

NO BONUS SYSTEM

Mitchell Opposed to Brandeis' Economy Plan.

A MENACE TO WORKINGMEN.

Specialization of Work and Payment of Premiums Tend to Mental and Physical Deterioration of the Toiler. Bad Business Policy.

John Mitchell, vice president of the American Federation of Labor, now member of the executive committee of the National Civic federation and one of the most prominent labor leaders in America, opposes what he believes to be some of the means advocated by Louis D. Brandeis to save \$1,000,000 a day for the railroads of the country.

Mr. Mitchell in a recent interview said he held Mr. Brandeis in the highest esteem, that he was a valued friend of labor, that he was a deep thinker and a man possessed of profound economic knowledge. He did not want to misinterpret anything Mr. Brandeis had said, and if he said anything not justified by what Mr. Brandeis had advocated it was because he had misunderstood it:

"Mr. Brandeis has been saying that some \$300,000,000 a year could be saved by the railroads in the cost of transportation, according to the newspapers. There is a general belief that he advocates as a means to that saving the premium or bonus system of paying the workmen and further specialization in work. I do not believe that the workmen employed by the railroads should do any more work than they are now doing. I do not believe that anything can safely be saved on them and that if there is a waste of \$300,000,000 a year it lies outside the sphere of cost occupied by the workmen. And I am against the premium or bonus system and against too much specialization.

"First as to specialization. The thought should not be so much about the machine as about the man in front of the machine. There is a point in the specialization of work beyond which it is not safe to go because of the deterioration of the workman and ultimately of the kind of work he does. I think that point has about been reached in the railroads and in most of the other large industries.

"Speaking recently to an interviewer, Dr. William Mabon, superintendent of the Manhattan State Hospital For the Insane, said that monotony of labor is a frequent cause of insanity. Let me read you what he said."

The article quoted Dr. Mabon as saying, for example, that in a shoe factory one man has a machine to punch holes in strips of leather for the laces; that all day long for six days in the week he punches holes. That kind of work gets to be absolutely automatic, and many workmen deteriorate while doing it. The brain cells that are not used in the piece of specialized work, which is most of those in the brain, finally go dead from lack of use, and then the worker is ready for the insane asylum.

"This horrible monotony of specialized labor," Dr. Mabon was quoted as saying, "is doing a great deal to unbalance the minds of the workers."

"It is best that the workman use all the knowledge he has," went on Mr. Mitchell. "There is nothing so restful as variety. Even if the work itself is not intrinsically hard, it deteriorates the workman if it is always one little piece of the same kind.

"I don't know whether or not Mr.

Brandeis is an advocate of the piece system. Organized labor is against that, because it speeds the men up too fast and causes deterioration in the man, who should always be the first concern.

"It is sometimes charged that the labor unions tend to level down workmen. This is not true. Labor unions do not say that an employer shall not pay an especially competent and effective workman something in addition to what he pays the others. They are but fighting for at least a fair pay for an honest day's work by the average workman.

"Organized labor is against the premium or bonus system of payment to the workman because that is designed to speed up the workman beyond the safety line. That is bad economy. The employer who uses the system may notice an advantage at first, but it is not long before the workman begins to deteriorate under the strain; then his work deteriorates also, and presently the loss in his productivity amounts to much more than the temporary gain.

"Of course there could not be a great deal more specialization in the actual running of the trains than there now is. In the very nature of the occupation a man must do work of considerable variety, but in the shops there is opportunity for minute specialization, as in the case of the shoe factory used as an example by Dr. Mabon. There the specialization has already been carried to the edge of the danger line, and it should be carried no further. Organized labor will oppose any attempt to carry it further.

"The men who do the work of the railroads, both outside and in the shops, are doing all they should do now. They are the fastest and most efficient of their kind in the world. If there be any waste, then, in the railroads of the country it is not in the men. I have no criticism to make of Mr. Brandeis' recommendations for effecting further economies in the running of the railroads except in so far as they relate to labor."

Hopeless.

Pat—I say, Mick, I'm very hard up. Can you lend me the loan of a pound?
Mick—Sure, Pat, to tell yer the thruth, I haven't a bob on me. Every penny I get I give to my poor old mother.

Pat—Be jabbers, Mick, I've just been talking to yer mother, and she tells me ye never give her a farthing.

Mick—Oh, well, Pat, if I don't give my poor old mother a farthing, what sort of a chance have you got of getting any?—London Mail.

An Inquisitive Scot.

Scotchmen are fond of an argument and delight to find flaws in an opponent's logic. Two blacksmiths were once conversing as to which was the first trade in the world. One insisted that it must have been gardening and quoted from Genesis, "Adam was put into the garden of Eden to dress it and keep it." "Aye, John," retorted the other, who had stood up for his own trade, "but wha made the spades?"

A Carlyle View.

Carlyle compared the advance of the world to the progress of some drunken man who, reeling from one side of the street to the other, slowly and at the expense of much wasted effort finally arrives at his destination.

Cutting.

Maud—Mr. Brownleigh tries to flirt with every pretty girl he sees. Ethel—I've seen him try to flirt with you too.—Boston Transcript.

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