of whom are foreign-born workers, will fight. The higher profits of the manufacturers talk loud. The workers will insist upon having a good part of them.

Mexican Farmers Raid Town.

MEXICO CITY, April 29.—Armed farmers attacked Bustamente, Vera Cruz, today and killed the mayor, a member of the chamber of deputies and four civilians. The armed men raided the town, attacked the city hall and fled before their capture was possible.

They'll be talking about it for the entire year. The first May Day demonstration in the Coliseum.