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OLD AGE PENSIONS.

Various Systems in Vogue Abroad. Germany the Pioneer.

The subject of old age pensions in foreign countries has been under investigation by Republican Congressman Lundin of Illinois. He finds that Germany was the pioneer in the movement with a law passed in 1880 and perfected ten years later, which covers 25 per cent of the population and is compulsory in some instances. The pensions run up to \$37.50 per year, according to class and weekly premium paid. Beyond seventy years of age no incapacity need be shown to insure the beneficiary his or her pension.

In 1891 Denmark enacted a law granting pensions to all persons upward of sixty-five years, with certain limitations as to residence, health and record of citizenship. From 1897 to 1908 laws were passed in New Zealand which granted pensions to all reaching the age of sixty-five, and to all who are without a minimum competence and can show twenty-five years of honorable residence the government pays \$2.50 weekly.

In 1900 Belgium adopted what is called an insurance annuity and nationally sustained pension act. Under it annuities are granted according to age and amount of premium paid. Pensions are paid to all over sixty-five years under certain prescribed conditions of want and disability.

In Italy, France and Austria systems of annuities and pensions are in operation. In these countries old age relief is recognized as an institution of worth. Australia perhaps presents the best example of growth and modernization of the old age pension scheme. The general plan there includes pensions to men over sixty-five and women over sixty at the rate of \$2.50 and \$2 respectively a week. Restrictions as to income, residence and character most effectively surround the application of the law.

England after years of consideration adopted an old age pension law in 1908 which declares all persons over the age of seventy years pensionable if they measure up to the requirements as to income, habits, character, etc. The amounts paid run from 25 cents to \$1.25 per week. Canada in the same year passed an annuity law which permits persons over the age of fifty-five to draw from \$50 to \$600 per year. The Canadian system is purely a government insurance proposition and entirely dependent on premiums, and as a step toward making provision for old age a matter of governmental registration it is encouraging.

Garment Finishing.

Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant writing in McClure's declares that "garment finishing is the worst type of tenement work." She continues:

"Ninety-five per cent of the so called home finishing in New York city is done by Italians. A day's wages for the united work of a family do not usually exceed 60 or 70 cents in this trade; they may be much less, but are never much more. The work varies from pulling bastings—this is usually the task of the babies—and sewing buttons, to putting in linings of coats and trousers, sewing in sleeves and blind stitching the bottoms of trousers. The garments themselves vary from the cheapest 'ready made' goods to the most expensive 'custom made' goods; for not only wholesale manufacturers, but to some degree fashionable tailors employ tenement labor. The industry is chiefly carried on in one of the most congested and insanitary parts of New York—the Italian district of the lower east side—where very large families live and work on the narrow edge of starvation in very small, dark, three roomed apartments, in the midst of tuberculosis and other diseases. The garments lie on dirty floors in the midst of the swarming family life by day, and are used as bedding at night."

The True Union Man.

If the clothing you purchase does not bear the union label of the United Garment Workers you are employing nonunion labor in the work of making your clothes.

If you purchase partly union label garments and partly garments without the union label, you are then running a sort of a free shop, giving employment to both union and nonunion men. A union man employing nonunion men! Just think of it!

If you are really a union man, you will buy no clothing or other articles unless they bear the union label.

Labor Notes.

Charles H. Moyer has been re-elected president of the Western Federation of Miners by a large majority.

The Sixth regiment of Toledo, on being relieved from duty at Columbus, made up a purse of \$500 for the families of the street car strikers.

Charles Fear, editor of the Missouri Trades Unionist published at Joplin, has been unanimously nominated for the legislature in his district by the Republicans.

Of the 30,000 miners affected by the strike order in the Missouri district about 5,500 are in Kansas, about 8,500 in Missouri, 9,000 in Oklahoma and about 3,000 in Arkansas.

A 3 per cent increase in wages, ef-

fective Aug. 1, has been granted the employees in the building and bridges department of the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad.

The wages of thousands of paper mill workers in New Hampshire, New York state, Vermont, Maine and Massachusetts have been advanced an average of 5 per cent by the International Paper company.

INDUSTRIAL DEPENDENCE.

The Clog That Hampers Solution of the Labor Problem.

The Rev. Percy S. Grant has a thoughtful article in the August issue of the North American Review on "What the Workingmen Want." It is a reflection upon socialism and democracy and links the two together thus:

"A great deal of what we call socialism is only democracy getting its second wind. Disappointment at the results of political democracy was inevitable. The modern experiment of democracy, it must be remembered, coincided with those great mechanical inventions, the cotton gin, the spinning jenny, steam, electricity, etc., which by making it possible to run thousands of machines under one roof have encouraged concentration of capital. The kit of tools of the old fashioned workman is now an archaeological curiosity. Our skilled workmen are dependent upon access to machinery capitalistically owned. Political independence and industrial dependence cannot live together. The same man cannot represent both without complaint and confusion. The same country cannot contain both without disrupting ebullitions. The world was never so friendly a spot to the human spirit as it is today. The Hebrew on the eve of the Messianic coming, the southern slave on the threshold of emancipation, the crusader in sight of the holy sepulcher, must have had the exultant expectations, 'the thrills,' as we say, that a glimpse of industrial brotherhood, upon a purely human basis, is giving millions of wage earners today."

In industrial dependence he finds the main difficulty for employer and employee:

"Industrial conditions do not reproduce this relationship. The employer and employee do not acknowledge identity of interest. They treat each other on the whole as enemies. Labor is a 'commodity' to be purchased by capital. How can you expect loyalty from a commodity? If one listens for any length of time to workmen discussing these matters he discovers that the way out of the difficulty is not an 'insoluble conundrum,' but is a simple and logical step. It is nothing less than an application of self government to industry."

GOMPERS AND MOYER.

Federation Leaders Working in Harmony For Merger.

President Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor has received a letter from President Moyer of the Western Federation of Miners denying that in his speech before the recent miners' convention at Denver he had made a statement disparaging either to the American Federation of Labor or to Mr. Gompers as its president. Mr. Moyer explained that he had told the delegates that Mr. Gompers, after thirty years of service, should be retired by the labor movement on a pension for the good work he had done. If the policy of the American Federation was wrong, he declared he had also said to the delegates, it was their duty to endeavor to change it by becoming a part of the national body.

Mr. Moyer asked Mr. Gompers to name the place and time for a conference between representatives of the American Federation of Labor and the Western Federation of Miners to continue the negotiations looking to a merger.

German Trade Union Schools.

Germany is making great strides in education. Those who were denied opportunities in their youth are given the privilege of attending night schools conducted at the expense of trade unions, and held for two hours each night. There are over fifty of these schools in Berlin. A college is located in the Central Labor temple. Twelve professors are engaged, and the attendance is limited to seventy. These are sent by trade unions throughout the empire and their expenses are paid by the unions. Three courses are taught each year. They are of six weeks' duration each, and the school continues in session six hours each day. Trade union leaders are tutored in political economy, social science, commercial law, the science of government and kindred subjects. The Berlin university does not permit its professors to teach in this college.

Discipline Needed in Industry Too.

A German captain has been dismissed from the army for brutality toward his soldiers. As yet no American "captain of industry" has been brought to book for brutality toward his child laborers. But, then, you know, the American children have the sacred right to quit, barring injunctions, starvation and a few other "sacred American institutions."

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