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### TRADE UNIONISM.

The real, material circumstances of life touch us at the present time. We are hungry now, poorly housed now, poorly clothed now, in trouble from overwork and underpay now. And the time to study the mastery of these troubles is now.

The great, stirring, irremovable, convincing truth of trade unionism is, then, its effectiveness, right at hand. That effectiveness stands as a firm foundation for things better and better.

A hundred times we have said it, and we say it again—that trade unionism contains within itself the potentialities of working class regeneration. It is practical democracy; it affords within itself daily object lessons in ideal justice; it breathes into the working classes the spirit of unity; it provides a field for noble comradeship, for deeds of loyalty, for self sacrifice beneficial to one's fellow workers. In contending for the political and economic rights of its members the trade union teaches those rights to the entire working class. And on a knowledge of those rights society will establish its future development.—Samuel Gompers.

### PERILS OF WORKERS.

Conditions in New York Factories a Menace to Life.

Investigation will probably be the least part of the work of the New York legislative commission which was appointed to consider conditions under which manufacturing is carried on in first and second class cities and which has just begun its labors, says the New York Tribune. Some investigation will, of course, be necessary. The disclosures of the coroner's inquest following the Asch building disaster and the work of the committee on safety have already demonstrated to a considerable degree the conditions which endanger the lives of multitudes of workers, and these will be at the disposal of the commission.

Recommendations for remedial legislation are always the purpose of the work of a commission of this kind, and there are certain obvious things for this body to do in that direction. It should straighten out the conflict over inspection of factories and lofts as to fire escapes. Responsibility is now divided among the state labor department, the fire department and the bureau of buildings. Power to enforce the laws requiring fire protection should be centralized. Dr. Keyes, executive secretary of the committee on safety, says that inspection of several hundred factory buildings in Manhattan and the Bronx showed conditions in more than two-thirds of them hazardous to life. The fact that defects are so widespread indicates laxity, which justifies a thorough tightening of the buildings, labor and fire regulations in respect of protection to workers.

### What Is a Living Wage?

The governor of Massachusetts has appointed a commission to investigate women's wages and conditions of labor in that state. "How much does it cost a working woman to live in health and comfort?" "How much does it cost her to live in filth and rags?" "How many women workers get wages enough to live in health, and how many do not?" These are a few of the questions to which the commission will endeavor to supply answers, as

they are fundamental in every reform. Suggestions have been offered that the commission should determine the amount necessary to provide wage earning women a comfortable subsistence. A smaller commission in Wisconsin has drafted and submitted to the legislature a minimum wage law based upon the laws now in force in portions of Australia.

### Back Pay For Printers.

Proceedings of recent sessions of the national arbitration board include two scale contentions which had been under consideration for many months past, but which were finally disposed of to the advantage of the Typographical union. In the case from Bellingham, Wash., employees of the American Printing company, publishing the Morning Reveille and Evening American, received an increase in wages of \$1.50 per week, to begin Jan. 1, 1910, which means substantially eighteen months' back pay. At Vancouver the printers employed on the Morning News-Advertiser and the Evening Province were awarded an increase in pay of \$4 a week, to commence with Jan. 1, 1911, which means practically six months' back pay.

### Guarding the Union Shop.

The Masons and Builders' association and the Bricklayers' union of San Francisco signed a reciprocal agreement recently to maintain the present wages and hours of labor until Aug. 15, 1915. This means that two of the most powerful labor unions of the coast have taken this early action in order to prevent a declaration of an open shop in building the Panama Pacific exposition.

Usually such agreements are signed only for one year, but this year it was determined to guard against any changes by making it extend over four years. It is expected that other unions will follow suit and thus prevent a repetition of the open shop which prevailed during the work on the World's fair at Chicago.

### FIGHT OVER LABEL.

California Federation of Labor and Judge at Odds.

Judge Van Fleet of the United States circuit court recently made permanent the injunction restraining the California State Federation of Labor, the San Francisco Labor council and the Building Trades council from boycotting the goods manufactured by the Loewe Hat company of Danbury, Conn.

The executive council of the State Federation of Labor declares in a resolution that "notwithstanding the injunction in the Loewe case the right and duty still remain to refrain from purchasing hats which do not bear the label of the United Hatters of North America, which right and duty they earnestly urge all members and friends to observe in the future, as in the past." This resolution puts it squarely up to the judge and shows conspicuously the fighting proclivities of the California trade unionists.

### Opposes the Boy Scouts.

In his annual report to the convention of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor, recently in session at Lacrosse, Assemblyman Frank J. Weber of Milwaukee, organizer and chief officer of the state body, attacked the boy scout movement, declaring that the boy scouts were the allies of capitalism under the guise of patriotism. "The boy scout movement should be shunned by every boy in America who scorns to become a legalized, salaried, professional murderer to serve the interests of a class of privilege," he said.