

# Talk with Uncle Sam's Industrial Diplomat

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ASHINGTON, D. C.—Here in brief is the story of the man who represents twenty and million honey-handed laborers of the United States in the cabinet of President Wilson. Born in Scotland, fifty years ago, the son of a miner. Coming to the United States at the age of 8 and at 9 delving in the coal pits of the Allegheny mountains. From that time on, until he was 30, his boyhood and young manhood was spent in the darkness, swinging the pick, drilling and blasting and loading the coal on the cars. Then a fireman on a railroad locomotive and a worker at odd jobs; at sawmilling and ditching. Then mining between times and tilling mountain land on the shares. At last a pretty farm owner of 200 acres of hills and hollows, and finally, to cut short the story, a member of congress, who was re-elected again and again as a representative of labor, and now a cabinet minister with a salary of \$12,000 a year.



Secretary William B. Wilson

This sounds like a story of the days of Aladdin. It is only the plain, simple annals of the evolution which is constantly going on in our American life. It shows what a boy can make of himself and how, with everything apparently against him, he need not despair.

**Life of Manual Labor.**  
So much by way of introduction to my interview with Mr. Wilson, Secretary of Labor, I give it to show you that he has a right to represent the workingmen of the United States in our national government. The information came from the secretary upon my asking whether he had ever worked with his hands. He replied:

"The greater part of my life has been spent in hard, manual labor. I swung a pick in the coal mines for twenty-seven years, and that as a miner, not as a boss. I entered the mines as a boy to help my father load coal. My father was a miner, and all the money we got came from the amount of coal he could mine. He was paid by the ton and upon the output depended our living. This was the situation when I reached the age of 9 years. Then father had a bad attack of lumbago. His head was so weak and so painful that he could not lift the coal from the floor of the mine to the cars. He was all right from his waist upward, and could still sit on the floor of the mine and undercut the coal with a pick, but he could not stoop to load it. I was taken down into the mines and did the loading. Later on, he taught me how to aid him in drilling, and I finally learned all kinds of mining. Father and I worked together for seven years, and after that I had a place for myself. I continued mining coal for twenty years longer, and later on mined coal in the winter time and worked on the farm in the summer."

**Educated at Home.**  
"Your wages must have been small in those days?"

"Yes, they were small. Until I was 23 years of age, I do not think I ever made as much as \$4 a month the year round. I sometimes made as high as \$10 a month, but lean seasons always succeeded the fat ones and kept down the average."

"These words of the secretary were in good English; and his talk throughout was more like that of a college bred man than one whose life had been spent in hard, manual labor. I wondered and asked him where he got his education. He replied:

"I could not go to school on account of my work, but I was fortunate in that my father was one of those argumentative Scotchmen who not only loved to debate, but gloried in having his facts backed by the best of authorities. He was not an educated man, and could not read very well, and so made me read to him. My mother, who had a common school education, taught me my letters, and I soon learned to read. After that father kept me reading to him every night, and by the time I was 9 or 10 years of age I had read the whole of Smith's 'Wealth of Nations' and other books on political economy. I had read a great deal of Chambers' 'Information for the People,' 'The Science of the Bible,' some works of DeQuintin and a little later on I read Burns and Campbell, Shelley and other poets. We had also Scott and Dickens, and I got to know them. As to the Bible, father was a rigid Presbyterian. In Scotland he belonged to what they called 'the Wee Kirk,' and, of course, we read a great deal of the scriptures. As I look back upon those days I can see that this was good literary training, and can realize how much effect it had upon my mind. I had a good memory, and this was stimulated by my father calling upon me to corroborate his quotations from the authorities used in his arguments."

"Shortly after I began work in the mines," the secretary continued, "our community arranged for a night school. Every pupil paid \$1 a month to attend school, and for a time I was able to attend that. I did also considerable studying at home, and so in one way and another I have gotten what little education I have. I was for a time a printer and stuck type for the Bowditch Advertiser. This taught me punctuation and gave me some insight into grammatical construction. But altogether, as you can see, my education has been very little."

**Always a Union Man.**  
"When did you first become connected with labor organizations?"  
"I can hardly remember when I was not a part of them. I became a limited member of a labor union when I was thirteen, and I have been more or less associated with unions ever since. I am a union man now, and have my union card. When I was 13 I was victimized for my activity in the mines as a trade unionist, and was ordered to leave. That was what drove me to the west and made me a fireman on a railway loco-

close regulated as the work of a factory or in the various industries. As to our other industries, however, there is no doubt but that the eight-hour day is practical and beneficial both to the employer and the employe."  
"Do you think we will ever have less than an eight-hour day?"  
"That is possible. There are some industries in England where the day is now less than eight hours. This has been the case for the last thirty years in the coal mines of Northumberland, where the men have been working only six hours a day."

