

Wilson's Opinion of Labor

Before He Entered Politics

New York City, June 16, 1909.

Hon. Woodrow Wilson,
President Princeton University,
Princeton, N. J.

Dear Sir:—

In the New York Times of June 14, which purports to give extracts of your baccalaureate address to the students of Princeton University, you are quoted as follows:—

"You know what the usual standard of the employe is in our day. It is to give as little as he may for his wages. Labor is standardized by the trade unions, and this is the standard to which it is made to conform. No one is suffered to do more than the average workman can do. In some trades and handicrafts no one is suffered to do more than the least skilful of his fellows can do within the hours allotted to a day's labor, and no one may work out of hours at all or volunteer anything beyond the minimum."

Now, your reported remarks strike me as being so extraordinary—so different from what I, as a member of organized labor, have found to be the facts—that I feel impelled to ask you if the foregoing paragraph is a correct report of what you said.

If you are correctly quoted, I should like to have you give me your authority for your statement that in labor unions "no one is suffered to do more than the average workman can do." Also give me the names of a few trades or handicrafts where "no one is suffered to do more than the least skilful of his fellows can do within the hours allotted to a day's labor, and no one may work out of hours at all or volunteer anything beyond the minimum."

As a matter of course, a president of a university of the reputed standing of Princeton would not make statements in his baccalaureate address unless he knows, or at least fully believes, that his statements are true. Therefore it ought not to be a difficult matter for you to oblige me with the names of those labor unions whose laws, or even policies, bring about the results you specify.

Awaiting your reply with lively interest, I am,
Yours very truly,

Care Evening Telegram,
New York City.

Edgar R. Lavery.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
PRINCETON, N. J.

PRESIDENT'S ROOM

June 14th, 1909.

My dear Sir:—

Your letter of June 16th contains a very proper challenge. I quite agree that I ought not to make the statements I did make about the trade unions, unless I were able to cite cases in verification of my statements.

I, of course, had no individual trades unions in mind which I can name by number, but I had in mind several cases of buildings in New York City, for example, the brick layers working on which spent about one third of the working day sitting around, smoking their pipes and chatting, because they had laid the number of bricks to which they were limited for the day by the union to which they belonged.

I had in mind numerous experiences of my own in dealing with working men in Princeton, where I once found it impossible, for example, on a very cold evening to get a broken window pane mended at the house of an invalid friend, because the

prescribed labor hours of the day were over and the glazier could not venture, without risking a strike, to do the work himself and could not order any of his workmen to do it. I had in mind scores of instances, in short, lying within my own experience and resting upon the testimony of friends in whose veracity I have every reason to have the greatest confidence.

I of course could not, in the case of more than one or two of these instances, give legal proof of my assertions, but the evidence I have are entirely sufficient to convince me of the general truth of the statement I made.

Very truly yours,

Woodrow Wilson

Mr. Edgar R. Lavery.

Labor's Opinion of Hughes

After He Retired From Politics

"HE WAS A GREAT GOVERNOR."

"Now that Governor Hughes has retired from politics and ascended to a place on the highest judicial tribunal in the world, the fact can be acknowledged without hurting anybody's political corns, that he was the greatest friend of labor laws that ever occupied the governor's chair at Albany. During his two terms he has signed 56 labor laws, including among them the best labor laws ever enacted in this or any other state.

He also urged the enactment of labor laws in his messages to the legislature, even going so far as to place the demand for a labor law in one of his messages to an extra session of the legislature.

"Only 162 labor laws have been enacted in this state since its erection in 1777—in 133 years. One-third of these, exceeding in quality all of the others, have been enacted and signed during Governor Hughes' term of three years and nine months.

"With such a record of approval and suggestion of progressive legislation in the interest of humanity to his credit, it is easy to believe that human rights will have a steadfast and sympathetic upholder in the new Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States."

From the October, 1910, Issue of Legislative News, Published by New York State Federation of Labor.

Labor's Opinion of Hughes Is Based on WHAT HE HAS DONE

These Are Some of the Laws He Advocated and Signed While Governor of New York:

Wainwright Commission of Inquiry.

Automatic mutual agreement compensation law.

Automatic compulsory compensation.

(The first law of this kind enacted in the United States.)

Limiting the hours of labor for street car men.

Limiting the hours of labor for men in train service.

Limiting the hours of labor for signalmen and railroad telegraphers.

Placing young women from 19 to 21 years of age in the protected class.

ELEVEN CHILD LABOR LAWS extending over a period from 1907 to 1910.

(These laws secured the first definite standard for the protection of children in New York.)

Reconstructed the State Department of Labor.

Changed the penalties to make enforcement of labor laws easier.

Requiring semi-monthly payment of wages.

THIRTEEN LAWS relating to welfare, safety and sanitation in workshops.

Republican National Publicity Committee