

# Mayor Harrison Discusses Capital and Labor

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**C**HICAGO, March 24.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—It is an odd thing that one family should carry a big democratic city like this in its inside pocket. It is fifty-seven years since Chicago was incorporated, and more than one-fourth of that time it has been ruled by the Harrisons. Some of its most turbulent days were passed under Carter H. Harrison, the elder, and for the last seven years it has thriven under the iron hand of Carter H. Harrison, the younger. It is thriving under his administration today, growing bigger, broader and richer, notwithstanding its strikes, its communities of socialists and anarchists and its holocausts of fire.

I like these Harrisons. They have an honest ring to them when you fling them down on the counter of municipal and national politics. They all come from the same stock. Carter Harrison's great, great grandfather was the father of Benjamin Harrison, who signed the Declaration of Independence, and whose son, William H. Harrison, was the ninth president of the United States.

Young Carter's great-grandfather was the first cousin of John C. Breckinridge and also of President Benjamin Harrison; and his own father was a statesman of radical ideas and no aversion to using the machinery of politics to carry them out.

The present mayor of Chicago is a chip of the old block. He is a politician, but at the same time is conservative, practical and safe. He is a friend of the working man, but is ready to enforce the laws when the business interests are attacked; and as such he today forms a part of the grist which is being ground out between the upper and nether millstones of capital and labor. Indeed, it may be because the grinding is so hard that he is tired of the job. At least he tells me that he is so and wants to retire.

The governing of Chicago is no small matter and its worries have begun to sprinkle the mayor's hair with gray. This is no goody-goody Sunday school town, and its 2,000,000 people need careful supervision. The city covers a vast area. It has 4,000 miles of streets, 2,000 miles of sewers and it costs about \$2,000,000 a year to pay its running expenses. The mayor has 12,000 employees under him, and there are also the city council and subordinate officers, but it is Carter Harrison who does the thinking and acting, and it is he who gets the blame.

The reason of my call was to ask about the labor situation. I began with: "Mr. Mayor, why is Chicago the strike center of the United States? There are more labor troubles here than in any other place in the country?"

"One reason," said Mayor Harrison, "is that we do more business than any other place, and also that our business is more diversified. Chicago is perhaps the manufacturing center of the United States. It has great factories and factories of almost every kind. Pittsburg, for instance, leads the country in iron making, but we have the Illinois Steel company here, which is one of the largest in the world. We do more packing than any other city, and we have car works, furniture works, and, in fact, almost every kind of works. The result is that if there is a strike in any branch of business the Chicago branch of that business strikes in sympathy. This gives us a variety of strikes, which are magnified by some of the newspapers, whose sensational reports are telegraphed all over the country."

"Then Chicago is not as bad as it is painted?" said I.

"No, it is not," replied Mayor Harrison. "It is not an angel city, but it is far from being the devil city that some people who have never been here think it to be. On the whole it is about as good a city as any in the country and just about as full of Christian charity, common decency, good order and brotherly love."

"But you certainly have many violent laboring men, Mr. Mayor. How about this stopping funerals and stationing pickets about the houses of the dead to keep non-union men from aiding in their interment?"

"Most of those stories are lies," said Mayor Harrison. "The union drivers did not refuse to drive hearses, as has been alleged. They would not drive the carriages, but it was the liveries who hold back the hearses, saying they would not let them go out without the carriages went, too. All such statements were exaggerations. As to picketing the dead, as soon as I heard there was any danger of such a thing I ordered the police to see that no stragglers or persons with evil intent were allowed to linger about within two blocks of any house in which there was a death or within that distance of a church where a funeral ceremony was being held."

"And then," continued the mayor, "why single out Chicago for the sole condemnation of the public when other cities have been equally guilty as to strikes in respect to funerals? The same was the case in St. Louis; but so far Chicago has received all the opprobrium and St. Louis is hardly mentioned."

"How does your labor compare with that of other cities as to peace and quietness?"



MAYOR CARTER H. HARRISON OF CHICAGO AT HIS DESK.

"It is just about the same," said Mayor Harrison. "If we have more strikes it is only because we have more men and more business."

"How about the nonunion man, has he any chance for work in Chicago?"

"Yes. We have a large number of establishments which employ nonunion men only and many which employ both unionists and nonunionists. The nonunion worker not only gets a job here, but he is protected in it, all statements to the contrary notwithstanding."

"Could a nonunion factory be started in Chicago with any hope of success?"

"Yes, if that success depended solely on the use of nonunion workmen. Its men would not be molested and it would have as fair a show in that regard as any union factory. As to the financial results, these would lie with the owners of the business and their management thereof."

"Do you think, Mr. Harrison, that trade unionism has, on the whole, benefited the workmen of Chicago?"

"Yes, I do," replied the mayor. "I think organized labor has done much to improve the conditions of our working classes. It has caused them to be more respected, it has increased their wages and shortened their hours of work. At the same time I do not deny that organized labor has abused its privileges. This it has done at times, but I have no doubt that on the whole the movement has been for the good of the whole class of workmen, unionists and nonunionists."

"But can you hold the union men back from violence at times of strikes?"

"I do not like the form of that question," said the young mayor. "The unions disclaim all responsibility for acts of violence. I will say, however, that we can hold and do hold every hot-head among the strikers in check, and that we propose to do so if it requires the whole police force of the city. In our last great street railway strike the leaders of the unions came to me before the strike was declared and said that it would be run on peaceful methods. Nevertheless, I soon found that certain hot-heads were attacking the cars and trying to prevent their moving."

