

Bull Moose Perkins and Labor

In the course of his speech in Boston, August 17, Theodore Roosevelt was interrupted by the question: "What about Perkins?" And this is what Roosevelt said in reply:

"The prime reason why I am with you," he (Perkins) told me, "is because I have children. I have come to the conclusion that this country won't be a good place for my children unless we have substantial justice; unless the relations between capital and labor are on a better basis. I wish to support any movement which will bring that about."

This statement is interesting in view of a certain investigation that is now being conducted by the New York state factory investigating committee. The hearing at Auburn, N. Y., occurred at the plant of the Osborne Twine company, a branch of the International Harvester company. The testimony showed that George W. Perkins is a director of this company (the harvester trust) and that A. Cyrus McCormick is president, while a great part of the McCormick fortune is invested in the company. As Medill McCormick is one of the principal owners of the Chicago Tribune, which is supporting Roosevelt, the whole circle of interests is complete. But Mr. Perkins is the man who "has children" and is so solicitous for "substantial justice" between capital and labor. Perkins is a director in the company owning the factory where the following testimony was taken:

Mary Previ, employe, testified as follows:

By Mr. Elkins—How long have you been in this country? A. Four years in December.

Q. Don't you speak English. A. Little bit.

Q. How long have you worked here? A. Three years this December.

Q. How old are you? A. I am 19. Q. Worked here three years last December? A. Yes.

Q. What room do you work in? A. The preparation room.

Q. What time do you come in the morning? A. Half past six.

Q. You get here about half past six? A. Yes.

Q. What time do you stop at night? A. Six o'clock.

Q. What time do you come Saturdays, same time? A. Yes.

Q. What time do you stop on Saturdays? A. Five o'clock.

Q. How long do you have for dinner in the day time? A. Fifteen minutes.

Q. Fifty minutes? A. Fifteen minutes.

Q. Fifteen minutes? A. Yes.

Q. Well, do you work by the piece or by the week. How do you get paid, by the piece or by the week? A. Seven or eight a week.

Q. How is it, by the piece or by the week? A. Piece work, because one week I make less and one week more.

Q. How is it arranged? A. I don't know.

Q. Some weeks you get seven, and some weeks eight? A. Yes.

Q. Have you done this work since you have been here for the three years or more? A. No.

Q. What else did you do? A. Only in the preparation room.

Q. What did you do in this preparation room? What kind of work did you do? A. Feed the machines.

Q. Did you stand up or sit down? A. Stand up.

Q. Are there any seats? A. No.

Q. You can stand all day from the time you come until lunch time? A. Yes.

Q. Then you start right in after

lunch. A. Yes.

Q. Do you eat your lunch in the lunch room or do you take it just where you are? A. Go home to lunch.

Q. How can you go home and back in fifteen minutes? A. I live only five minutes—I am home.

Q. How long does it take you to eat? A. Five minutes.

Q. And five minutes to come back? A. Yes.

Q. How much do you get per hour or for each piece of work you do? A. I don't know. No one ever told me how I am paid; all I know is I get my envelope, sometimes it is more, and sometimes less.

Q. Do you ever work at night time? A. No.

Q. Have you ever been sick in three years? A. Yes.

Q. Had to stay home? A. Yes.

Q. What was the matter with you? A. I was sick.

Q. From the work? A. My stomach—head disease and stomach troubles.

Q. Do your feet ever hurt you at night? A. Very much.

Q. Every night? A. Yes; every night.

Q. Do they swell up? A. No.

Q. Do you have to go to bed when you get home, right after supper? A. Yes, sir.

Q. Would you like to sit down if you could when you work? A. Oh, sure.

Q. Do any of the other girls sit down that work in the preparation room, or do they all stand up? A. Yes; all stand up.

Q. How many work there, do you know? A. I don't know.

Q. Is the floor slippery? A. Yes; very slippery.

Q. Do you wear shoes in there all the time, or do you wear slippers? A. Shoes.

Q. Is the light good in the room? A. It is dark, but there is electric light.

Q. How about the dust; is there dust in there from the twine? A. Sure, awful; it hurts.

Q. Gets in your throat? A. Yes.

By Senator Wagner—Since you started to work here, have you always earned about the same amount of money each week? A. Yes.

Q. About six or seven or eight dollars a week from the time you started three years ago? A. Yes.

Josephine Cristenoli, an employe, testified as follows:

By Mr. Elkins—Were you born in Italy? A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been here? A. Around seven years.

Q. How old are you? A. Sixteen.

Q. How old were you when you came to this country? A. I was around 7 years old.

Q. Didn't you go to school at all? A. Yes, I went to school around three years.

Q. What did you do after that, work? A. Work.

Q. At what time did you come here in the morning? What time did you come? A. Seven o'clock.

Q. What time did you leave at night? A. Six.

Q. How long do you have for your lunch? A. Half an hour.

Q. How much do you make a week? A. Make around \$7.

Q. Seven dollars a week? A. Yes.

Q. What do you do? What kind of work do you do? A. Spinning.

Q. You put the twine in the machines? A. Yes.

Q. And pull it out? A. Yes.

Q. Do you have to push those big barrels of stuff? Do you push those alone? A. Yes.

Q. How much do they weigh; do

you know? A. I know how much my balance weighs.

Q. How much? A. Sometimes three hundred and two or three hundred and five.

Q. Pounds? A. Yes.

Lucy Charles, an employe of the Osborne Twine Works, being duly sworn, testified as follows:

By Mr. Elkins—How old are you? A. I was 17 the 18th of April.

