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NEWS OF THE
LABOR WORLD

Boston.—Several hundred thousand operatives in mills and factories of Massachusetts and Rhode Island began work on a shorter schedule of working hours in consequence of the new 56-hour laws passed by the last two state legislatures becoming effective. While the new statute applies only to women and minors, the manufacturers find it impossible to separate the departments so that the men can work longer than the women and children, and have therefore brought all their operatives under the new schedule, which allows them to work not more than 56 hours a week. In Rhode Island it is estimated that the 20,000 operatives affected will lose a total of 2,080,000 working hours a year. Many of the great textile mills in Lowell, Lawrence, Fall River and New Bedford, had already reduced their working hours in conformity to the policy of curtailment of production.

Paris, France.—Official statistics of the strikes which occurred in France last year have just been issued, and they show that there were in all 1,073, in which 99,042 persons, mostly men, took part, leading to idle days estimated at the huge figure of 1,720,743, including 241,672 days lost by the fact that 9,196 non-strikers were unable to work. This is, however, an improvement on 1907, when there were 1,275 strikes, with a loss of 3,562,220 days, and a still greater improvement on 1906, when the total number of lost days amounted to 9,438,594. It is explained that the strike movement has a marked tendency to coincide with prosperous years, workmen expecting to obtain more concessions from a thriving employer than from one who can just make both ends meet. Most of the strikes have emanated from the refusal of an increase of pay.

Washington.—Officers of the American Federation of Labor have issued a call to the 1,540,000 members of the organization, calling on them to subscribe to a fund with which a bitter fight is to be begun against the United States Steel Corporation. The corporation, the call sets forth, is inimical to both the interests of labor and to the country at large, and is termed "a bold and daring violator of the laws. The sum of \$154,000 will be raised by this first appeal, but further calls will be issued as the fight progresses. The action is the result of the conference held in Pittsburg on December 13 and 14 between the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, the Tinplate Workers' Protective association and the Longshoremen's and Seamen's union.

Chicago.—Committees representing the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and Order of Railway Conductors on nearly forty railroads east of the Illinois Central and north of the Chesapeake & Ohio presented new wage schedules to the general managers. A standard scale on all lines is asked, which would require advances ranging from five to forty per cent. About 125,000 employees are interested. Locomotive firemen employed on the same railroads are also considering a new wage schedule equal to that paid for the same work west of Chicago. The result will be known in a few weeks.

Boston.—Clarence L. Mitchell, system chairman for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers on the B. & M. system, is authority for the statement that the general committee of that organization for the road has not as yet met to consider any wage increase requests. It is stated, however, from a railroad source, that a request for a better arrangement of hours and working conditions for the engineers of that system has been suggested.

Memphis, Tenn.—Believing in charity of a definite and helpful form, Memphis Typographical union has incorporated in its book of laws a provision that annually an assessment of one-half of one per cent. on the October earnings of its members shall be levied, the sum realized to be divided equally between the day nursery and the founding home.

London, Eng.—In reference to the workings of the liability laws of Great Britain, the usual plan is weekly payments of compensation, but under some circumstances, as where a workman is incapacitated for the work in which he is engaged, and he desires to go into other business, an arrangement is made by which he receives a lump sum.

Boston.—National executive board of the federation of state, city and town employers' unions has decided that the annual state convention shall be held at Lynn, Mass., February 6.

Mount Vernon, N. Y.—John Mitchell, the labor leader, who was asked by the Temple club of this city to describe what he regarded as an ideal relation between capital and labor, has replied as follows: "It is my firm conviction that the ideal of trade unionism will be attained when a strong organization of labor, supplied with an ample reserve fund and embracing every workman in its trade, shall find itself face to face with an equally strong association of employers embracing every employer in the trade. The two will then meet on a basis of absolute equality."

Philadelphia.—At a special meeting of the board of directors of the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company held here, it was decided to give \$500 free insurance to all employees in the service of the company. It was also decided to give pensions of \$20 a month to all employees who have been 25 years in the employ of the company and have attained the age of 65 years. A new scale of wages, to become effective on July 1, 1910, was also adopted. On that date the wages of motormen and conductors, which have been 22 cents an hour, will be increased to 23 cents. These wages will be increased one cent an hour every two years until the maximum of 25 cents an hour is reached. A similar increase will be granted the employees of the elevated road. The maximum for motormen on the latter line will be 28 cents an hour.

Indianapolis.—Four additional paid organizers of the Journeymen Barbers' International union, headquarters of which are in this city, will start out in the field next Monday. The country has been divided into four districts—eastern, central, western and Canadian, and an organizer will be placed in each of these districts. There will also be a general organizer, who will travel in these various districts. The barbers' international is showing substantial growth, having issued ten new charters since November 1. The charters were issued to locals in the following cities: Anadarko, Okla.; Columbia, Mo.; Lethbridge, Alberta; New Rochelle, N. Y.; Charleroi, Pa.; Mangum, Okla.; Watertown, S. D.; Spartanburg, S. C.; North Yakima, Wash., and Hutchinson, Kan.

Chicago.—No increase will be granted the switchmen in the Chicago district unless it should come through a board of arbitration. The managers submitted their proposition to the union committee, and in substance it refused every demand which the union made. The demand of the men for time and one-half for over-time and Sundays was answered by the statement that in the movement of passengers and freight the railroads got no extra compensation for holidays and that work performed on such days must be regarded as regular work and paid for at regular rates.

South Bethlehem, Pa.—As a result of a conference between General Manager Maguire of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company and a committee of conductors, the conductors will receive substantial increases in their pay. Ten hours instead of 12 will constitute a day's work. Passenger conductors will receive \$3.90 a day instead of \$3.50. Through freight conductors will be paid \$3.50 instead of three dollars, and the wages of local freight conductors will be increased from \$3.55 to \$3.85. About 1,200 men will benefit.

San Francisco.—Every law pertaining to or bearing on labor and in force in California at the present time has been condensed into one small compact volume by the state labor commissioner. This is to meet a constant and increasing demand for such a publication by lawyers, public officials and others interested in various ways.

Boston.—Thirty-five hundred conductors and motormen employed by the Boston Elevated Railroad Company received New Year's gifts from the company of \$20 and \$25 respectively as a reward for good records in 1909. The company distributed this year \$75,000.

Sacramento, Cal.—At the next meeting of the federated trades council an effort will be made to amend the constitution to the extent of making it obligatory for every delegate to wear a union-made hat.

Boston.—More than 100 delegates will represent New England at the biennial convention of the railroad clerks, to be held at New Orleans next April.

Washington.—A convention of the International Transport Workers' Federation meets in Copenhagen, Denmark, next August.

Laramie, Wyo.—a state federation comprising in its membership about 6,000 miners was organized recently in Wyoming.

New York.—Organizers are at work in this city trying to form an international union of typewriters and stenographers.

Augusta, Me.—A new eight-hour law has gone into effect in the mills and factories of this state. The running time hitherto has been 60 hours weekly.

Washington.—Hungary has almost 150,000 trade unionists.

Washington.—Since the adjournment of the American Federation of Labor convention, renewed activity in the ranks of the International Mill Employers' union has resulted in the return to the union of five locals, that have not only paid up all arrears, but have been successful in obtaining the use of the union label for their product.

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