

would be valuable to our country in its hour of need. It gives courage and confidence to the fighting forces at the front and makes it forever impossible for the mailed fist of the Kaiser to impede the progress of our free institutions.

## LABOR POLICIES THAT WILL WIN THE WAR

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Modern warfare has discredited all prophecies. Difficulties that were foreseen have been met, even when considered insurmountable, while others that were never considered as of military importance have been most difficult of solution. Among these is the mobilization of industry, which we all see now is as essential as the mobilization of the army, for without industrial organization at home, an effective army cannot be kept in the field. The foundation principles of modern industry are competition, and supply and demand. Modern warfare at once sets aside competition, for government needs immediately take precedence over those of the private consumer, while at the same time through restrictions on imports and exports the usual balance between supply and demand is destroyed.

The mobilization of an army is a simple task compared to the mobilization of industry. The principles of military science have been studied for generations and as the methods of warfare have changed, thousands of trained men have studied the varying problems and developed their plans to the smallest detail. Not so with industry. Two years ago no one in this country had given the matter a moment's thought. Now we find that to maintain a mobilized army we must mobilize an industrial army ten times as large. In the fighting army each individual is trained to his particular duty and knows just where he belongs, but in industry few are trained and each worker follows his own choice or chance occupation. War also disrupts normal industry by shutting off employment in certain trades and creating abnormal demands in others.

The most disturbing factor, however, is that of private interests. In peace times, the employer and employes are free to pro-

tect their respective interests as they may see fit without much regard to the public welfare. The consequence is a constant state of more or less acute industrial warfare. When, as during a war, the very existence of the nation is at stake, all causes for domestic strife must be eliminated. Only by substituting the national welfare for self-interest can the nation develop its full power. Our government has had to face an enormous task in creating almost overnight, new industries on the largest scale, extending others, and gradually discouraging those that are non-essential. This has meant the shifting of hundreds of thousands of workers from one industry or location to another. This change has been accelerated by the self-interest of the employer and of the employe. The employer has offered higher wages to attract not only a sufficient number of men to his plant, but, if possible, the best men. The same self-interest has naturally led the workers to seek employment where the highest wages were paid. As a consequence, all industries have suffered from an enormous increase in their "labor turnover." It has not been unusual for a plant to change half its force in one month. Another equally important cause for this instability has been the introduction of tens of thousands of green men into industries with which they were totally unacquainted and for which they were perhaps unfitted.

Usually the employer and employe can be trusted to represent two divergent points of view, but when the government is either the sole or dominating customer and pays the increased wage, the financial interests of employer and worker are more or less the same. This is particularly true where the only competition is on the part of the employer to get enough men to enable him to make a good record and complete his contracts on time. There are many forms of government contracts, but those in which the contractor is paid all costs plus a 10 per cent profit have tendered to aggravate the situation described above.

As a people, we have resented any government interference into what we considered our private business, and what we do not as yet fully realize is that when we are at war the life of the nation is at stake, and in such a crisis every act of every individual is of national importance, and becomes the proper business of the government. Local pride, craft pride, personal ambition, local, craft and plant customs, sectional and industrial prejudices must all be ignored if

they stand in the way of the adoption of a national policy. Before labor can be mobilized definite standards must be developed. The necessity of centralized control for war purposes has long been recognized, yet only recently have the Allied armies been placed under one commander-general. After months of delay all purchases of supplies for the United States as well as the purchase of many articles for our Allies have been centralized in the War Industries Board. We are spending many billions of dollars on war contracts and of this stupendous sum at least half is paid out in wages. We have standardized and fixed prices for our raw material supplies, but are only just realizing that we cannot mobilize labor without standardizing conditions of employment and wages. Under war conditions there is practically only one employer and that is the government. The manufacturer, for the period of the war, is merely the agent of the government. He either negotiates with the government for a satisfactory price for the use of his organization and his plant, or he takes a contract like any agent on a commission basis. Under these changed conditions there is no occasion for any strife between employers and their employes where government contracts are involved. The government must determine policies to be followed by both employers and employes.

I do not for a moment mean that labor should be conscripted, for that is unthinkable where private profit is obtained from human labor. The time has come, however, when the government must say to employers, "If you take a government contract you must take it upon such and such terms. In this emergency all skilled mechanics must be used, whether they are union or non-union men; you cannot discriminate against either, you must pay them certain wages and you can work them not more than sixty hours a week." The welfare of the nation demands that the standard of living of our people must be maintained while we are fighting for democracy, and their health and efficiency must not be destroyed by excessive hours of labor. At the same time, the government must say to the workers, "The nation requires the best you have, regardless of whether you are a member of a union or not. We do not tell you where you must work, or at what trade; make your own choice, but wherever you work these are the wages you will receive in your particular craft and these are the minimum and maximum hours you will be required to work. Your interests have

been protected, for the wages and conditions have been fixed only after careful investigations in which your union representatives acted in coöperation with representatives of the government."

In order to fully protect its citizens the government also says that through the Labor Department it will have made careful studies of any changes in the cost of living and readjust the wage scale in proportion to any increase that may take place.

If we are to have the same experience as other warring nations, as time goes on government contracts will require the full capacity and energy of the nation, and private contracts will play a small part in industry. So far the government has been feeling its way in this untried experiment of mobilizing labor, and the result is still chaotic. Six or eight various departments have each followed their own particular method of dealing with labor questions. As a rule, so-called boards having limited powers have been created within each department, such as the Army, Navy, Shipping Board and others. These boards are composed of government representatives and representatives of organized labor. The result has been that no definite standards have been set and these departments, as well as contractors, having both government and private work have been allowed to bid indiscriminately against each other for men, causing a rapid increase in wages; but what is more important, this lack of method has seriously reduced efficiency by creating an abnormal "labor turnover." Manufacturers state that it requires much time and costs fifty dollars to break in a skilled mechanic to a new position, so one can imagine the loss of time and dollars that is going on daily, owing to the fact that thousands of men are being enticed from plant to plant or industry to industry.