"I then called out the police force. I put a certain number of officers in citizens' clothes in each car, and they went with such passengers or nonunion men as rode on the car to their homes to insure their protection. The property owners, the public and the nonunion workmen certainly had the protection of the city in that strike. It was the same in the Kellogg Switchboard company strike, where we prohibited any outside teams coming within a certain distance of the factory."

"But do not the courts here discriminate in favor of the trades unions?"

"The trades unionists are always claiming that the contrary is the fact," said the mayor. "No, I don't think so. We have a bad system of punishments here, allowing the judges to give indeterminate sentences—that is, they send a man to prison for a term based upon good behavior, and this opens up chances for influence, or pull, as it is called, to aid in his release. That, however, is an evil of the law and not of the executive."

"One of the great troubles in these conflicts of labor and capital," Mr. Harrison went on, "is that both laborer and capitalist are too often illiberal, brutal or, to say

the least, too inconsiderate of the rights of the other. I wish I could show you the letters I get from both sides. I have some from the men denouncing their employers; and I have some from the employers advising me to quell strikes by means of Gatling guns, rifles and cold steel. Some of them ask me to have the police fire at the mob and shoot to kill. Such men are worse than the worst of the strikers. It does me good to write them what I think of them. No," concluded the mayor, "what we need is more consideration on both sides. We want more brotherly love. We want the Golden Rule."

"But, Mr. Mayor, is the situation not growing better?"

"I think it is," was the reply. "The older unions are becoming more conservative and the employers are beginning to see that the demands of the workmen after all are only business propositions, based on the sale of their commodities, that is, the muscle and skill which they have to put into the product, and that the matter should be treated as a business one."

"You spoke of the unions shortening hours, Mr. Harrison. What is the common working day in Chicago?"

"It is the eight-hour day," was the reply. "But can a big city like this be run on an eight-hour basis?"

"We are running it so. All government jobs are given out on that basis."

"I see it stated that your labor troubles are driving capital out of Chicago?"

"I don't believe it," replied the mayor. "At any rate the city is growing rapidly. Our factories are increasing in size and many new ones are going up. We are in a healthy financial condition and our business is growing every year."

"What is your population now?" I asked.

"It is more than 2,000,000," was the reply. "The federal census gives us less, but the postal census and the directory census give us more. We have also an estimate based on the number of school children which makes our population considerably in excess of 2,000,000. The federal census is paid for by the number of names and in a population containing as many foreigners as Chicago, the enumerators have probably skipped some because they would not take the trouble to verify their statements."

I here asked Mayor Harrison several questions as to order in Chicago with a view to learning something of the wickedness of the city. He said:

"I do not think Chicago is any worse than any other city of the United States. It is a good fair average, and its people will grade up with those of any other locality. One reason for the bad reputation which the city has in some quarters comes from their nonappreciation of our highness. We have now over 2,000,000 people. If a city of 200,000 has two assaults in a given time it attracts no attention, but if Chicago, which has 2,000,000, has twenty assaults they hold up their hands in horror, not reflecting that this number is only proportionately the same as that of the 200,000 town."

"As to safety, I have been in Chicago about forty-two years, and have been traveling through all parts of it at all hours of the day and night. I never carry a gun and have never thought that I needed one. A man's property, life and person as safe here as in any part of the United States."

"There is one thing," continued the mayor, "that might make Chicago more lively than other cities. This is its vast

floating population. We are so situated that we have tens of thousands of men for the winter. We are right on the lake, and a large part of the vast army of lake workers come here at the close of navigation to spend what they have earned during the rest of the year. We have thousands of railroad workers, including Italians, Greeks and others who labor in the spring, summer and fall on the various trunk lines, going as far west as the Rockies, and we have the men who work on the farms in the summer. The result is that we have many men who are half idle during the winter, and such men are always hard to control."

"What do you think, Mr. Mayor," said I, "about the city ownership of great public utilities, such as the street cars and light plants?"

"I believe in them," said the mayor, "but I think that all such matters should be very carefully studied, and that nothing should be done until the city shows that it has the capacity to manage them. I think the day will come when Chicago will own such things. As it is, we are now putting a clause in all our new charters giving the city the option of taking over the plant after a certain number of years."

"I should like to ask a word about politics, Mr. Harrison," said I. "Do you think the democratic party has a fighting chance for success in the coming presidential election?"

"I most certainly do. The republicans have by no means a sure thing, and I believe that they are losing ground today in the state of Illinois."

"Who will be the candidates?"

"It is a foregone conclusion that Roosevelt will lead the republican party."

"But I mean the democratic candidate. Who will lead your party?"

"I can't say," was the reply. "Will you?"

"No," said Mayor Harrison. "I have no such ambition. I am not chasing rainbows and that dream has not entered my head. We have a congressman, J. R. Williams, who will probably be the candidate of Illinois. As for me, I am not anxious for anything but to do my work here and to retire at the end of this term. The chief thing that troubles me now is to get enough money to run the city."

"How much do you want?"

"We want a lot more than we can get, but our charter and the state laws are such that we cannot get what we ought to have. We need just now about \$14,000,000 for the city alone."

"That is not a great amount for Chicago," said I. "It takes more than \$90,000,000 a year to run New York."

"I only wish we had one-third of it," said Mayor Harrison. "We could use it and use it well."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

## Honest Wraggles

"You look to me," remarked the severe old gentleman, "like a man who would spend his last penny for beer!"

"You do me an injustice," retorted Weary Wraggles, "and also show yourself lacking in information, sir. You can't get no beer for a penny. I would play my last one inter de slot machine in hopes of gettin' a chip good for a whole glass of de fluid. See?"—Chicago Tribune.