Q. How long have you been working here? A. The 26th of April was one year.

Q. What room do you work in? A. The spinning room.

Q. Do you stand up or sit down? A. Stand up.

Q. You are tired out pretty much every night? A. Yes.

Q. Do you ever have headaches? A. Yes, lots of times.

Q. Is there noise in your room, great deal of noise? A. Yes, the terrible noise down here.

Q. How much is the least you made? A. The least I get, I had to work all week and work as hard—terrible hard, and I got \$7.14.

Q. What do you mean by working terrible hard? A. To make a little more money.

Q. Work your very best, just as fast as you could? A. Yes.

Senator Wagner—And never sat down, I suppose?

The witness—No; nobody sit down. They keep them always going, always going.

Q. Your fingers hurt in the machinery? A. A lot of times I get hurt myself.

Q. You did? A. Yes.

Q. Where, on your fingers? A. Most of the time I had to go up to No. 1. I had a sore hand right down to here (indicating) and they had to fix it up some.

Q. What did they do; sew it up for you? A. No; they put something on. And last week I cut my finger right down here, here and here, and that it was in my bone here and it was raw for two days, and I commenced work again.

Q. Did they pay you while you were away? A. I couldn't work.

Q. What did they use that knife for (indicating knife)? A. They use this knife to cut the strings around on the machine and take the bobbins out. You can't work without a knife; you have to keep the knife.

Q. Do they supply you with a knife, or is that your knife? A. We have to pay for it.

Q. How much? A. Ten cents.

Q. How long does the knife last? A. Lasts as long as they won't steal one.

These are only a few of the questions and answers of the hearing which concerned more than 300 women and girls. They worked ten hours or more a day amid distressing conditions. They were required to stand on their feet for ten hours. They had only fifteen minutes for lunch. The dust made them sick and their feet were diseased. They were docked half a day when a few minutes late and they were required to drag bundles of material weighing 160 pounds to their machines. In fact, the working conditions were wretched and many women and girls were hurt by the machinery and were broken in health by the unusual strain of their employment. Mr. Perkins who "has children" and is anxious to "join any movement" that will bring "substantial justice" to the working people is one of the directors of this concern. Mr. McCormick is president. All the orders come from Chicago. Both Mr. Perkins and Mr. McCormick are vigorous bull moose adherents in the cause of "social justice" and the "rights of labor." They were "pleased" at the platform of the bull moose party which declared for shorter working days and better conditions of employment. But in their

zeal for the working people they overlook the fact that thousands of their own employes in the International Harvester company mills were little better than slaves, ground down to the most meager wages and required to work day and night for ten-hour stretches save for the fifteen-minutes lunch time. This is indeed a fine commentary upon the smug and holy pose of Perkins and the McCormicks.—Dubuque (Iowa) Telegraph-Herald.

STANDARD OIL CONTRIBUTIONS

The Republic owns its inability to get excited over this Penrose-Roosevelt-Standard Oil affair.

Who doesn't know that the Standard Oil company owns everything in Pennsylvania republican politics except that which is the personal property of the Pennsylvania railroad? Who doesn't know that Roosevelt, as a candidate, was the immediate and personal beneficiary of the fat-frying methods perfected by that prince of political chefs, Marcus Alonzo Hanna? What man has so short a memory as to have forgotten Mr. Roosevelt's close friendship with Matthew Stanley Quay, over whose political footwear Boies Penrose of Philadelphia and William Flinn of Pittsburgh have quarreled acrimoniously since Mr. Roosevelt so touchingly paid tribute to the dead boss' memory?

Did the Standard Oil company help elect Roosevelt? Of course it did. So did Cain kill Abel, and it was a great wrong and a lamentable tragedy—but why grow excited about it now?

It is not necessary to go back into the holy gloom of a year when great tribunes of the people like Cornelius N. Bliss were still alive and saints like Quay and Hanna were just entering into rest in order to prove Roosevelt's close and intimate connection with the powers that prey in American finance and politics.

A director in the United States Steel corporation, whose organizers have taken tens of millions of dollars from the investing public for "underwriting" alone, is a member of the executive committee of the "progressive" party. This man—George W. Perkins—is also chairman of the finance committee of the International harvester company of America.

Another member of the "progressive" executive committee, William Flinn, was openly exulting recently, that "he was wise enough to know how Penrose could be controlled without the necessity of buying him" by "requesting the Standard Oil chief to give orders to his man Penrose in my behalf." Yes, Flinn, too, is "progressive," and hand in glove with the man who would not sit down to eat with William Lorimer because Lorimer was tainted with the imputation of corrupt use of money in politics!

These things are of today. The progressive platform, too, with its laudation of the protective tariff, is of today. So is Roosevelt's declaration that he is in favor, not of less "prize money" under the tariff, but more, so long as it is "more equitably divided."

So long as these shameless alliances of Theodore Roosevelt with predatory wealth and with machine politicians reared in the Archbold-Quay-Penrose school are facts of the present hour, so long as this unblushing indorsement of a principle in politics which the American navy has abandoned in warfare on the high seas is of the present hour, we feel but a mild interest in the historic doubts of Mr. Roosevelt as to events of 1904 and the fierce protestations of Messrs. Penrose and Flinn. The American people, on November 5, will register its verdict upon Theodore Roosevelt and his political affiliations in 1912, and in the light of that judgment the stubs of Standard Oil check books of the vintage of 1904 will be of mighty little interest to anybody.—St. Louis Republic.