**Conditions Are Improving.**  
"Are the conditions of labor improving?"  
"Yes, there is no doubt of that."  
"What would you say about organized labor as a trust? Why should it not be handled on the same ground as other monopolies?"

"I have already answered that question, but I would say that an organization should not be opposed or destroyed simply because it is an organization. The laws for centuries have permitted the organization of corporations, and such persons will be continued. The opposition to trusts and monopolies arises because they enable a few men to dictate to the producer what he shall receive for his production and to the consumer what he shall pay for the things he consumes. This can never be the case with labor organizations. Such an organization cannot be composed of a few individuals. It must be an organization of the multitude, and it must be always for the purpose of endeavoring to secure for the producer an equitable share of that which he produces and at the same time it can never be an organization which will regulate the price to the consumer. The labor organization is thus founded upon an entirely different basis from the capital organization. It should not be regarded as a trust. It cannot be a monopoly in that sense of the word."

"Then you think it should be governed by different laws?"  
"Yes. The laws should be adapted to it, and based upon the difference of condition which actually exists."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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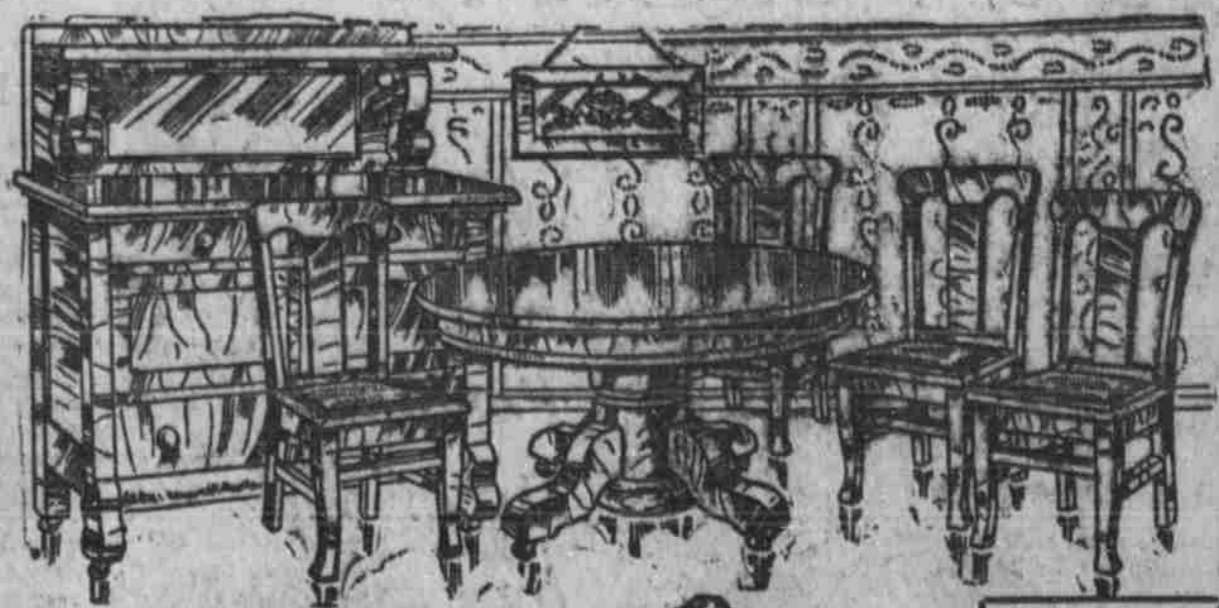
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C. M. P.: The neck should receive similar attention to that given the complexion, so color and texture of skin will be the same. A yellow neck and a white face give a discordant effect. I advise using for both neck and complexion, the treatment recommended to "Monsieur."  
E. M.: First, stop yawning. If you would get rid of the lines between the eyes. The best application for such lines, and all wrinkles, is a solution of powdered sorbolite, 1 oz., dissolved in witch hazel, in pint. Rub the face in this daily until entirely relieved.  
Monsieur: You hardly need such a list of cosmetics as you mention. Ordinary mercerized soap will keep you more than any or all of them. It will gradually absorb the withered, discolored complexion and you will soon have a new, youthful and healthy-looking skin. You need not get more than an ounce of the wax, which will last you a year, and any drug-seller will give you a sample. Apply nightly like cold cream, washing it off mornings.—Woman's Realm—Advertisement.

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