An example that has come to my attention recently is this: by much effort and expense three hundred boiler makers were taken from some non-essential trades near St. Louis and sent to shipyards at Seattle. They were only there a few weeks when inducements were offered them to leave and go to St. Paul to work on refrigerating machinery. Railroad efficiency is being rapidly reduced by the men in their shops being drawn into other industries while highly skilled men in certain textile mills having government contracts were taken away by companies manufacturing talking machines, owing to the higher wages offered. Such methods only add to the confusion. They do not increase the number of skilled men avail-

able, but they do seriously destroy all efficiency of production. The workers become dissatisfied and restless and drift from plant to plant trying to improve their condition. In times of peace under normal industrial conditions this is harmful but in time of war it may become fatal to the national cause. Neither contractors nor workers are to blame for the condition. The forces at work are too large to be handled by any individual or association. The government of the United States is the only agency with sufficient power to deal with the problem. The longer it is allowed to run unchecked the more difficult will be the task of mobilizing industry.

All government departments and contractors must come to approximately the same wage scale for the same service, if we are to have any stability in industry during the war. The War Industries Board will be forced to cut off all supplies to private manufacturers who exceed the wage scales set by the government boards. Over the various departmental boards there should be one supreme board to lay down general principles and conditions for the guidance of the inferior boards so that uniformity in decisions may be brought about. Such a supreme board could also act as a board of appeal from the decisions of the departmental boards.

There is one other piece of machinery which is now being developed and which must come into general use before labor can be properly mobilized. Secretary Wilson, through the Department of Labor, is opening federal employment bureaus in many places. These must be rapidly extended and all employers must be required to apply for workers to these bureaus, and all those seeking positions must be compelled to register at the bureaus. As long as private employers are permitted to arrange with men to leave their jobs and come to them, they will continue to raid each other's establishments notwithstanding agreements to the contrary. It is only through such public employment bureaus that labor can be properly distributed and a surplus in one place shifted to supply the shortage in another. Promiscuous advertising by employers in newspapers in distant cities is no guarantee that the men may not be drawn from equally important industries or that those who answer the advertisement are skilled in the trades required. A large number of men may respond to an advertisement when a comparatively small number is needed, thus increasing the present faulty distribution of labor. These federal bureaus can be in touch with condi-

tions in all parts of the country and in all industries. Agents can be sent out who can examine the men, properly classify them, and see that they are taken from only non-essential industries. Such bureaus will prevent the loss of much time by men seeking employment, and do much to properly distribute the skilled labor required.

To sum up, there are two forces, at present, working against the mobilization of labor; first, the competitive bidding for labor by governmental departments and private contractors, doing both government and private work; second, the unequal and poor distribution of labor. These two difficulties can only be overcome by the patriotic coöperation of plant owners and works; first, in assisting the various government labor boards in establishing a national standardization of wages, hours and conditions, thereby removing all inducements for changing a place of employment; second, in encouraging and supporting federal labor employment bureaus, for the proper distribution of labor throughout the nation. Unless these means are taken, labor cannot be mobilized, and without stabilized labor, industry cannot be mobilized.

The views herein expressed are the result of eight months experience in attempting to adjust wages, hours and conditions of employment in the shipyards. We have heard the employers and the men from practically all of the one hundred and thirty yards, from Bath, Maine, to Houston, Texas, and from Los Angeles, California, to Seattle, Washington. We have inspected many of the largest yards. We have found human nature about the same whether we were dealing with representatives from the Atlantic, Pacific, or Gulf coasts, or whether it was a shipyard owner or a representative of the workers, who came before us. We have not been surprised, therefore, when our decisions have frequently been as forcibly criticized by one group as by another. We have been described as anarchists, capitalists and theorists. We soon learned, however, that "adjusting" did not settle the problems presented to us. To meet the situation, standards had to be "fixed" and made to apply universally over a large area. This has finally resulted in our establishing only two scales of wages, with merely slight differences, one for the Pacific coast, and one for the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. Our greatest difficulty has been to get people to think in national terms instead of local, in terms of industry instead of the point of view of their shipyard or their craft.

To win the war we must forget many of our peace traditions and prejudices, and fearlessly adopt war measures. Above all, we cannot hesitate to act because we are afraid of what may happen after the war. If we do not win, there will be little left to strive for. To win for democracy, no price is too high, and no sacrifice too great.

## HOW ENGLAND MEETS HER LABOR

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In fighting for democracy abroad we are gaining two of the biggest democratic principles at home. The first is the recognition of the rights and dignity of labor, and the other is women's freedom, because never before have we so clearly realized that the output of the machine is just as essential to victory as the gun at the front; and for the first time in the world's history mankind is looking to women to do specific and concrete tasks that are constructive as well as preventive. Every avenue of work is now open to women, and not only that but the whole world is expecting women to do that work well; for the first time women in industry are occupying just as dignified a position as men in industry.

Substitution of skilled labor for unskilled, or women taking the place of men, has not as yet come into as common use here as it has in England, and probably never will because of the fact that there is a much larger percentage of men to the population in this country than in England. At this moment 1,413,000 women are replacing men in industry in England in three kinds of substitution. One is direct substitution, where women replace men directly (this is not very common in skilled trades); and the other is indirect substitution, where women replace unskilled or partially skilled men so that they may be released to take the places of skilled workers who are called to the colors. In the latter case the women are generally lost sight of because of the attention concentrated on the skilled workers.

Then there is what is called group substitution, where a group of women take the place of a smaller group of men with a re-arrange-